

MARCH
2023

THE MEMBERS' VOICE



THE NEWSLETTER OF LOCAL 15, VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORKERS



A message from 1st VP, Santino Scardillo

Hello Local 15 Members,

I have been making some site visits around the union, reaching out to various worksites and meeting the members who work there. One of these visits was to Hastings Community Centre, which was very special to me because this is where I worked in my first job as a CUPE Local 15 member, which was the VMREU (Vancouver Municipal & Regional Employees' Union) back in 1980.

Thanks to all the staff at Hastings Community Centre who took the time to meet and chat with me, and agreed to have their photo taken for this issue of the Members' Voice.

Along with an Executive Sector Representative, I will be visiting other worksites to talk about what it means, and what it takes, to be a Local 15 Shop Steward or Site Contact.

If you are interested in a union visit at your worksite, or becoming a shop steward or site contact, or even if you just have general questions, please contact the union office and leave a message for me. I'm always happy to meet with the members and help out any way I can.

MARCH 2023 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The General Membership Meeting will be held on March 22, 2023 using the Zoom platform. You will be sent an invitation by email if the union office has a personal email address on file for you. Details will also be posted at www.cupe15.org. If you do not receive emails from the union office and would like to attend this meeting, please call us at 604-879-4671 or email us at email@cupes15.org to update your information. There will be a draw at the end of the meeting and three lucky winners will receive a gift card (retailers TBA at meeting). Child and dependant care reimbursement is available as per eligibility requirements in Section 31 of the Local 15 Bylaws.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Virtual General Membership Meeting Invitations

After registering for the Virtual General Membership meeting, please do not share your link with other members. If they did not receive the invitation and would like to attend the meeting, please ask them to contact the union office and provide us with their contact information directly. Once this is done, an invitation will be sent to them and they can register to receive their own link. This is important to facilitate accurate attendance records.

MARCH 22, 2023
5:30 p.m.
via Zoom invite

UNDER DISCUSSION:

- Election of delegates to the Vancouver and District Labour Council
- Election of delegates to CUPE Metropolitan District Council
- Nominations for the 2023 Executive Board Elections (see more details pg.3)
- Committee and Staff Reports

WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

We live, work and play on the unceded land of the Coast Salish peoples—Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.



We're open!

The union office is open and the boardroom and staff are available by appointment by calling us at 604-879-4671. Our office telephone hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Return undeliverable
Canadian addresses to:
CUPE Local 15
545 W. 10th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 1K9



President's message



WARREN WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

by Warren Williams,
President

This month we celebrated International Women's Day and as with other dates in the year we acknowledge the need to make fulsome

changes to our systems of segregation and oppression.

We still have a long way to go. The catch phrase of diversity, equity, and inclusion really speaks to how little we have done. The last time a woman held the seat of Prime Minister of Canada was 30 years ago when British Columbia's Kim Campbell replaced Brian Mulroney as the leader of the Conservative Party. She was Prime Minister for a little over four months, until the general election.

Regardless of your political bent, this was and still is an historic event and one that our neighbors to the south have yet to do.

That was 30 years ago and no woman has come close to being Prime Minister since. What social norms are at play that prohibit a so-called progressive country like ours from knocking down that wall?

That fact that women are life givers should be celebrated as most of us wouldn't be here if our mothers hadn't given birth. Instead, it's used as a means to hold women back. It is still often used as an excuse in the back room to deny promotions or senior management positions. Look at the cost of child care for instance. For many women the cost of child care prohibits them from gaining meaning full employment. While we have made some inroads in affordable child care, it can still be very expensive.

I sometimes take my male privilege for granted. Fortunately, I am by design surrounded by strong progressive women and

some men who remind me that my story of maleness is all about power and control and the world would be a better place without it.

Last month was Black History Month. This month, we celebrate International Women's Day. Why only one day? As a Black man I am also a partner, son, father, brother, uncle, cousin, colleague, and friend to the women in my life. I know many women around the world have suffered and continue to suffer unspeakable indignities all done to maintain a man's need for power and control over them.

I am calling on all you fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, cousins, and friends to challenge your story and society's story of maleness and to take a stand for your partners, mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces, cousins, colleagues, and friends to not settle for anything less than diversity, equity, and inclusion.

These are not just words. It is a truth worth standing for.

Secretary Treasurer's Report

by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer



DEBBIE MOHABIR
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Hello Everyone,

Stewards

We continue to work on recruiting stewards for various sectors. Since December 2022, four Intro to Stewarding Courses have been put on by CUPE National and we

now have twelve new stewards in the City, Parks, VSB, and Health. We have even more members registered for upcoming steward training and we look forward to having them onboard!

If you are interested in becoming a steward or have any questions about stewarding, please contact me at dmohabir@cupe15.org.

Education

In mid-January, CUPE National and the Vancouver and District Labour Council circulated their steward education course schedules, and many of the classes are already full. These courses are an excellent opportunity for stewards to learn about various topics that help support our members, and to network with other CUPE members not only in BC but in locals all over Canada. Local 15 is fortunate to have two CUPE National Facilitators; myself and Henry Lee. We have facilitated many courses for various locals across the country, including our own, and



have also been very lucky to be facilitators at the CUPE Fall and Spring Schools.

International Women's Day was on March 8th

IWD is a worldwide day to celebrate the various achievements of women and to acknowledge their important contributions around the world, but it is also a day to take action against gender inequality.

Unfortunately, this is still happening all over the world. We have recently seen this in the Middle East with blatant human rights injustices against women. Mahsa Amini was arrested in Tehran by the country's morality police for not wearing a hijab and mysteriously ended up in the hospital in a coma, and later died. She is only one woman featured prominently in the news, but there are so many others who have lost their lives for their right to make their own decisions. I would also like to recognize the men who were murdered by the government for standing up for women's human rights and their right to choose.

I am sure many of you have heard and seen the protests that have been organized at

the Vancouver Art Gallery to put political pressure on the Iranian government to stop the senseless killings. It is heartbreaking that in 2023, women are still fighting for the freedoms that many take for granted because these basic rights have never been an issue for them.

This fight is all of our fight and collectively we can make the change for women all over the world. Do you ever wonder what you can do specifically to help? You can attend a protest or rally, continue to bring to light gender inequality wherever you can through conversations or committees that you may sit on, read a book, take a workshop, share a news article, or be an ally.

International Women's Day falls on March 8th every year. This year's theme was #EmbraceEquity - "We can all truly embrace equity." It's not just something we say. It's not just something we write about. It's something we need to think about, know about, and embrace. It's what we believe in, unconditionally. Equity means creating an inclusive world.

Check out internationalwomensday.com.

CUPE BC CONVENTION

Delegates elected to Convention

At the General Membership meeting on February 22, 2023, the following members were elected to represent CUPE Local 15 at the 59th Annual CUPE BC Convention taking place in Victoria in April 2023:

- Kamal Gautam - City Sector
- Aaron Cook - City Sector
- Cynthia Schadt - K-12 Sector
- Chris Brown - K-12 Sector
- Henry Lee - Parks Sector

- Bernie Dionne - Parks Sector
- Lucia Rincon - Health Sector
- Seagrin Worster - At Large

As per the Local 15 bylaws, the Table Officers have automatic delegate status as follows:

- Warren Williams - President
- Santino Scardillo - 1st Vice President
- Ravina Lal - 2nd Vice President
- Debbie Mohabir - Secretary-Treasurer

TIME FOR YOUR LOCAL ELECTION

Executive Board Elections

Another year has passed and nominations for Executive Board elections are on the agenda for the March General Membership Meeting. The term of these positions is three years. This year there are eight positions up for democratic renewal. They are:

- Secretary-Treasurer (full time paid position)
- 1st Vice President
- City Sector Representative (1)
- Park Board Representative (1)
- College/University Sector Representative (1)
- K-12 Sector Representative (1)
- Health Sector Representative – HSPBA/Paramedical (1)
- Trustee (1)

To be eligible to accept nomination you must be a member in good standing for at least twelve months immediately prior to the nomination. To be eligible for the Secretary-Treasurer, 1st Vice President, or Trustee positions you must have attended at least 50% of the general membership meetings in the past twelve months.

Voting will be conducted electronically as it has been since 2013. More information will be available in the April issue of the Members' Voice, at cupe15.org, and via email if you have provided the union office with a personal email address.



Nominations to be held at the March 22, 2023 Virtual General Membership Meeting

Casual Office Assistance Work Available at the Union Office

From time to time CUPE Local 15 requires casual office assistance for short term assignments, often with little notice. The union office is a fast-paced environment that requires the ability to work to deadlines with frequent interruptions and multiple demands.

Word, and Microsoft Access is essential. Knowledge of standard business formats for a variety of documents is also a requirement and broad knowledge of the union is required to carry out the duties of the job. A strong commitment to trade union principles is essential.

This is clerical work of advanced complexity including word processing and data processing. Advanced knowledge of Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Office

If you are interested in being placed on the on-call list please forward your resume to: Tia Tang, CUPE Local 15 Office Manager, ttang@cupe15.org

VSB JOB SHARE OPPORTUNITIES

1. SSA looking for a job share partner to work at John Norquay Elementary on Thursdays and Fridays beginning September 2023. Please contact Sheila at sheilafarrales3@gmail.com if you are interested.
2. SSA looking for job share partner to work at Van Horne Elementary two days per week beginning September 2023. Please contact Rosemary at rmahnger@vsb.bc.ca if you are interested.
3. SSA looking for a job share partner to work at David Livingstone Elementary on Thursdays and Fridays beginning September 2023. Please contact Veronika at vpathak@vsb.bc.ca if you are interested.

DECISIONS

BY THE EXECUTIVE

At the Executive and Society Board meetings on February 21, 2023, the following decisions were made:

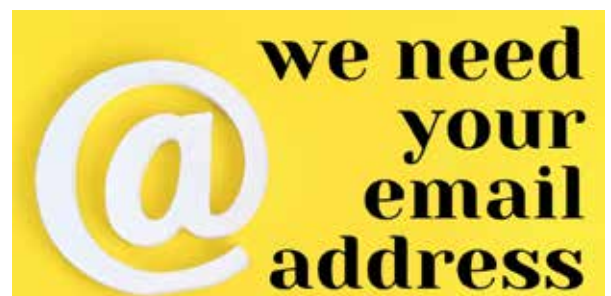
- To purchase a half-page advertisement in the DOXA Documentary Film Festival program.
- To purchase a half-page advertisement in the Royal Canadian Legion BC/Yukon Command Annual Military Service Recognition Book.
- To approve a donation of \$500 for, and request a table at, the VGH and UBC Building Bridges Day event on May 30, 2023.
- To appoint Pheby Yeung as the temporary Primary OH&S Representative at VanDusen Botanical Garden.
- To appoint Aleta Nelson as Primary OH&S Representative at the Evergreen Community Health Clinic.
- To endorse Sheryl Burns, Dal Benning, Tony Rebelo, and Amber Leonard for CUPE BC General Vice Presidents, Debra Merrier for CUPE BC Indigenous Diversity Vice President, and Debbie Mohabir for CUPE BC Trustee.

BY THE MEMBERS

At the General Membership meeting on February 22, 2023 the members in attendance made the following decisions:

- To elect 12 delegates to the CUPE BC Convention. See election results elsewhere in this issue.
- To approve a donation of \$5,000 to the BC Heritage Labour Society.

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS ON MARCH 22, 2023 via Zoom



The union cannot use your worksite email address

For legal reasons, the union does not use employer email addresses to send information to members. If you have previously provided us with an employer email address, it has been deleted from our database. Please call 604-879-4671 or email us at email@cupe15.org to provide us with a personal email address, so you can continue receiving information from the union.



The Members' Voice is published nine times a year for members of CUPE Local 15 - Vancouver Municipal, Education and Community Workers. The deadline for submissions is 9:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. All submissions may be edited for brevity and clarity. Signed articles and letters do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of CUPE Local 15.

CUPE Local 15

545 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1K9

Phone: 604-879-4671

Fax: 604-879-7582

Email: email@cupe15.org

Web: www.cupe15.org

Local 15 is a chartered affiliate of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and is also affiliated with the CUPE British Columbia Division, CUPE Metro District Council, the Vancouver & District Labour Council, and the BC Federation of Labour. CUPE 15 is a member of the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

CUPE Local 15 Executive Board Table Officers:

President: Warren Williams

Secretary-Treasurer: Debbie Mohabir

1st Vice President: Santino Scardillo

2nd Vice President: Ravina Lal

Sector Representatives:

City: Kamal Gautam, Paul Chohan

College/University: Eduardo Rodriguez
Rose Palozzi

Cultural: Courtney Gillen

Health/HSSCBA: Roxshanna Shankar

Health/HSPBA: Mia Nickel

Parks: Bernie Dionne, Henry Lee

K-12: Chris Brown, Cynthia Schadt

Trustees:

Aaron Cook, John Kaptein, Vanessa Mani

Staff Representatives:

Kathie Currie, John Geppert, Steve

Salsman, Gail Johnson, Joy Tullos,

Office & Administrative Staff:

Mark Gloumeau, Accounting Coordinator

Nancy Strider, Accounting Assistant

Tia Tang, Office Manager

Nadia Thibault, Office Assistant

Michelle Yim, Office Assistant

Building Service Worker:

Elaine Duan

CUPE National

Representatives:

Andrew Ledger, Bryan Bickley (on leave),

Sung Wong (temporary), Michael Reed

(temporary)

WINTER SCHOOL

Human Rights - CLC Winter School at Harrison Hot Springs

by *Cynthia Schadt, K-12 Sector Executive Representative*

I would like to thank the membership for the opportunity to attend the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School from February 12-17, 2023. I attended the Human Rights course with 17 other attendees from unions across the province. Our facilitators were Ela Gunad from the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU), Deanna Ogle from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and retired CUPE Local 15 member, Michele Alexander. Jeff Atkinson, from the CLC, was also sitting in to assess the program.

Topics covered in the class included:

- Class and Neoliberalism
- What is Equality?
- Oppression and Privilege
- Challenging Colonialism
- Challenging Racism
- Challenging Xenophobia
- Challenging Sexism and Misogyny
- Challenging Anti-Black Racism
- Challenging Ableism
- Challenging Transphobia and Homophobia
- Challenging Islamophobia; Being Allies
- Workplace Harassment and Violence
- Employment Equity
- Duty to Accommodate

These subjects and course activities brought up some very strong feelings in the group. We had the opportunity to attend a Red Dress Ceremony, a Blanket Ceremony, and listen to an Elder speak about her experience at a residential school. It was emotional and made me very angry.

The messages in this course were very clear; bring like-minded people together to work on the topics above or to create committees, lobby government to make change, educate people, and become allies.

Of course, there were also the plenaries. Harry Bains and Suzanne Skidmore spoke to us, missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls were honoured, and there was a choir night.

This was the last week Ron Stipp, CLC Pacific Regional Representative, would be attending as he is retiring, and may he have an excellent retirement! I just have to mention that after some of the emotional and heavy subjects, we had an opportunity to unwind in the hot springs pool and receive sustenance from the Copper Room. CLC Winter School is a must-do for labour school.

OH&S CORNER

Refusal of Unsafe Work

by *Cynthia Schadt, K-12 OH&S Committee Representative*

I have some questions:

- What do you do when you experience unsafe work?
- What does unsafe work look like?
- What can you do?
- Can your supervisor discipline you for speaking up and refusing unsafe work?
- How do you refuse unsafe work?
- What can you do once you refuse unsafe work, and the employer and the Joint OH&S committee attempt to resolve the issue but the issue doesn't get resolved?

Well folks, no one should go to work to get injured. We do have basic health and safety rights in the workplace. They include The Right to Participate, The Right to Know, and The Right to Refuse. You also have The Right against Reprisal.

When you experience unsafe work, you should refuse it. How do you do this?

- Tell your supervisor or the person in charge about the unsafe work and then inform them you refuse to do this type of work.

- The employer may try to have one of your coworkers do the task, but the coworker must be informed of the unsafe work in writing. They too can refuse.
- The employer must investigate the issue immediately with a worker who is on the joint health and safety committee, and solve the issue. If the issue is still not resolved you can refuse again.
- If the issue still isn't resolved, contact WorkSafeBC for assistance.

Your supervisor cannot discipline you for reporting unsafe work. A few scenarios of unsafe work can include malfunctioning warning systems, slippery floors, trip hazards, blocked safety exits, malfunctioning equipment, missing safety guards, unsanitary working conditions, dim lighting, and violence.

For more information use the Refusing Unsafe Work – WorkSafe BC link at:

www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work

Stay safe my friends!