

# CUPE WIRE

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38  
1439—9th Av. SE, Calgary, T2G 0T4, Phone (403)233-2700 Fax (403)290-1757  
Email—office@cupe38.org Website-www.cupe38.org

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 1



January 2017

## New Contract for Enmax

While many of our members were setting their mind to the busy Christmas season, your Bargaining Committee was hard at work negotiating a new contract with Enmax. The Committee spent 11 days in negotiations with the employer to get to the deal. The memorandum of agreement was ratified on January 5, 2017 by a majority, and CUPE Local 38 members now have a new contract.

The contract is for 3 years and members will see a 6.5% increase in wages over the life of the contract. No concessions were given to the employer, which means nothing in the preceding contract language was lost. This is important to note, as in the current economic climate, many employers are looking to dismantle many collective bargaining agreements to save a couple of bucks on the backs of members. This was not the case in this round of bargaining and the committee remained diligent in protecting the current language and structure.

On behalf of the CUPE Local 38 Executive Committee and all the members, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Bargaining Committee for their time and effort. Getting this agreement ratified in such a swift manner, allows the members to continue with their work knowing that their rights will remain intact for another 3 years. Congratulations all!



## Excerpts from a Local 38 Scholarship Winner 2016

The following is an excerpt from the second of two Local 38 scholarship winners. Sean Lam's essay was on "*The Role of the Labour Movement in the Global Environment*"...

" Labour movements have played a crucial role in the development of workers' rights and the rise in standards of living over the course of history. The development of workers' rights were not a spur-of-the moment suggestion by compassionate souls, but rather a hard-fought battle. Dating back to the Industrial Revolution, workers have come a long way since fighting against injustices such as child labour, hazardous working conditions and the segregation of racialized workers. However, these changes took place during a time when societies were confined to their local geographic regions.

...With the introduction of globalization, a tidal wave of challenges lurking under the benefits of international trade and investment are gradually becoming more pronounced...The consequences of globalization have pitted workers, governments and business against each other to determine who will drown among the waves, be taken by the tides or receive the riches of the sea.

...What (workers) lack is a large body, which garners momentum and inertia, as well as a central core to take the helm. With these two combined, workers can approach the playing field of the titans which we call corporations and governmental bodies.

...within developed countries, the momentum behind labour movements gradually declines as governments establish trade agreements and businesses establish international foundations. Though the motivation and effects of a higher GDP resulting from a free-trade agreement are theoretically better for workers, the benefits of such actions may be partial. (Economist.com 2016).

...Numerous economists such as Paul Krugman, have pointed to overbearing laissez-faire policies and a decline in unionization as a detriment to U.S. workers. The exportation of American intermediate goods to Mexican "*maquiladoras*" for further processing after passing the North American Free Trade Agreement is only one of many of these occurrences.

*Continued on Page 3*

## CPP Expansion: How It will Affect You

*From CUPE National*

CUPE, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and other unions have campaigned for many years for enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). CUPE members and Canadians may now claim victory as federal and provincial finance ministers recently concluded an agreement to enhance the CPP.

Nine out of 10 provinces, representing more than two-thirds of Canadians, agreed in principle with this expansion. Quebec is planning to consult its population about similar changes to the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP).

The CPP improvement has two features. First and foremost, the paid benefits will increase from 25 per cent to 33 per cent of a worker's yearly average income. Secondly, this agreement will provide a gradual increase to the upper income limit subject to CPP—up to \$82,700 by 2025 from \$54,900 in 2015. The implementation of these changes will be gradual over the next seven years thus allowing the next generation of workers to fully benefit from the changes. Benefits will be paid according to the number of years of contribution.

These augmented benefits will be paid by an increase of one per cent of both the employer and employees' contributions (from 4.95 to 5.95 per cent). The required contribution for the new upper income limit will be four per cent for both employers and employees.

CUPE welcomes the agreement on CPP expansion because it will benefit all workers. However, low income individuals will benefit significantly less than middle and higher income individuals. Federal and provincial governments must now take steps to increase retirement incomes for lower income earners through enhancements to the Guaranteed Income Supplement or other measures.

There will be many other issues that will need to be addressed with this expansion, including how it will affect existing workplace pension plans. CUPE will continue to provide support and guidance to help our members fully benefit from these changes.

## Cities Bringing Services Back In House

Faced with rising costs and declining quality of contracted out services, cities in Canada and around the world are taking back control of their public services.

The growing trend is documented in the new Columbia Institute report *Back in House: Why local governments are bringing services home*. The report reviews Canadian and international evidence about contracting out and the reasons to contract in. It also revisits pro-privatization reports dating back two decades to find that many privatization poster projects are now back in house.

Back in House tells the story of 15 Canadian communities that have ended privatization. In many cases, the services are now being delivered in-house by CUPE members. The number one reason municipalities brought work back in house was to save money, followed by problems with the contractor, poor-quality service, and the need for more flexibility.

In some of these communities, local governments saw they could do the work themselves because of increased in-house capacity. Many communities took the opportunity of a contract expiring to end privatization.

Contracting in was a major theme in the municipal meeting at CUPE's recent National Sector Council Conference. Members shared their successes and setbacks, including CUPE 3034 president Terri-Lynn Cooper who described the patient, 20-year campaign her local waged to win back solid waste services in the Town of Conception Bay South, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The local built its case over time, tracking complaints and documenting when in-house staff cleaned up after the contractor. The first step was contracting in door-to-door pickup of bulky garbage. That foot in the door helped the local showcase superior in-house service. Cooper and other local leaders worked to build support with CUPE 3034 members, including mechanics who were initially reluctant to service what they saw as dirty garbage trucks.

A spike in complaints and rising contractor costs helped strengthen the local's case as they developed a fully-costed proposal for an in-house fleet and public service delivery. In 2011, council voted to bring solid waste services in house for a five-year trial. Cooper says savings since in-house service began, are approaching \$1 million. At the same time, the workers have improved wages and benefits, and far better health and safety protection than the contractor provided. "It's a win-win for everyone," says Cooper, who announced that the trial is over and the services will be staying in house.

CUPE funded Back in House to help our members and municipal officials promote and protect public services. Read the report and order copies at [cupe.ca/back-in-house](http://cupe.ca/back-in-house)

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



Experience is the hardest kind of teacher. It gives you the test first and the lesson afterward.

~Oscar Wilde

## Rebuilding Our Economy

The plunge in oil prices has exposed deep cracks and imbalances in Canada's economy. Slumping growth and rising joblessness demand positive action and a fundamental change in approach by our governments to grow the economy, create jobs and reduce inequality.

Eight years after the Great Recession we still haven't fully recovered. Economic growth is a third lower than previous recoveries, we've already had a mini-recession. The immediate response to the global financial crisis averted a depression, but since then governments have relied too much on low interest rates while cutting spending, which slows the economy.

Unfortunately, too many provincial governments are undermining progress with spending cuts and continued austerity. Increased stimulus spending is a good start, but inequality is holding back economic growth. A healthy economy needs more good jobs and stronger wage growth. Instead of persisting with neoliberal policies that destroy jobs and undermine wages – including “free trade” agreements and privatization – we need to strengthen collective bargaining, raise minimum and public sector wages, and eliminate pay gaps. Quality public services and universal social programs, including health care, education, and public pensions, don't just generate good jobs and provide a strong economic boost. They're also the best way to strengthen equality. Public services and programs need to be improved and expanded.

We also need progressive tax reform, not just to generate funding for public services but also to reduce inequality. Repairing the cracks and rebuilding our economy will take time. We need to start now.

## Excerpts from a Local 38 Scholarship Winner 2016

*Continued from Page 1*

...business interests still remain the main concerns in poorer less developed countries reliant on foreign investment. Examples of this are the previously mentioned “banana republics” of Guatemala as well as the plight of coffee growers of Ethiopia.

...Within developed countries, such as Canada, it can be said that our governments,... also fail to protect our rights as workers... Here in Alberta, one controversial bill passed would be the Public Services Salary Restraint Act (Bill 46) of December 2013, which imposed a four-year contract on members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. The Canadian Foundation of Labour Rights has been tracking legislation of this nature and claim that 218 such laws have passed since 1982. Unions have lost the power of strike action, the ability to negotiate wage packages and are replacing businesses as the targets of regulation. It can be said that the power of workers has declined not only in third-world countries, but within first-world countries as well.

...the value of the individual in terms of labour, has decreased. The world is full of billions of people, so the average worker has become somewhat dispensable and replaceable. Considering this and a decrease in unionization rates in Canada, the power of Canadian unions has been dealt a terrible blow.

...it is clear that the role of labour in the world today, is to continue what they have always done: spread awareness, seek out advocates and strive for unionization.

Labour must seek out people to aid in their “movement”, not only to strengthen their momentum and protect themselves from injustice, but also to move beyond mere “survival” in the ever-changing global economy.

## Connect with CUPE 38

Email: [office@cupe38.org](mailto:office@cupe38.org)

Phone: 403-233-2700

In-person: 1439 - 9th AVE SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0T4

Online: [cupe38.org](http://cupe38.org)

# Get involved!

## REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING

*All CUPE 38 Members Invited to Attend*



**When: Tuesday, January 24, 2017  
at 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: CUPE 38 Office,  
1439-9 Avenue SE**

**Business: Regular & Elections**

**Elections:**

- 1. Eighteen (18) eligible Delegates to the CUPE Alberta Convention, March 15-17, 2017 in Red Deer.**