

THE CUPE CONNECTION

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38
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MEBAC Negotiations ... The Final Chapter

This last round of negotiations between MEBAC and the City was undoubtedly the most contentious round in recent MEBAC history. In the agreement, it states that MEBAC and the City agree to use the “government sector median”. As there is no clear data to determine this, in the last prior round of negotiations both parties agreed to conduct a joint study to determine the public sector median. Mercer Group was commissioned to conduct the study and their report was presented to MEBAC and the City.

The Mercer study clearly indicated a number of areas in which our benefits plan was below the public sector median, particularly in health and dental benefits. It also showed that our plan was above in areas such as long term disability. After the presentation, both MEBAC and the City took the information away to review prior to this round of negotiations.

The City requested a delay in negotiations. In good faith, MEBAC agreed. Unfortunately, unbeknownst to MEBAC the City used this delay to commission a second survey to establish a new “benchmark” based upon completely different criteria. This “Relative Value” survey now shows that MEBAC benefits are, as a whole, slightly above the public sector median. The City’s position is that this now should be the benchmark and this became a significant point of contention during negotiations.

In the past, the relationship between MEBAC and The City has been collegial. All parties made attempts to address benefits with the best interests of the plan members in mind. Communication has always been forthright and upfront. This round of negotiations has shown a mark change in this relationship. This is also reflected in the extraordinary length of time it took to conclude the negotiations --- well over a year and a half.

The outcome of the negotiations has come modest changes to the benefit plan. Still at issue is the benchmark for the plan. Local 38 will work with the other bargaining units in the City to protect the integrity of your benefits plan.

Please see Page 2 for the MEBAC changes ...



Scholarships Awarded

For the last nine years CUPE Local 38 has awarded two scholarships to either members or children of members in good standing who are

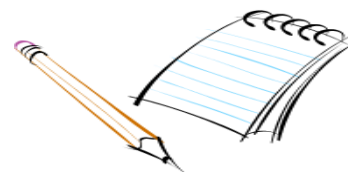
enrolled in a post secondary institution. The applicants must write a 1,000 word essay on a chosen theme. The topics to choose from this year were:

- 1) The challenges facing unions in Alberta over the next 20 years; or
- 2) The relevance of unions in Canadian Society; or
- 3) The role of the labour movement in the global environment.

We had a total of fourteen (14) submissions and the Local's Public Relations and Education Committee chose the two winning essays. We are proud to announce the names of this year's scholarship recipients; Harper Duffy and Natan Wolfe.

The Committee would like to thank all of those who submitted essays and wish them the best of luck in their studies.

Excerpts from the winning essays will be published in upcoming newsletters.



Continued from Page 1

MEBAC Changes

Health

Level 2

- Remove the \$30,000 overall health benefit maximum per participant
- Amend travel insurance coverage from age 70 to age 75
- Adjust lifetime maximum for prescription smoking cessation medications from \$200 to \$500
- Add Athletic Therapist to list of approved paramedical services
- Attending Physicians Statements (APS) or equivalent medical documentation for absences (as outlined in the MEBAC Agreement) will be reimbursed by The City at 50% of the cost per note with no yearly maximum

Dental

Level 2

- MEBAC and The City shall fund the increase from 80% to 90% reimbursement for Basic level services - City pays 85% Basic and MEBAC pays 5% Basic to a total of 90% reimbursement

Level 3

- The City shall pay 85% Basic and MEBAC pays 15% Basic to a total of 100% reimbursement

The Hitmen



are a hit!!!!

Over the past year, Local 38's Social Committee has endeavoured to provide a variety of Social events to our members. In the summer, Stampeder tickets were offered at a subsidized price. Based on the response, the Committee has offered subsidized tickets to the Calgary Hitmen Teddy Bear Toss game on December 7th. The response was overwhelming and the tickets sold out in record time!

Given such positive response, the Social Committee is organizing similar events in 2015.

Keep checking the website for new offers in the new year!

Great West Life --- Are They Great?

Over the past twelve months, we have been receiving an increasing number of phone calls and emails regarding Great West Life and long term disability. Specifically, there seems to be an increase in concerns regarding how GWL communicates to plan members, and rising concerns regarding GWL's consistency in applying the rules regarding LTD.

A number of calls have raised concerns regarding the abruptness of communication with GWL. In some cases, members concerns dismissed by case workers. In other cases, members are left confused by the decision of GWL on the claim.

Long term disability is 100% employee funded, and it is important for the Local to hear concerns from the members. Should you have concerns or know someone who does, please contact the office at 430-233-2700.



Reminder:

The 2014 Children's Christmas Party will be Saturday, December 13, 2014 at the Red & White Club. Deadline for Registration is November 30, 2014. If you require a Registration form please contact 403-233-2700 to obtain the application form.

Welcome Aboard!

As many people may be aware, our Office Administrator Paula Orr moved back into a position in Enmax in July. The Local established a search committee and, after a lengthy process, we are pleased to announce Karen Riddell as the new Office Administrator.

Karen previously worked in Water Resources in an Administrative role. She brings many years of administrative experience with her, both within the City, as well as previous positions. Additionally, Karen has extensive experience within Local 38 and the Alberta Labour movement.

Karen has held several positions within Local 38, most recently as the Vice President. She has attended CUPE Alberta, CUPE National, Alberta Federation of Labour and Canadian Labour Congress conventions as a delegate from Local 38. Karen has been active in the CUPE Calgary District Council and has been a delegate to the Calgary and District Labour Council.

Karen's experience and knowledge will place her as a valued addition to the office. We feel very fortunate to have Karen join us. Please take the time to stop in and join us in welcoming Karen aboard.



**THOUGHT
FOR
THE
MONTH**

"In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins; not through strength, but through persistence"

~Buddha~

GENERAL MEETING



Tuesday, **November 25th**, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Union Office

1439—9th Avenue SE

BUSINESS: **Regular**

- 1. Election of Vice President**
- 2. Election of 2 Members to Equal Opportunities Committee**
- 3. Election of six (6) eligible delegates to the Alberta Federation of Labour Winter School, January 19 - 24, 2015 in Jasper**