

Voices from the Floor

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Special points of interest:

- The next General Meeting will be on Saturday, March 8, 2008 at the New Westminster CAW Hall 326-12th Street at 9:30 am. Come out and get involved!

Editorial Policy: Letters and submissions are encouraged. The opinions expressed may not be those of either Local or the National Union.

Editor: Darcy Suehn

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Variety - The Spice of Eric's Life

By Brother Darcy Suehn

In 1971 when Brother Eric Phillips worked on his very first Variety Telethon things were a little different than they are today, and for that matter, Eric is a little different as well. Back in the day, the Telethons were held at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Van-

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Brother Greg Gilks receives a Turkey from Sister Jayne Pedersen. Both are employees of DHL Nanaimo. DHL and CAW 114 teamed to buy DHL employees a turkey for Christmas in lieu of a Christmas party. Donations of non perishable food items were collected for the food bank. Special thanks to Brother Jason Stafford' Nanaimo, and Matt Macey of Courtenay who generously donated their turkey's to the Salvation Army. Photo by Brother Jim Sadlemyer.

Brother Dave Robb 1929-2007

By Brother Pete Smith

Sadly, I must report the passing of a long-time member of this Local Union. Brother Dave Robb worked in the Kenworth Truck Plant from 1963 until the

plant closed in 1981. I worked at Kenworth with Brother Robb for a number of years. From there he went to work at the Freightliner Truck Plant until it closed in the 1990's.

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couver and because of the limited parking volunteers used their own vehicles to transport other volunteers and performers to and from the venue. All of this was co-ordinated by CB Radio volunteers from two different clubs. Eric was asked to be one of the volunteers. "The new guy got the job of climbing the spiral tower to put up the antenna, I don't know how high it was but it was quite the climb," Eric told me.

These days, Eric Chairs the Truck Transportation Committee for Variety and helps oversee a fleet of 35 cars and trucks all donated by Budget Car and Truck Rentals. Brother Phillips is also responsible for Variety's recycling program which covers all the recyclables in Variety's office as well as two newspaper bins which help generate funds for Variety.

Variety got into recycling in a big way back in 1978 and in 1982 Eric got involved. By the mid-80s there were 26 bins getting \$300 per metric tonne and raising \$1 million per year. But like so many other things, people started using the bins to dump their personal garbage which ultimately led to a decline in bins. Today there are two bins located at IGA sites, both in Vancouver, at 41st and Dunbar, and Broadway and Maple. Today Variety gets only \$30 per tonne but still manages to raise \$15-16,000 per year. At one point Eric was also responsible for the recycled oil program that saw oil picked-up at local garages by Mohawk Oil. However, that came to an end when Husky Oil bought out Mohawk.

In spite of all these changes Variety has continued to evolve and Eric has evolved with it. Since

his first telethon, Eric married for the second time and now has three children, all of whom are grown adults now. Two of his children, a son and daughter who live in the Lower Mainland, are also active in Variety and his other son, who teaches in Saskatchewan, watches on satellite every year. "I remember my wife and I having



the kids in cuddle seats while answering the phone; my kids have always been a part of Variety," said Eric.

While we are all familiar with the annual "Show of Hearts" Telethon which runs for two days and nights on Global Television each year and raised over \$2 million last year, Eric was quick to point out that more than \$5 million was raised last year from a range of events that go on throughout the province but get far less publicity. Every summer, Variety hosts six golf tournaments that raise as much as \$30-40,000 per event. There are two "Boats for Hope" events, one in Victoria and the other here in Vancouver, which give kids a chance they might not otherwise have to go out on a boat for the day, as well as raising badly needed funds. Even less well known are the Radiothons held in Vernon, Kelowna, Prince George, Nanaimo and Kamloops that see locally raised funds stay in those communities to help local kids.

The fundraiser closest to many people's hearts, however, is Jeneese's "Coin Drive". This courageous girl has been an inspiration to so many, including our Local Secretary Sister Debbie Jaques, who makes sure the coin jar is front and centre on her counter as you walk into the Local office in New Westminster. This year's drive got an added boost when DHL on Vancouver Island agreed to help out in communities that are not served by G4S (formerly Securicor), thanks to the work of Brother Jim Sadlemyer and Sister Jayne Pederson. Over the years G4S has taken on the task of collecting, sorting and wrapping all of the coins gathered by this program and with the latest donation, the total has now reached a staggering \$800,000 and Eric is confident that this will be the year that Jeneese's wish of raising \$1 million dollars will come true.

While some things have changed in Variety's 80-year history, Eric is well versed in the history that gave rise to this charity. Eric told me the story of how a group of men playing poker one night in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1928 heard a commotion outside and went out to discover an abandoned child in a basket complete with note. Realizing how much this child would need, the men organized a circus fundraiser and thus was born the Variety Club, complete with language that draws its roots from the circus.

Over the past 35 years, almost twice as long as he has worked at G4S, Eric has been honoured by Variety four times. Even after all these years Eric is still excited by the upcoming "Show of Hearts" Telethon on February 16 and 17th which will be held at the Red Robinson Show Theatre in Coquitlam. There was real enthusiasm in his voice as he told me the line up: "We start with Michael Buble and finish with River Dance and we will have Andrea Bocelli. These are all taped performances that have never been shown before, it's going to be great!"

Anthropologists for labour

The Guild Reporter/CWA/CALM

Anthropologists rarely get any good press; indeed, since Margaret Mead's death they rarely get any press coverage at all.

Viewed by the public as musty researchers of dead or dying civilizations, most people don't realize anthropologist insights can be applied to contemporary society.

Now the American Anthropological Association (AAA) has issued its very first policy brief—and the policy issue it chose is the right of employees to organize unions.

The brief notes that that income inequality in the U.S. is at historic highs, that worker self-organization is at historic lows, and that anti-union consulting firms have become a multi-million dollar industry. It summarizes ethnographic fieldwork by examining management-labour practices in the U.S. workplace to determine underlying dynamics. Their findings won't surprise any union activist.

"This ethnographic research exposed a previously concealed dimension of management-worker communication: actions of consultants that are often extreme and highly coercive," the brief observes. But, it adds, "Because ethnographic research makes visible such factors, it is necessary for making fully-informed policy decisions regarding labour organizing practices."

Translation: Let's stop being ivory-tower academics for a minute and verbalize the real-world implications of our research, which the AAA proceeds to do, in a comprehensive endorsement of employee free choice.

"Anthropology provides sound evidence that current organizing processes do not allow employees to express their desire to join unions because: 1) there are insufficient disincentives to managerial lawbreaking in its resistance to unions; and 2) management uses tactics of intimidation and fear to coerce workers to vote against unions."

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Retired National Representative, Roger Crowther remarked at the service for Brother Robb that there were few other union members over those many years who attended more weekly steward meetings (yes, weekly!), unit meetings, Local Executive meetings, General Membership meetings and later Retired Members meetings. Dave was a stalwart on the picket line in an 8 month strike at the Kenworth Truck Plant in 1980 where he picketed tirelessly day and night whether asked to or not. In addition to this, over those years and after he would rearrange his own personal schedule, often on short notice, to shore-up any picket line or help swell the ranks at any demonstration. He really understood that to better our world it took a lot of commitment, time and sacrifice. If the Local Union would have 100 Dave Robbs it would be a force in the Province to contend with.

If you worked at the Kenworth Plant, you would talk to Brother Robb. The truth be told, you really had no choice. Dave and Boris were the two men in the plant who were responsible for the metal engine hoods on the huge logging trucks that still operate in some areas of the Province. Dave and Boris could work anywhere in their department all they mainly required was a work bench. Where they located their workbench however, was at the intersection of 3 main aisles in the plant. If you were going anywhere you were likely to pass this intersection a few times a day. Dave had the luxury of choosing who he would talk to of the on-going parade of Kenworth workers who passed his workbench every day. And talk he did.

I don't remember seeing Dave actually working on these huge hoods. I do have however, vivid memories of the discussions we had on a regular basis and even on-going arguments some days. If you were going by, he would simply step out in front of you and ask you what you thought of Trudeau's latest pronouncement or some other event either in politics or grievance or complaint. As I said, there was no choice Dave talked to anyone he wanted to talk with and he usually decided the topic.



Photo provided by Brother Pete Smith

As much as this memory is amusing, there were a number of things that Dave taught myself and other younger (at the time) active members of the Union. Firstly, you get the best decision when you debate the issues. Admittedly, this was not an easy lesson for an impatient young man. Secondly, in the event you think you know,

tell someone or the Union what they should be doing on a particular issue. As annoying as that was on occasion, it was and is the right thing to do. Brother Robb always had the best interests of his fellow workers, their organizations and their causes at heart. His actions were never for his personal gain.

As Roger also said, his commitment of time and sacrifice he committed to the Union he also extended to his party, the NDP. The founder of the CCF/NDP, J.S. Woodworth once said, "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. To this end may we take our share in the world's work and the world's struggles."

Dave did more than his fair share, taught us a lot

Family Education makes a difference

and he will be missed and always remembered.

By Brother Jonathan Chan

"We pay union dues every month. What has the union done for us?" Many of us have heard something similar in our workplaces. Even I have asked a similar question when I first joined a Union. Month after month the work the Union does is not visible to me. I was always interested however; to find out what kind of organization it is that I joined. No one from my workplace could provide me with all the information I was seeking. One day, completely by accident, I overheard a woman co-worker talking about the union paying for a two week family vacation, included air fare, in Toronto. Boy was I interested in that!

I applied and was approved for Session 3 of the Family Education Program in the summer of 2007. The union flew us – a family of four – to Toronto and we stayed in a hotel for a night. The next day we went with many other families to Port Elgin by bus. The room in the Family Education Centre was much better than Motel 6. Two double beds plus an extra room in our unit. Dinner the first night was prime rib. Not bad! Plus all you can drink (juices, pop, milk, tea, coffee etc). Fruits and salads all you can eat and all of it delicious. You did not have to worry about grocery shopping and cooking for two weeks.

Monday to Friday we were in classes. Saturday and Sunday in between the two weeks was our own time. Port Elgin is a resort town on Lake Huron and the Family Education Centre is located near the beach. Some families stayed behind on the weekend while some took advantage of being in Ontario to visit Toronto and other places. Those that stayed behind enjoyed beach and other activities such as kayaking and bicycling

that the Centre provided.

My wife and I attended class. My two kids had classes in their own age group. They had their own learning time and activities while the adults learned about the CAW- who is in the union, what the union does, how each member can make a difference in their local union, how we can make a difference in our workplaces and in our communities. We also learned the rules of order and how to write and debate resolutions for the Convention that ends the two week Family Education session.

People who took part in this program came from everywhere in Canada; Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, and cities on the East Coast. They brought different cultures, accents, different struggles at work and solutions. It was a rare opportunity to meet and get to know so many people who came from different parts of this big country.

My group facilitator was quite knowledgeable. Later, I found out that he and other facilitators were factory workers like many of us. Where did they learn all these kinds of skills and knowledge? The answer is the CAW. I learned the CAW provides many training programs both locally and nationally.

So, you see, the CAW invests part of my union dues to train me. The CAW wants all of us to be active in the union starting from the shop floor. Joining the union is not just the mandatory deduction of union dues from my pay cheque. Joining the union is joining the labour movement.

So the question is not "What can the union do for me?" The question really is "What do I want to do in the labour movement and where do I start?" One answer is to attend the 2008 Family Education Program. Contact the Local Office for

Climate change threatens public health

NewsBulletin/UNA/CALM

The biggest public health issue facing Canada may not be the coming flu pandemic.

It's possible that poverty or housing, the two giant "determinants of health" are becoming secondary concerns. In the 21st century, many Canadian experts say the environment and climate change will have the biggest impact on the health and well-being of Canadians.

Back in 2002, Health Canada gathered a group of population health experts for a workshop. The report on that meeting contained a fairly strident note of concern: "Long-term direct health impacts of climate change include premature death and disabling illness due to increased temperature, extreme weather events, water and food borne enteric dis-

eases, and cancer risks from ozone depletion." The experts also noted that "Climate change will place greater demands on the social infrastructure (including emergency services and social support systems) supporting public health and well-being."

The panel concluded: "Because of the significant health risks that are likely to occur in the absence of

global action on climate change, the uncertainties surrounding the magnitude of such risks, and the long-term ecological consequences of failing to

take action, a precautionary approach to climate change risk management policy development is needed, as required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."

The precautionary approach is important because even the climate scientists from the International Panel on Climate Change don't know for sure what is going to happen.

Canadian journalist Gwynne Dyer summed things up in a recent column. "The IPCC says that global temperature rises of between two degrees and 4.5 degrees are almost inevitable in the course of this century—but much higher increases of six degrees or more cannot be ruled out."

We are in the neighbourhood of one degree warmer already and the upward swing is gaining momentum.



Dwyer points out that it is not just a matter of extreme weather, hot summers or even flooded coastlines. "If the global average temperature

of our food production worldwide. Any major reduction in food production means mass migrations, war and mass death. It is getting very serious."

British commentator George Monbiot says in his book, *Heat: How To Stop the Planet From Burning*, that two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels is the temperature level beyond which major eco-systems begin to collapse to prevent this from happening, rich nations must cut their greenhouse gasses by 90 per cent or more by the year 2030.

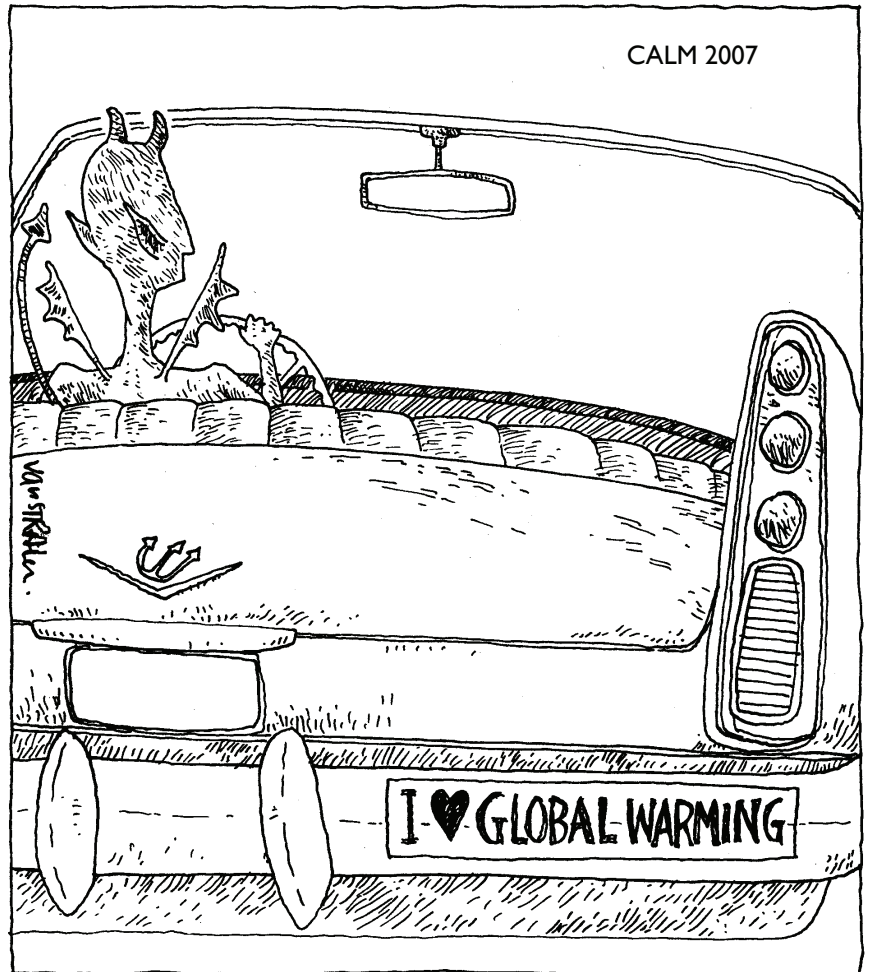
Monbiot warns that an upper limit of even two degrees Celsius may be too high. At 1.5 degrees or less, millions of people will be deprived of water and food and the complete melting of Greenland's ice will begin. We are at close to one Celsius degree today, and we need only to look out our windows or pick up a newspaper to see that severe climatic effects are already occurring.

Environment Canada says "Climate change could have a profound impact on the Canadian way of life." Changes in temperature and precipitation may help the survival of insect (vector) borne diseases, causing increases or invasions into Canada of diseases such as Lyme disease and malaria.

In the western mountain regions of B.C. and Alberta, there could be less late-season runoff because of an accelerated retreat of glaciers. This will threaten water supplies in small communities and have an effect on the cattle industry.

In the north, loss of permafrost may cause massive terrain slumping, drainage of small lakes and increased sediment loads in rivers, threatening northern wetlands and such deltas as the Mackenzie and Peace-Athabasca.

Water levels in the Great Lakes are forecast to drop by more than one metre. In shallow lakes such as Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie, the existing



shoreline would move up to six kilometres offshore from where it sits today.

Health Canada says climate change has become a global policy issue widespread environmental and human health impacts.

The widespread consensus is that climate change, and specifically changes to temperature and precipitation levels, has the potential to significantly affect human health, as well as economies, and physical and social environments in every region of the world including Canada.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming: climate change presents very serious global risks, and demands an urgent global response. Sectors at all levels are being challenged to find collective solutions to safeguard the planet ecosystem and the health of its inhabitants, while maintaining a reasonable quality of life for communities and individuals.

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Rich not contributing fair share

CCPA/CALM

More than a decade's worth of tax cuts have disproportionately lined the pockets of Canada's most affluent families, says a new tax study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The study finds the top one per cent of families in 2005 paid a lower total tax rate than the bottom 10 per cent of families. "Canada's tax system now fails a basic test of fairness," says Marc Lee, senior economist with the CCPA's B.C. office and author of the study. "Tax cuts have contributed to a slow and steady shift to a less progressive tax system in Canada."

The study, which is the first comprehensive review of tax changes at all levels of government in Canada in the past 15 years, finds the system is delivering larger tax savings for high income families. This reinforces the growing gap in market incomes between high income families and the rest of Canadians.

"Most Canadians will be surprised by these findings because they believe we have a

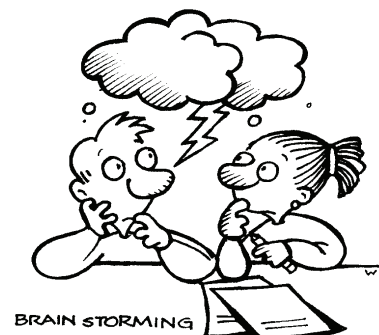
progressive tax system—but looking at all taxes combined, that's no longer the case."

Provincial tax cuts are the key culprit for the increasingly regressive nature of Canada's tax system but the problem has been made worse at the federal level with billions of dollars worth of post-2000 tax cuts.

The richest one per cent of taxpayers saw their tax rate drop by four percentage points between 1990 and 2005. Most Canadians saw their tax rate fall by two percentage points, but not so for the poorest 20 per cent of taxpayers, who pay three to five percentage points more in taxes.

Middle-income families pay about six percentage points more in total taxes than a family in the top one per cent.

Eroding Tax Fairness: Tax Incidence in Canada, 1990 to 2005 is available at www.growinggap.ca and www.policyalternatives.ca.



If you know someone at work or a family member who needs some help with a personal problem there are union members who can help. Contact Jayne or Barbie, Peer Referral Coordinators. Phone 1-888-468-9223 press 1 for Jayne and 2 for Barbie after connecting. All calls are confidential.