

Voices from the Floor

Volume 8, Issue 1

November-December 2007

Special points of interest:

- The next General Meeting will be on Saturday, January 26, 2008 at the New Westminster CAW Hall 326-12th Street at 9:30 am.

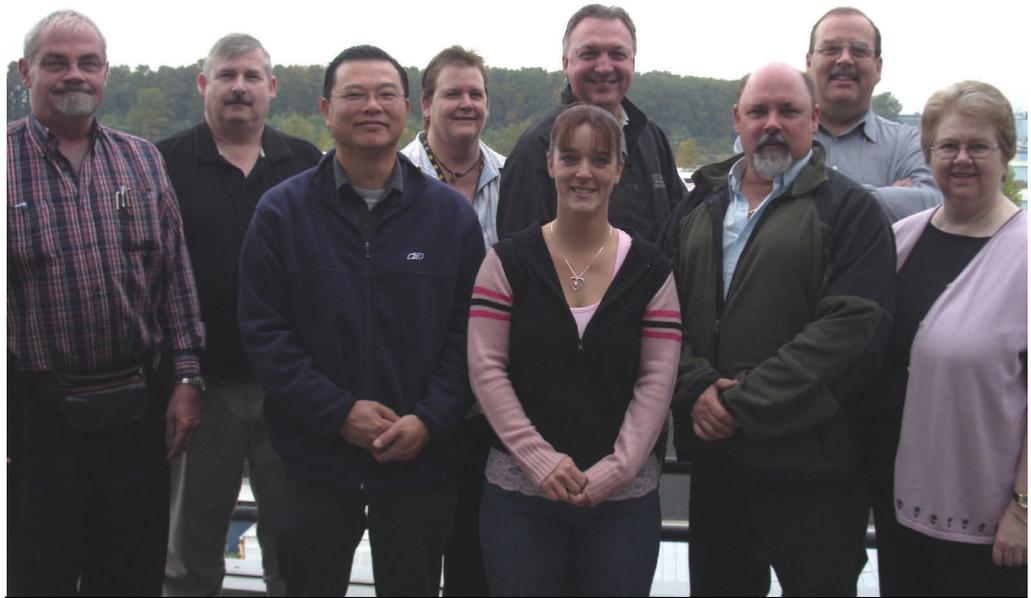
Editorial Policy: Letters and submissions are encouraged. The opinions expressed may not be those of either Local or the National Union.

Editor: Brother Darcy Suehn

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Local with the giving spirit



Front Row: Gord Piper, Jonathan Chan, Nathalie Pretty, Gord McGrath, Debbie Jaques
 Back Row: Bill Gaucher, Linda Jensen, Mark Misic and Harry Moon
 Not in photo: Cynthia Anderson. Photo by Darcy Suehn.

By Brother Darcy Suehn

Ever wonder what the Local's

Staff does with all that money they get paid? Well, since 1995

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Strike avoided at Viking Air

By Brother Darcy Suehn

It came down to the wire; in fact a tentative contract was reached just six minutes before the strike was due to begin at Viking Air,

Victoria, BC on Vancouver Island.

With an 86% Strike Vote, the bargaining Committee was well-positioned to reach a deal and reach one they did.

Labour Volunteers Clean Up at Silver Harbour Centre

Reprinted from "Year in Review", August, 2007 published by The Canadian Labour Congress-Labour Participation Department-United Way of the Lower Mainland.

A large group of United Way Labour volunteers showed up

early Monday, June 4th in North Vancouver, with their gardening tools and gear, to participate in the annual Vancouver Sun United Way Day of Caring. It was the seventh Day of Caring project for the group of Labour volunteers representing the Labour Committee of the Board, Campaign Labour Committee, the Vancouver & District and New Westminster & District Labour Council as well as various unions.

This year the group was matched with Silver Harbour Centre, a seniors recreation centre whose mission is to inspire and enhance the physical and mental well-being of adults over 55. The agency does this by offering over 60 different social, creative, educational and physical activities as well as many opportunities for volunteer participation. The agency was well prepared with a list of tasks to be completed. The weather dete-

riorated but this determined group of volunteers kept going, weeding, trimming, power-washing, planting and cleaning, until at the end of the day. The improvement was very satisfying to see.



CAW Participants: Brother Gord McGrath (Local President), Sister Linda Jensen (Local Rep), Sister Nathalie Pretty (Local Support Staff), Joanne Demmery (CAW/UFAWU), Sandi Brice (National Support Staff) and Bill Gaucher (Local Secretary-Treasurer) Photo provided.

United Way Labour volunteers have participated in a project each year since the inception of the Day of Caring program. Bill Gaucher, member of the Campaign Labour Committee summed it up by asking "Why wouldn't we? The initiative

provides union members with an opportunity to contribute to their community in a meaningful way by helping non-profit agencies complete projects which might otherwise not be completed. As a result of connecting with the agency directly, the Labour members also gain a greater understanding of the services in our communities"

Gaucher added, "This year we had the opportunity to meet with several of the agency's volunteers and see some programs in action. Once again, the project was busy, interesting and fun. We'll be back next year!"

Fact check on Brian Day, M.D.

by Michael McBane/Canadian Health Coalition/CALM 2007

Since Dr. Brian Day became president of the Canadian Medical Association this past summer his claims about Canada's health care system have been widely reported—claims that are not supported by evidence. Day is president and CEO of Cambie Surgeries Corporation in Vancouver and is an outspoken advocate of private, for-profit medicine. He called on the Romanow Commission in 2002 to repeal the Canada Health Act, increase privatization and contracting-out, introduce user fees and de-insure services.

The following is a fact check on claims Day made.

Claim: "The Canadian health system has been ranked 30th in the world by the World Health Organization."

Fact: The 2000 World Health Organization study presented a misleading representation of health care systems including Canada's. The WHO abandoned this ranking system because of seriously flawed methodology.

Claim: "At \$4,400 per capita [Canada] is the most expensive of all countries that offer universal coverage."

Fact: Canada's per capita spending in 2004 was \$3,165. It is above the OECD average but below Norway, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. The U.S. spent \$6,100 per capita in 2004.

Claim: "In Canada 65 per cent of sick children wait a medically unacceptable period of time."

Fact: There is no evidence for this claim.

Claim: "The assertion that our single-payer system is administratively efficient is hogwash."

Fact: Before Canada introduced a single-payer system, spending in Canada and the U.S. was escalating in parallel. After 30 years of single-payer administration, Canada now spends almost 50 per cent less than what Americans spend (9.9 per cent of GDP in Canada vs. 15.2 per cent in the U.S.) while providing equal or better care. All Canadians are covered while the U.S. has 46

million citizens with no coverage.

Claim: "In our country a dog can get a hip replacement in under a week, but a human may wait two years."

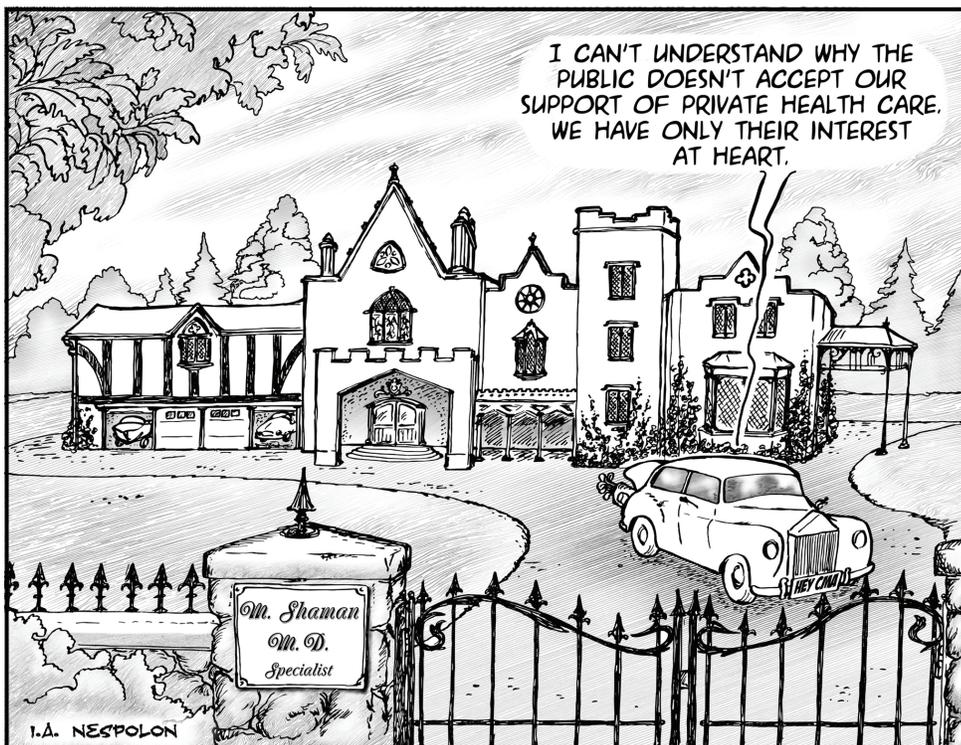
Fact: Access to veterinary care for animals is based on ability to pay. Dogs are put down if their owners can't pay. Access to care should not be based on ability to pay.

Claim: "All other models of universal health care differed from the Canadian model in one fundamental way: They did not exclude competition from the private sector. Canada shared this distinction with just one other country—North Korea"

Fact: Thirty per cent of what Canadians spend on health care is private expenditure. Canada is below the OECD average on public health care spending. The argument that private for-profit health care does not play a significant role in Canada is false.

Claim: "At the [Cambie Surgery] Centre we spend only 30 per cent of our gross revenue on wages and salaries, compared with 70 per cent in the public hospitals, yet we pay our nurses more."

Fact: Peer-reviewed evidence shows that for-profit



all of the Office Staff have participated in a program that sees them donate a minimum of one day's pay towards the Annual United Way Campaign. This year the Local will increase our matching donation to a maximum of two days in recognition of the fact that many Staff members are already doing this, and some are already donating three days pay. So how much money are we talking about? This year those Staff donations meant over \$10,000 and, since 1995, over \$62,000! Not bad when you remember we have only nine Staff.

October 23rd was the fifth year in a row that the

CAW Hall played host to the United Way Pancake Breakfast, which raises funds for Lower Mainland Food Banks. According to Brother Bill Gaucher, Local Secretary-Treasurer and a Labour Board Member for the United Way, "This year's event raised \$217.00 in donations."

Now that alone could be the story, but wait, there's more! Anyone who has ever called the Local or come into the Office likely will have met Sister Deb Jaques, who has been involved with the Terry Fox Run since 2002, making this year her sixth year. What you may not know is that

since 2002, Sister Jaques estimates she has raised \$7000 and for the last two years she has been the number one fundraiser for the Run in New Westminster, accounting for 17% of all the funds raised in her region. "I can be a very persuasive fundraiser," she explains with a note of pride.

Sister Jaques and Sister Carole Lee, retired CAW National Support Staff, are part of a group called Alpha Iota Sorority that holds fundraising events throughout the year in support of a range of projects. At this time of year they are getting ready to put together Christmas Hampers for four fami-

lies and funding Christmas dinners at the Union Gospel Mission. But it's not just about money. Throughout the year the Sisters collect things like personal care products such as unused hotel soaps and shampoos, some from our Staff who travel to serve

members outside the Lower Mainland, and donate these much-needed products to Monarch Place, a New Westminster Transition House for women and children fleeing violence in the home. Some of the collected products also end up at the First United Church, helping the homeless in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. That is, how-



Left to right: **F.F.A.R.T.** Team photo: Allura and Cynthia Anderson (Local Rep), Murray Gore (formerly Local Organizer now CAW National Organizer) and Anne Davidson (CAW Area Director) Photo by Darcy Suehn

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ever, only a very short list of the many groups that benefit from Alpha Iota Sorority's work. The Local is also a supporter of the CAW/ UFAWU's Protein for People Campaign that raises funds to purchase Union made canned wild Pacific Coast Salmon to put into BC Food Banks. One event that draws attention to this program is the 6th Annual New Westminster and District Labour Council's 'Chilli Cook-Off,' which was held at the CAW Hall again this year. The CAW team entry, photo inset, named Fossil Fuel Alternative Research Team (F.F.A.R.T.), is based on the theory held that methane gas, a natural but not necessarily harmless by-product of chilli consumption, could be used to off-set fossil fuel use and thereby reduce the effects of Global Warming. However, the on-going research is still up in the air. Meanwhile, our own Brother Bart Healy tended the 'refreshment stand' at the 'Chilli Cook-Off' event and helped out wherever needed.

As always, members attending the Local's General Meetings are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for the Food Bank. In the coming editions of *Voices*, you can read about other members of our Local who are active in various charities, and if you know someone that you think we should talk to, please contact me at the Local.

In the next edition: learn more about Variety Children's Charity and one very involved member, Brother Eric Phillips, as we get closer to the Annual Variety Club "Show of Hearts Telethon," which will be held February 16 and 17, 2008, on Global TV.



(Continued from page 3)

investor-owned facilities skimp on staff and patients are at risk as a result. Where is the rest of Cambie's revenue going? Profits.

Claim: "In striking down the existing laws, the judges said, "The evidence shows that delays in the public health care system are widespread and patients die as a result of waiting lists for public health care.... the courts have a duty to rise above political debate."

Fact: The Supreme Court of Canada's *Chaoulli* decision recognized that failure to ensure timely access to care endangers Canadians' well-being. But the remedy must be to ensure access for all—not just for those who can afford to pay for private care. Three dissenting judges warned that the Charter should not be used to roll back benefits enjoyed by all Canadians, especially the poor.

Claim: "Health care is approaching 50 per cent of all spending in the provinces."

Fact: Health care spending is rising as a percentage of provincial budgets because of tax cuts and cuts to other program spending. Health care spending as a percentage of the economy is stable and takes up the same share of national income as 25 years ago—approximately four per cent of GDP for hospitals and physicians. Why would someone concerned about rising costs advocate transferring cost from governments back on to patients and private insurance?

Claim: "The coming changes will create a massive new industry and enable the Canadian health industry and its workers to enter the international health market and participate in the \$2 trillion U.S. health economy. On the basis of extrapolations from other countries, we may see \$40 billion a year added to the Canadian health system."

Fact: There is a lot of money to be made by wrecking medicare in Canada. But how is it in the public interest to drive up spending to U.S. levels? If current levels of health care spending are said to be unsustainable why would one advocate spending an additional \$40 billion a year?

Michael McBane is the National Coordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition in Ottawa. He was assisted in researching this article by members of Canadian Doctors for medicare. www.medicare.ca

Climate change threatens public health

From CALM 2007
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 diseases, and cancer risks from ozone depletion."

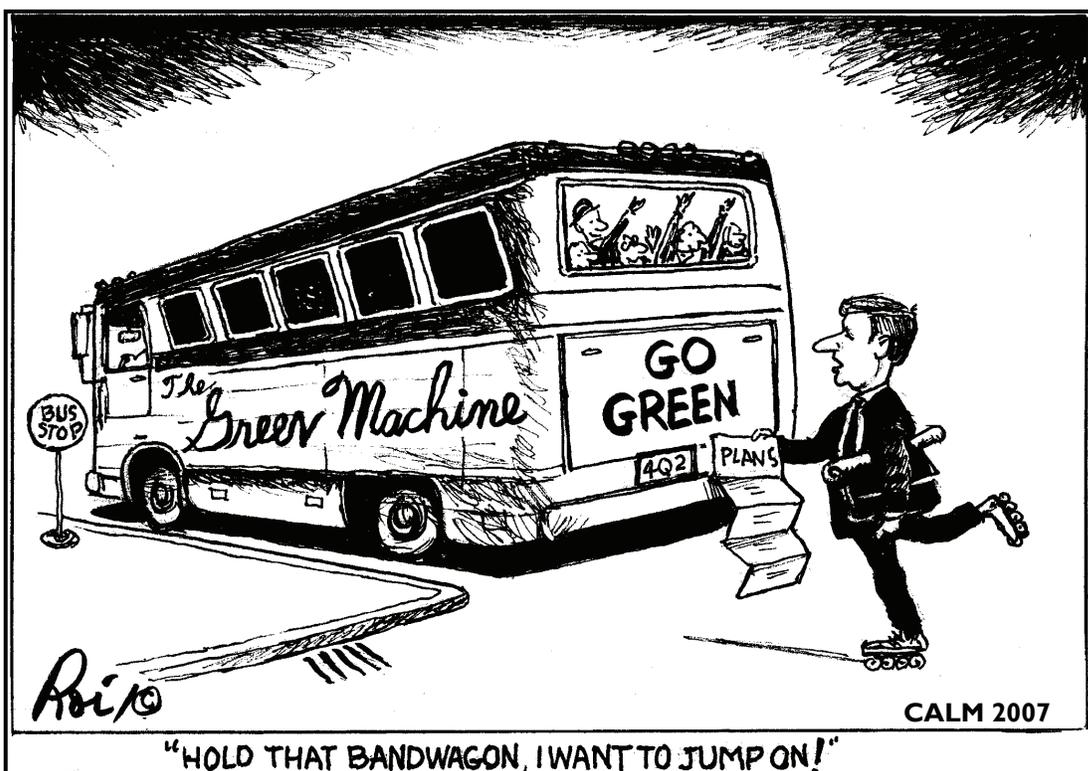
The experts also noted that "Climate change will place greater demands on the social infrastructure (including emergency services and social support systems) supporting public health and well-being."

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 rises by 4.5 degrees, shifting rainfall patterns will bring perpetual drought to most of the world's major breadbaskets



(the north India plain, the Chinese river valleys, the U.S. Midwest, the Nile watershed), and reduce global food production by 25–50 per cent. If it goes to six degrees we lose most 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

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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.

Wieser Lock says good-bye

By Brother Darcy Suehn.

In a bitter sweet ceremony held on Saturday, June 23rd the last four members out of Wieser Lock said goodbye to the CAW. After twenty-five years the Wieser Lock certification was voluntarily withdrawn with the consent of the last four active members. At one time Wieser employed over 500 workers at its Burnaby plant but with the passage of the Free Trade Agreement that was about to change.

By the mid-1990's the plant located on Beresford Avenue in South Burnaby had been closed down and the jobs exported to Mexico. All that was left by 2000 was a small distribution centre on North Fraser Way with less than ten employees. In 2005 Wieser was purchased by Black and Decker and the transformation was nearing competition.

As bargaining approached earlier this year Sister Linda Jensen, the group's Local Union Rep, was approached by the Company about decertifying the group and working out some kind of settlement. After getting the four remaining members together it was decided to decertify a group that had voted to join CAIMAW Local 14 back in 1976 which in turn voted to join the CAW in 1991 to become CAW Local 3014.



George Dundas, Cathy Rennie, Angraj (Angie) Braich, Linda Warden, Gord McGrath and Linda Jensen . Photo by Darcy Suehn

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Ph: 250-384-4423 or 1-800-665-1950

The Editor:
Fax: (604) 524-0419
Email: gdsuehn@shaw.ca



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Life lessons

Internet/CALM

Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
Always keep your words soft and sweet—in case you have to eat them.
If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
Never buy a car you can't push.
Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because you won't have a leg to stand on.
Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep

late.
The second mouse gets the cheese.
Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once.
A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
We can learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colours, but they all live in the same box.



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.