

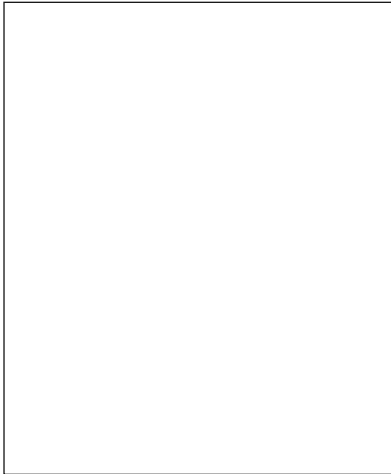


# Impact

SEPTEMBER 2008

COMPENSATION EMPLOYEES' UNION

## New business agent joins CEU staff



Susan Epp

Susan Epp started working as a business agent for the CEU in early June.

Before joining the CEU, Susan worked for the 26,000 member BCNU (British Columbia Nurses' Union). Her first job there was as a labour relations officer. Her duties included

working on many areas such as grievances, harassment investigations, workplace accommodations, and health and safety issues.

When she left the BCNU, Susan was a coordinator of negotiations and servicing. She was responsible for negotiations and providing leadership, strategic planning, staff development, and mentoring in all areas of labour relations to all levels of the union.

Before she joined the BCNU staff, Susan trained and worked as a nurse. She has experience in surgical, medical, critical care, orthopedic, and community nursing. She was also an activist in the BCNU before becoming a member of the BCNU staff.

Susan got her activist experience in the eighties, the decade the BCNU became a full-fledged independent union. Until then, it had been the labour relations section of the Registered Nurses' Association of British Columbia (RNABC). (The RNABC is the licensing body for nurses in British Columbia.)

Susan started working at the BCNU in 1991. The nineties was the decade that current BCNU president

Debra McPherson says the union re-organized "...to make use of the strength of our membership...making a membership driven organization a reality". ("BCNU: Twenty-five years strong", 2006, p. 3).

In addition to her Diploma in Nursing, Susan has a Diploma in Business Administration from the British Columbia Institute of Technology and a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University.

When it comes to her views on life and work, Susan believes it is important to invest in people. "At the end of the day people are what make an organization successful. We need to nurture people so that they excel."

Susan places a lot of importance on tending to and cultivating relationships. An important part of tending to relationships is listening. "How we do is directly related to our ability to listen. Sometimes in the labour movement we are too busy admonishing the employer that we forget how we say things can affect the relationships we have. The danger in advocacy can be that we get so caught up in it, we don't listen to or we forget about the concerns of the other party. We need to engage in ways that are supportive of the relationship, and allow us to achieve our objectives."

Although Susan has not yet had the opportunity to solidify her views on the CEU, she made this observation: "Unlike many other unions, the CEU only deals with one employer. This can be an advantage because it gives both

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### ***New business agent joins CEU staff con't***

sides the opportunity to develop their relationship."

When she's not working, Susan likes to go hiking. One of her toughest "hikes" was to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain peak, in January 2007.

Kilimanjaro is also the world's highest free standing, snow-covered equatorial mountain, and as such looks like a snow-covered cone rising out of the green rainforest. Although Susan does a lot of hiking, she doesn't regularly climb mountains! The air pressure at the top of Kilimanjaro is about 40 percent of that found at sea level, so many climbers suffer and even die from altitude sickness. Susan described the climb as "quite grueling" but well worth the effort. The climb was part of a trip which fulfilled a life-long dream of travelling to Africa.

For about 15 years, Susan was a volunteer for the Children's International Summer Villages (CISV). As described in its web site, CISV is "...a charitable, independent, non-political, volunteer organization promoting peace education and cross-cultural

friendship." CISV is founded on the "... belief that peace is possible through friendship – and that the real difference can be made by starting with children."

CISV volunteers organize international camps and exchange programs of up to 28 days in length for people aged 11 and up from 60 countries. Participants learn about each other's similarities and celebrate their differences. These camps and programs typically occur during the summer seasons.

Susan is a former president of the Vancouver CISV chapter. In her many years of volunteering, Susan has hosted activities, found sites for the camps, coordinated the camps, hired staff, raised funds, and obtained produce from farmers. As she describes it, she has done "anything and everything" needed to run a camp. She says working with the CISV camps has been very satisfying. The camps have also made a difference in her daughter's life. Because of her participation in CISV, Susan says her daughter has friends all over the world.

## **Update on CMS redundancies**

The Working Group is continuing to work on issues related to CMS redundancies. (The Working Group is a sub-group of the Reorganization Committee created under article 70 of the collective agreement. See "CMS redundancies: vacancy placement is underway", Impact, July 2008 for more information.)

### **Vacancy placement**

In July, we told you there were about 40 employees in redundant positions needing new jobs through vacancy placement. We're pleased to report that number is now down to 15 (as of August 25, 2008). The process is working well. We have occasionally been held up by vacation schedules, as we are placing employee by seniority. Given that CMS is now expected to "go live" in the first quarter of 2009, we expect that all placements will be completed before that time.

### **Administrative processes for temporary employees**

In July, we also reported on the MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) the CEU and Board signed which should help many temps maintain employment. The Board is now developing administrative processes to put this agreement into effect. These include processes for administering the layoff and recall lists and a means for

temps on layoff to find out about and apply for positions. The Board will be consulting with the CEU on these processes through the Working Group.

### **Ending RLTT assignments**

The ending of RLTTs is perhaps the most difficult piece of work, which flows from CMS redundancies, left to do. Employees will be released from RLTTs in reverse seniority order. The "unwinding" of an RLTT assignment will start a chain of events (similar to the falling of dominos) with permanent employees returning to their permanent jobs, or temporary employees getting a new temp assignment, or being laid off. While the RLTTs have provided a place for permanent employees in redundant positions "to land", we know that the unwinding process will be difficult and frustrating for many people. As we said in the December 2007 Impact article, "Why are there so many RLTT positions", the root cause of the frustration is not the fact that we have RLTTs, but rather that the Board chose to develop a new computer system. As we unwind the RLTTs, we need to recognize that this type of change is difficult for most of us and not take out our frustrations on each other.

# Support for the PCC is growing

Over the last several months, many individuals and unions have joined the Public Compensation Coalition (PCC). This is the public campaign that the CEU launched in 2007 to educate stakeholders and the public about the value of a public workers' compensation system that lives up to the promise of the historic compromise. (See "CEU public campaign now underway", "Impact", March 2007.)

## Unions back up support with dollars

Many unions have backed their support with financial donations to the PCC. For example, CUPE BC, the BC division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents about 120,000 workers in BC, donated \$5,000. The CUPE BC executive made the donation at the request of their OH&S committee.

The 60,000 member BCGEU (British Columbia Government and Services Employees' Union) has also donated \$5,000 to the PCC.

The BCTF (British Columbia Teachers' Federation) has made a major "in-kind" donation by distributing PCC information to the local teachers' associations that make up the BCTF. They have also published an article about the PCC in their union newsletter. These publicity efforts have the potential to inform 41,000 BCTF members about the coalition's goals and activities. In her letter endorsing the work of the PCC, BCTF President Lanzinger particularly expressed support for the current PCC campaign: "British Columbia's teachers applaud your efforts to restore loss of earnings benefits and pensions to

permanently injured workers."

The PCC has also received donations from smaller unions ranging from \$150 to \$400. These include the CCAA (Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association), the IBEW, Local 1003 (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), and the ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union), Local 400, which represents towboat workers.

Two major health sector unions are also endorsing the

PCC. Fred Muzin, President of the 43,000 member HEU (Hospital Employees' Union) said, "Thank you very much for the work that the Coalition is doing on behalf of all workers...", in his letter of support. The other major health sector union that has joined the coalition is the 15,000 member HSA (Health Sciences Association). In his letter of support, President Reid Johnson wrote: "We

hope that we will be able to work together to achieve the goal of a healthy and fair compensation system for British Columbians in the future."

## The PCC participates in many events

The PCC has been busy attending labour events throughout the province over the last several months. The PCC was promoted and was well received at the CLC (Canadian Labour Congress) Winter School in Harrison in early 2008. (The Winter School is the major educational program that the CLC runs annually for the BC labour movement.) The PCC display booth in the "Union Label Trade Show" was visited by many activists and PCC printed information was distributed to each Winter School participant. PCC presentations were given in six

**injured workers pension pulltab!**

**Name: SUSAN**  
**Profession: Personal Care Aide**

Susan is a 37 year-old personal care aide earning \$34,000 per year. While leaving the house of a client, she slips on an icy sidewalk, badly injuring a disc in her lower back. Susan is no longer able to handle the heavy lifting at her job. She secures another job as a light housekeeper that pays only \$20,000 per year. Susan lives to age 85.

	BENEFITS TO AGE 65	BENEFITS AFTER 65	TOTAL BENEFITS PAID TO AGE 85
<b>under the old legislation</b>	Loss of earnings pension \$875 / month	Loss of earnings pension \$875 / month	\$504,000
<b>under the new legislation</b>	5% Permanent Impairment Benefit \$94 / month	One Time Payout \$1,553	\$32,613

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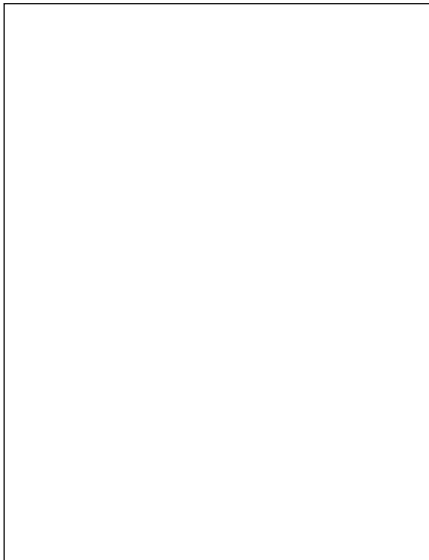
[www.publiccompensation.ca](http://www.publiccompensation.ca)

**Support for the PCC is growing con't**

classes. Overall, this event brought the PCC to the attention of more than 1,000 individual union activists and dozens of unions.

CEU Business Agent and PCC Coordinator Deborah Payment participated in two Day of Mourning events. She was asked by the organizers of both events to highlight the PCC's work in her remarks. One event was organized by the Vancouver Labour Council and the BC Federation of Labour. The other event was organized by the New Westminster and District Labour Council (NWDLC). This ceremony was held in Burnaby's City Council chambers. Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan presented a proclamation recognizing this annual event as community members looked on.

Photo by Michelle Boudreau



**Deborah Payment at  
Burnaby's Day of Mourning**

Some organizations have been actively promoting the PCC campaign for some time. For example, the NWDLC does an annual presentation to all of the city councils in their jurisdiction, in which they raise issues of concern to labour. They prepare a scripted speech and then assign various activists to visit each council. This year they focused much of that speech on the PCC campaign.

In May, Deborah also put on a workshop at a CEP

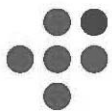
(Communications, Energy & Paperworkers' Union) health and safety conference.

The PCC has also presented at events and meetings hosted by the CUPW (Canadian Union of Postal Workers) and the CPAA.

Deborah sums up the PCC's work to date in this way: "As a result of all these activities, many new contacts have been established, which will continue to generate requests for more presentations and materials. We are experiencing solid growth in awareness and support of the PCC's goals. We receive a warm welcome everywhere we go and we are repeatedly recognized and thanked for our efforts."

**Major Coalition Allies**

- B.C. Federation of Labour
- B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- BCGEU Component 6 (Social, Information and Health)
- CUPE BC (Canadian Union of Public Employees)
- CUPE Local 116 UBC Employees
- CUPE Vancouver Island District Council
- CUPE Local 50 (Victoria)
- Hospital Employees' Union
- British Columbia Teachers' Federation
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSA)
- BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1003 (Kootenays)
- ILWU Local 500 (International Longshore & Warehouse Union)
- Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association
- Canadian Postmasters & Assistants Association
- ILWU Local 400, Marine Section
- COPE 378 (Canadian Office & Professional Employees)



OUR HEALTH • OUR SAFETY

**Public Compensation Coalition**

**778.330.1600**

INFO@PUBLICCOMPENSATION.CA

# Know Your Collective Agreement

## Leaves you might not know about

At 234 pages, 74 articles, six schedules, two appendixes, and 25 letters of understanding, it's not surprising if you're not familiar with all the rights and benefits contained in the collective agreement. The CEU has been able to negotiate many leaves of absence which most employees know about, and many have used. For example, the five years to care and nurture children (article 35.09) and the self-funded, one-year leave through salary deferral (article 35.10) This column identifies some of the lesser known articles which also allow you to take time off at important times in your life, in some cases with pay. You may not need to use all of these articles during your work life, but when you do, you'll appreciate that you can.

### **Jury and witness duty (article 41)**

When you are called to sit on a jury or are subpoenaed to testify at a legal proceeding, (provided you aren't the plaintiff, defendant, or accused), you will be granted a leave of absence with pay to perform this civic duty. When on such leave, if you are excused before the end of the day, you must return to work if it is still early enough to perform more than two hours of work.

You must submit any jury and witness fees you receive to Human Resources except for that portion of the fees in excess of five calendar days per week. The excess fees don't have to be submitted to the Board because your regular wages are based on a five-day work week.

### **Blood and bone marrow donations (article 42)**

If you need to be a blood donor for a close relative, to fulfill a request from the Canadian Blood Services, or to donate bone marrow, you are entitled to a leave with pay for three days. If you need more than three days, you can use sick leave.

### **Armed Forces Reserve (article 46)**

You may request an unpaid leave for a maximum of 10 working days per calendar year to attend training camps if you are a member of the Armed Forces Reserve, the part time component of the Canadian Armed Forces. Reservists are required to take the same levels of training to quality for their trades and ranks as do regular soldiers. This often involves attending training courses or exercises

of two weeks or more at least once a year.

In 2007, the CEU and the Board were awarded the Canadian Forces Liaison Council's Award of Excellence for Best Practices in Employer Support—Public Sector, for including this leave in the collective agreement.

### **Leave to write examinations (article 40.01)**

You are entitled to take leave with pay to write examinations to improve your qualifications. To be eligible, the connection between the course and Board operations must be positive and direct. You should provide at least 10 working days' written notice of your need for leave. Your leave will be for the actual time involved writing the exam, not for the time you need to study for the exam. (If you need time to study, you can request an unpaid leave under article 35 or request vacation or ETO time.)

### **Leave for full-time public duties (article 35.07)**

You will be granted leave without pay for a maximum of 90 days if you decide to seek office in a municipal, provincial, or federal election. If you are elected to a public office requiring full-time duties, you will be granted leave without pay for a maximum of five years.

### **Secondment to another employer (article 71)**

Article 71 permits the Board to assign you to another agency, board, society, commission, or employer. This is referred to as a "secondment". The Board's Leave of Absence Policy says the work experience from a secondment "...must enhance an employee's value to the Board, or meet another Board objective."

Examples are rare. Several years ago an Occupational Safety Officer was seconded to the BC Employment Standards Branch. Secondments can provide an opportunity to work in an area of special interest for a limited time. (General leaves without pay under article 35.03 can't be used to temporarily work for another employer).

If the Board wants to second you to another employer, but you don't want to go, the article protects you. Secondments can't take place without your agreement. Your wages and benefits are also protected under article 71.02.

# Feds get failing grade on child care

The Canadian Labour Congress gave the federal government a failing grade for its lack of action on giving working parents more access to affordable, quality child care spaces.

CLC executive vice-president Barbara Byers released a full set of report cards, grading the provinces and the federal government on their performance.

Based on data provided by governments, the report cards measured progress in three areas:

- Affordability, measured by what child care services cost
- Quality, measured by the salaries paid the child care staff
- Accessibility, measured by the creation of new public child care spaces.

Manitoba scored the highest mark, with a grade of B+. The lowest mark, a D-, was awarded to B.C. The federal government got an "incomplete".

"They aren't getting the job done for working parents. Fees are going up. New spaces are being created at a much slower pace. Wages for child care workers continue to range from fair to far too low. Provincial governments could do so much more if the federal government was there with stable, predictable funding and support," said Byers.

"The vast majority of today's Canadian moms are working moms. More than 65 percent of women with children under three years old work outside the home.

Meanwhile, 75 percent of women with pre-school kids (between three and five years old) are in the paid workforce."

Despite this clear demand for services, says Byers, only 16 percent of children in Canada had access to a regulated child care space in 2004.

Quebec was not included in the CLC survey because of that province's advanced child care and early learning services. With just 22 percent of Canada's children, Quebec accounts for 45 percent of the country's total regulated child care spaces and 78 percent of the total increase in public funding since 2001.

The report cards are part of the CLC's "Equality! Once and for All!" campaign. For more information, visit [www.onceandforall.ca](http://www.onceandforall.ca).

Source: CLC/CALM

## Why BC got a D- grade for child care

- Subsidies do not make child care affordable for all unless parent fees are capped at reasonable rates. Between 2001 and 2006, average full time fees for children aged three to five increased by \$672/year (from \$5,928 to \$6,600).
- About 75 percent of BC mothers are in the labour force, but there are only enough regulated spaces for 14 percent of children.

Source: *Child Care Report Card: British Columbia*, [www.onceandforall.ca](http://www.onceandforall.ca)

## A few more facts about child care

- Canada's investment in childcare ranked last in a survey of 14 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. Those above Canada include France, the UK, USA, Korea, and Ireland. While the OECD recommends countries invest one percent of GDP on child care, Canada's investment only reaches 0.3 percent of GDP.
- Even though 67 percent of child care workers have a post-secondary qualification, their average, full-time all year income is less than \$22,000 per year. This makes child care workers one of the lowest-paid skilled jobs.
- One in six children in Canada (16 percent) lives in poverty. More than 50 percent of female lone parents are poor. Access to dependable, affordable child care can help mothers improve the lives of their families. It allows them to train for jobs, and to get decent jobs, which benefits us all.

Source: *Child Care: it should be Child's Play*, [www.onceandforall.ca](http://www.onceandforall.ca)

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