

CCU CONNECTIONS

Voice of the Confederation of Canadian Unions

Spring 2020



LIFE AFTER COVID

How the "New Normal" will affect health care,
the economy and workers' rights

LIFE AFTER COVID:

How the “New Normal” Can Be Better than the Old Standard

BY CCU PRESIDENT
KELLY JOHNSON



During the second week of March 2020, I was in Vancouver at the PPWC (Public and Private Workers of Canada) biennial convention, right before most of the planet was placed in lockdown because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Everything seemed relatively normal then. We thought we were doing enough when hand sanitizer lotion was provided to each delegate. Then the media reports came in, examining the rapid expansion of the strange, misunderstood illness, the economic crash and bailouts, and finally, the stay-at-home orders. Almost three months later, and we now understand how devastating COVID-19 has become. As of June 2020, there are 6.1 million cases worldwide, with over 370,000 deaths, and the number continues to climb. In Canada, there are more than 90,000 cases and over 7,200 deaths.

Just as well, the desolation of the global and Canadian economies continues. Unemployment in Canada now stands at 13%, with two million workers losing their jobs in April 2020 alone. In mid-March, the CCU called on the federal and provincial governments to immediately implement a set of policies that would protect workers' health, ensure their rights and safety, and

just as importantly, stop the spread of the illness.

This included providing paid sick leave and extra funds to workers on the front lines, including health and medical workers, allowing more flexible work arrangements, assisting Indigenous communities, providing additional funding to our health care system, and additional income relief for those who have lost their jobs or have lost work hours, and demand that landlords, banks and other financial institutions relax rent and mortgage payments, among others.

Some of these ideas were implemented, others half-heartedly, and some were tragically ignored. It is unknown when COVID-19 will finally be conquered, or even if some kind of cure will be found at all. Nonetheless, Canada's economy, based on rising income and wealth inequality, wage stagnation, underfunded social programs and an endangered environment, cannot go back to the way it was. That won't work.

In order to protect the gains workers have won during the past decades, and more importantly, save lives, we need a new normal based on workers' rights, economic democracy and social justice.

To begin, the government should prepare to make additional expenditures to kick-start the economy and lift us out of

recession. This doesn't mean bailing out banks, giant corporations or executives. It means extending financial supports to the unemployed and working people, and genuine small businesses.

Billions of dollars a year are already spent on corporate welfare to some of the most profitable and richest businesses in the country. This could instead be used to fund environmentally-friendly forms of energy production, construct more public transportation, and retrofit buildings, creating good-paying, unionized jobs throughout the country. It's yet another win-win situation that would protect our environment and build an economy for the future all at the same time.

Also, additional infrastructure spending must be made available to Indigenous communities, which even before the COVID pandemic, already lacked even basic necessities and suffered from exceedingly high rates of poverty.

This new normal also means adding much-needed billions of dollars to health care, education and other important services like childcare, social housing and transportation. After three decades of cutbacks at both the federal and provincial levels, Canadians have had enough.

To provide high-quality care to an aging population, Canada will need more doctors, nurses and hospital beds. That's obvious. But in order to fight future pandemics, partially a symptom of an ever-

2020 PLAN B

increasing globalized economy, we'll also need emergency funds set aside as well.

This also includes creating something the CCU has been repeatedly calling for: a national, publicly-owned and controlled Pharmacare program. Saving lives in the future, whether during a pandemic or not, will ultimately depend on the provision of affordable prescription drugs to all Canadians, and Pharmacare will do just that.

And speaking particularly of COVID-19 and its effects on the health care system, the CCU is also calling for long-term care facilities to be taken out of the hands of private corporations and instead placed under public ownership and control. After decades of privatization and deregulation, private, for-profit ownership of long-term care in Canada has been a litany of poor service, corner-cutting, chronic underfunding, price gouging and other forms of corporate profiteering.

Private long-term care has been an utter disaster, all of which has been made abundantly clear during the COVID pandemic, where over four out of every five deaths from the illness are connected to long-term care homes, according to Ryerson University and confirmed by none other than Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam.

It shows, once again, that for vital public services, whether it be education, childcare, social housing, transportation, pharmaceutical drugs, and especially

health care delivery, profit isn't the cure. It's the disease, and it needs to end now.

The funding needed for this additional infrastructure and social program spending will come from those who can best afford it. After decades of tax cuts to corporations and the very wealthy, and billions of dollars being hidden away in tax havens (all supposedly to “create jobs”), Canada must once and for all create a progressive taxation system based on ability to pay.

Opinion polls show most Canadians agree with us on these issues. According to recent research by Abacus Data, almost two-thirds of Canadians say

“After decades of privatization and deregulation, private, for-profit ownership of long-term care in Canada has been a litany of poor service, corner-cutting, chronic underfunding, price gouging and other forms of corporate profiteering. Private long-term care has been an utter disaster.”

they want governments to spend whatever is required to rebuild and stimulate the economy.

75% support implementing a wealth tax of 1% to 2% of the value of assets of Canada's wealthiest people to help pay for the recovery, and 81% believe that companies receiving government assistance should be required not to use foreign tax havens, and not use the money for excessive salaries, share buybacks, or increasing dividends.

After the Great Depression and the Second World War, millions of soldiers returned home and through the labour movement, fought for and won the rights we enjoy today, including collective bargaining, public education, universal health care, women's rights and public pensions, among many others.

This is the next chapter of that same struggle. We all now stand at a crossroads. With developing technologies and commitments to a living wage, universal access to public services, environmental sustainability, and public ownership and democratic control of our economy, we can come out of this crisis together and change Canada and the world, eliminating disease, mass inequality, hunger and poverty forever.

Just like COVID 19, we will one day throw all of it into the bust bin of history. It is possible we may see all this in our lifetime, and that is something worth fighting for. ■



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Spring 2020

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FAKE Art



High Tech Organizing Today

Jim Streb is a former President of the Confederation of Canadian Unions



It isn't important right now if you think the current Covid-19 pandemic is a hoax by the Chinese government to attack the U.S., or the first of what may be numerous zoonotic pandemics, what seems impossible to dismiss is that our daily lives have been changed. While it is likely that some return to a more normal existence will eventually occur, that existence is unlikely to be what we remember from last year.

The challenge then is how we respond to what we will soon have. The government response to the global pandemic has demonstrated several stark facts. Some of the occupations that we have come to disregard are in fact critical; some of the care facilities for our most vulnerable citizens are woefully lacking; international trade can create extreme vulnerabilities; health care is plagued by racial and economic inequalities; and lack of adequate preparation can be deadly.

Looking forward to a calmer time, what can trade unions do to prepare for the post-pandemic world? It seems that the need to increase efforts to organize is becoming more

obvious. Workers at senior health care facilities, smaller grocery stores, delivery and transit drivers, and early childhood education workers, among a host of others, need the protections of union membership more than ever. So what can affiliates of the CCU, and the CCU itself, do?

I would suggest that we have a great opportunity: we can adopt the technology that has become so common during this shutdown. Imagine a Zoom meeting with potential members. It would even be possible to organize a membership drive meeting with potential members across the country simultaneously.

"We can adopt the technology that has become so common during this shutdown. Imagine a Zoom meeting with potential members. It would even be possible to organize a membership drive meeting with potential members across the country simultaneously."

When the CCU was assisting the Canadian Union of Transportation Employees in the 1990s, one of the problems was that the workers were located coast to coast to coast. We spent many hours on the road, and in motels, trying to contact as many of these workers as possible. That might not be needed initially anymore. Most of what we did then could have been done with a number of online meetings in a fraction of the time and a fraction of the cost, without compromising current isolation protocols.

Thanks to Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, Google Docs, and others, unions have a variety of tools to assist in the initial

stages of organizing. Using such tools in addition to QR code generators, it is now possible to distribute links to organizing documents, information fact sheets, FAQ's, or even just union history, without ever displaying evidence that an organizing drive is underway. It might be possible to coordinate an entire drive up to the gathering of signatures without the employer knowing. And don't overlook the power of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as a way of increasing your union's profile among prospective new members!

Nothing can replace the signing of cards, and I'm not suggesting that it could. But initial contact, distribution of information about the organizing union, answers to frequently asked questions, determining enthusiasm, building committees, and explaining the process to prospective new members might be done in completely new ways. By giving more workers access to union resources and increasing the ease with which unions can demonstrate the advantages of membership to those workers who need us now, we have an opportunity to overcome the current situation while improve the lives of others. Let's seize the moment. ■



photo: Bart Heird

International Solidarity Report

May Day has its origins with workers and their trade unions internationally for solidarity between working people in their struggles to win fair employment standards. The date was chosen in 1889 for political reasons by the Marxist International Socialist Congress, which met in Paris and established the Second International as a successor to the earlier International Workingmen's Association.



Dawn Burns is the CCU International Affairs Correspondent and a YUSA Steward

They adopted a resolution for a “great international demonstration” in support of working-class demands for the eight-hour day. The date had been chosen by the American Federation of Labor to continue an earlier campaign for the eight-hour day in the United States, which had culminated in the Haymarket affair, which occurred in Chicago on 4 May 1886. May Day subsequently became an annual event.

Here are some examples of how International Workers' Day is celebrated throughout the world:

ALGERIA - 1 May is a public holiday and is celebrated as Labour Day.

EGYPT - 1 May is known as Labour Day and is considered a paid holiday. The President of Egypt traditionally presides over the official May Day celebrations.

GHANA - 1 May is a holiday in Ghana. It is celebrated with a parade by trade unions and labour associations. The parades are normally addressed by the Secretary General of the trade union congress and by regional secretaries in the regions.

KENYA - 1 May is a public holiday and celebrated as Labour Day. Events are addressed by the leaders of the workers' umbrella union body – the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU). The Minister for Labour (and occasionally the President) addresses the workers. Each year, the government approves (and increases) the minimum wage on Labour Day.

NIGERIA - Since 1981, 1 May is a public holiday in Nigeria. People gather while the president of the Nigeria Labour Congress and other politicians address workers.

SOUTH AFRICA - Workers' Day has been celebrated as a national public holiday on 1 May each year since 1995. May Day started to get more attention by African workers in 1928, which saw thousands of workers in a mass march. In 1986, the hundredth anniversary of the Haymarket affair, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) called for the government to establish an official holiday on 1 May. After its first universal election in 1994, 1 May was adopted as a public holiday, celebrated for the first time in 1995.

ARGENTINA - Workers' Day is an official holiday on 1 May, and is frequently associated with labour unions. Celebrations related to labour are held, including demonstrations in major cities. The first Workers' Day celebration was in 1890, when Argentinian unions organized several celebrations in Buenos Aires and other cities.

BRAZIL - Workers' Day is an official holiday that is celebrated on 1 May, and unions commemorate it with day-long public events.

CHILE - President Carlos Ibáñez del Campo decreed 1 May a national holiday in 1931, in honour of the dignity of workers. All stores and public services must close for the entire day, and the major trade unions of Chile, represented in the national organization Workers' United Center of Chile (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores), organize rallies during the morning hours, with festivities and cookouts in the later part of the day. During these rallies, representatives of the major left-wing political parties speak to the assemblies on the issues of the day concerning workers' rights.

COLOMBIA - 1 May has long been recognized as Labour Day and almost all workers respect it as a national holiday. As in many other countries, it is common to see rallies by the trade unions in the main regional capitals of the country.

COSTA RICA - First celebrated in 1913, labor day is a public holiday, and at the same time an important day for government activities. On this day, the President of Costa Rica gives a speech to the citizens and the legislature of Costa Rica about the duties that were undertaken through the previous year. The president of the legislature is also chosen by its members.

CUBA - This day is known as Labour Day in Cuba. People march in the streets, showing their support to the Cuban government and the Cuban Revolution throughout the day.

MEXICO - 1 May is a federal holiday. It also commemorates the Cananea Strike of 1906 in the Mexican state of Sonora.

URUGUAY - 1 May is an official holiday. Since the late 1990s, the main event takes place at the First of May Square in Montevideo.

VENEZUELA - 1 May is an official holiday in Venezuela. El Día del Trabajador is celebrated on 1 May in Venezuela since 1936, but from 1938 to 1945 it was held on 24 July, by an order of Eleazar López Contreras. However, Isaías Medina Angarita changed it back to 1 May in 1945. ■

PPWC National Report

BY PPWC National President Gary Fiege

The world around us is spinning faster and faster into the unknown. Historians will look back at 2020 and point to this year as the time that the world changed. Much that we used to take for granted will no longer be available to us. We could spend hours lamenting on Covid-19 and its effects, but I will leave that for future articles.

The PPWC National and our Local 5 recently hosted Convention in Vancouver. It was a milestone event as it was our last annual Convention. A year prior in Castlegar, a resolution was passionately debated and passed, to move to biennial Conventions matching the 2-year terms we adopted years earlier for our elected positions.

During the first two days of convention week we hold labour school. This year we were educated by Mark Leier, a labour historian from Simon Fraser University. He informed our group of some of the labour struggles from our province. He kept attendees on their toes with a



lively presentation that included a banjo.

This was followed by a tour of the restored cannery in Steveston. It was opened in 1894 and was the biggest cannery on the west coast. Participants were treated to facts around the labour movement, changes in technology and environmental issues related to its operation.

In Day 2, we were treated to a presentation by Graham Mitchell of the Broadbent Institute. He taught our members about internal/external organizing. Further discussion was intended to give us ideas on doing a better job of organizing with helpful strategies to facilitate that end.

Wednesday saw the first of three days of convention. Squamish First Nations elder Latash welcomed us to their unceded territory. He spoke of his grandfathers' work unionizing the dock workers in Vancouver during the first part of the 20th century. We passed our rules of order, presented officer reports, went over proposed budget numbers for next year and opened nominations for our table and part time officers.

2020 PPWC National Convention photo. For all convention photos, see at PPWC Facebook page.



We were lucky to have a presentation by Dr. Charlene Higgins of the First nations Forestry Council and the work they are doing to ensure First Nations are given equal opportunities in forestry. They want to be true partners on their traditional territories. They have earned this right. It is now time to make it happen.

We debated the resolutions that were presented for consideration on the floor. Of note, we combined our Forestry and Environmental officer positions, as much of the duties overlapped. The new position

is called the Environmental Sustainability officer.

Presentations by CCU President Kelly Johnson and CUSW President Geoff Denstedt were appreciated by all.

On the last day, nominations were again opened up. Myself, Todd Smith and Rod Gallant were acclaimed as President, Vice President, and Second Vice President, respectfully. We will be having elections for Secretary Treasurer and Health and Safety Officers. A pending election for the Environmental Sustainability Officer may be

needed after Locals canvas their members for interest.

Audit, Tabulating, and Young Workers Committees positions were filled, and the Communications Officer will be Chris Wipplinger.

Convention is a time to look back at the past and move forward into the future. It is the true, democratic place where we can debate all things and direct us for the coming years. ■

Shelby Kennedy is President of the Nova Scotia Union of Public and Private Employees (NSUPE)

NSUPE LOCAL 2:

Members ratified a new collective agreement in July and the employer, Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) ratified it in September. It contains miserly, legislated wage increases that will see workers continue to lose purchasing power as the cost of living rises faster than wages. There were no major gains or losses. It is difficult to negotiate when the neoliberal government (government that wants to get government out of peoples' lives) basically removes the right to bargain.

The HRCE refused to implement the new wage rates until the revised collective agreement had been proof-read and signed, despite language that says the new wage rate will be implemented upon "approval" of the agreement by the parties. This has given rise to a grievance which has been referred to arbitration.

There are a number of grievances including four which are challenging the discipline letters provided to members. While some of the members may have been legitimately deserving of criticism, the letters are disrespectful and the HRCE is adopting the common human resource practice of falsifying the information in the letters to make the incidents seem worse than they were.

There is also a grievance claiming that management was disrespectful to an employee for doing her job diligently (management took the side of a contractor who was not doing his job). We tried to mediate a resolution to this grievance (at management's request) but it was a waste of time because management will not admit having done anything wrong. We also have an individual grievance and a union grievance with respect to information required in job postings. In the last year we have settled four grievances: two on the first day of arbitration, one in mediation, and one through management's concession.

Our sick leave absences and long term disability claims continue to be high, with increasing numbers related to issues around mental health and workplace induced stress. Management continues to flagrantly refuse to discuss real causes of absence such as under-staffing, rude and harassing supervisors, disrespect by management, increasing demands on workers, and financial stresses caused by legislated wage controls.

A trend we have seen growing at the HRCE is the abdication of management from the role of managing. Supervisors now rarely come out of their offices as they are busy gathering and in-putting data for the data-gatherer-report-writers in Human Resources and higher

management. Workplace issues that would once have been dealt with on the spot by an engaged supervisor now all have to go through Human Resources where the formulaic approach is implemented and we are reinforced in our view that workers are nothing more than tools – less important tools than the computer programmes they use to gather data and write reports.

NSUPE LOCAL 12:

Members voted to reject the last contract offer put forward by Canadian Blood Services (CBS) and, on the same day, voted in favour of strike. In another suppression of workers' rights even under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the neoliberal, Liberal government of Nova Scotia has imposed essential services legislation which the NS Labour Board, in support of employers, has ruled applies to NSUPE Local 12.

While the last CBS offer has been rejected and the members have voted to strike, they can do nothing until the employer and the union agree to an Essential Services Agreement which will keep the operation running during a strike. CBS first claimed that it needed all employees to keep working but they could picket during their off hours. They have now moved to allowing a half dozen or so employees to strike (as long as they don't need them) while the rest work.

We will be having one more meeting on this issue and will then apply to the Labour Board for a resolution – that is not a happy prospect given that the Labour Board's mandate is to promote industrial peace – meaning avoid strikes. In the meantime, CBS ignores all of our requests to get back to negotiating a collective agreement. It is clear that CBS is using the essential services legislation just as the government intended it to be used – to weaken workers' ability to bargain collective agreements. To be clear, essential services legislation does not and never has had anything to do with providing essential services to citizens. Workers and their union in critical areas such as health care have always ensured there was coverage for essential care even when there has been no legislation. Essential services legislation has only one purpose – to suppress workers.

We have discovered that CBS has a process for members who apply for long term disability benefits that actually is structured to discourage them and either force them back to work or to quit. This is driven by CBS Ottawa and NSUPE is challenging the process and supporting members who apply for long term disability. The

whole sick leave process is based on harassment and intimidation (and ignoring the collective agreement terms) in the hopes of forcing people back to work.

NSUPE LOCAL 19:

We are continuing to prepare for negotiating the first contract following the one year strike that led to the current collective agreement. We have requested negotiating dates with the employer and the membership is meeting on January 25th to finalize the package. IN PEI, at the moment, there is no essential services legislation.

LOCAL 13 (HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY INSIDE WORKERS):

The Local has a judicial review and five arbitrations coming up. The arbitrations involve a variety of issues:

- The setting and considering of qualifications for a job where the main task is parking enforcement
- Two probationary dismissals
- Whether an employee can choose what kind of paid leave to use for medical appointments
- Alleged unfair bias in considering a job application

The judicial review involves a grievance over harassment and the posting of an anti-bullying sign. Local 13 had a one-week arbitration that was to take place in December over the dismissal of an employee alleged to have carried out work while on LTD that was in conflict with her position with the municipality. The case settled at the last minute but the settlement included a confidentiality provision so we can't tell you any more about it.

LOCAL 14 (HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES):

The Library continues to move forward with determining and implementing a strategic workforce plan (SWP). A number of new positions have gone through joint job evaluation and the next step is to start figuring out which employees will transition to new jobs and how. After much consideration, the Local Executive decided the Local would form a joint SWP transition committee with management which will make recommendations to the union and to management about implementing job changes. The Library has guaranteed that every permanent employee will have a position with at least the same pay they had when the SWP started.

The Local is also dealing with a return-to-work issue where the Library proposes to move a 30-year employee who has been off on long-term disability into a lower paid position. The union wants to make sure every option for keeping the employee at his previous pay level is explored.

LOCAL 15:

Local 15 is getting ready for negotiations. With a full executive and negotiations committee in place, things are going quite well. HIL continues to be a great employer and is a delight to work with.

NSUPE REPORT

LOCAL 16:

Local 16 has been challenging Conway Workshops Association since May 2019 on how they handled a sexual harassment. This has result in 3 grievances that stem from the investigation and multiple breaches of confidentiality. Local 16 has made the decision to write to the Minister of Community Services and ask that the department take some action.

LOCAL 17:

Local 17 continues to focus on the damage done by the attempt to contract out the work of the bargaining unit. Fairly new Local

Executive members are making great progress.

LOCAL 22:

Local 22 is also getting ready for Negotiations. A grievance has recently been filed over management employees suggesting to members of the bargaining unit that they move to decertify and deal with management directly. CHP has a new general manager and recently the long time Operations Manager has been replace by an employee who formally was a member of the bargaining unit. We thought that this change was going to work in our favour however this employee is part of the grievance asking members to decertify. ■



The CCU/CSC believes that actions speak louder than words, and we support and encourage all our affiliates to speak out and engage in peaceful protests against social and racial injustice. The CCU believes Black Lives Matter.

Furthermore, we believe that remaining silent in light of these injustices is not only unacceptable, but also contributing to a society in which racism and unequal systems of power continue to go unchecked. We unequivocally believe that all individuals should be able to live without fear of discrimination and harassment regardless of their skin colour.

The CCU believes that everyone has the responsibility to educate themselves on the systemic oppression as well as make strides towards equality and justice. Change must occur now and will require all Canadians working together and listening.

This week and beyond, listen to voices from the Black Lives Matter movement, and look for ways to support their fight for justice and inclusion. This is what we commit to doing. ■

#blacklivesmatter

Written by CCU Executive, June 2020

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

~ Desmond Tutu
1984 Nobel Peace Prize Recipient

Statement from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives on systemic state violence and anti-Black racism

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is angered and outraged by ongoing police violence and brutality against Black citizens and protestors across the continent. And while much of the current media attention is focused on the United States, these same problems are painfully alive and present across Canada, including in every province where CCPA offices are located on Indigenous territories.

We recognize that this state violence is endemic, long-standing and a function of structural white supremacy.

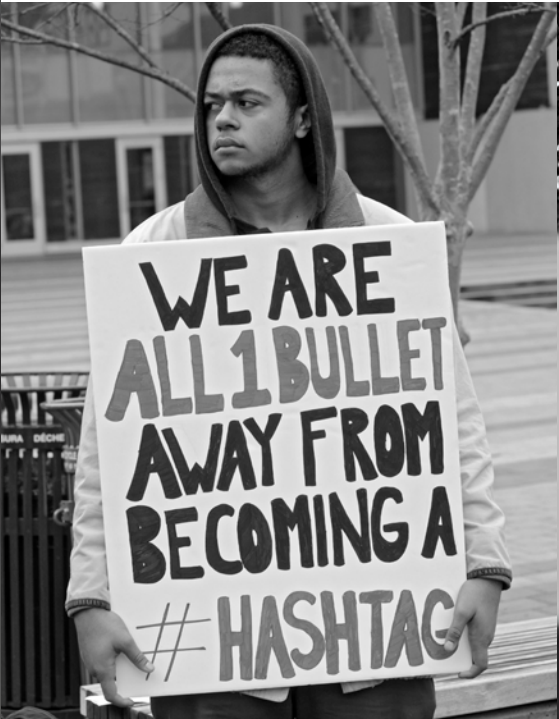
As a research institute committed to social justice, we believe that public policy is an essential vehicle for dismantling systemic injustices — including in relation to the coercive power of the state and state violence, economic and gender inequalities, migration and citizenship, poverty, race-blind data collection, housing and food insecurity, and inequities

in health and education. We know our work is far from done: we have a responsibility to document, challenge and propose solutions to racism and white supremacy, a responsibility we have yet to adequately meet.

Through our research and analysis, we will continue to document the systemic inequality, racism and injustice that dominates our society, limits access to public services, and infects our democratic institutions. As we move forward, we will listen to and work in partnership with Black researchers, leaders and organizations to press for root-cause, systemic change while holding the powerful to account.

It is our individual and collective responsibility to ensure that systemic state violence and anti-Black racism are eradicated.

— CCPA British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, National and Nova Scotia Offices. ■





AESES Report

The first few months of each calendar year are extremely busy times for AESES, as we find ourselves planning education seminars, retirement workshops, our annual general meeting, member's day lunches and our annual volunteer's banquet. However, this year's activities were suddenly halted as we found ourselves grappling with the realities of a new world following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Since Wednesday, March 11, AESES has been intensively working to provide increasing services and messaging to our very worried members whose lives have suddenly been turned upside-down. Work situations are changing daily as are the instructions we are receiving from the federal and provincial governments to observe social distancing practices.

The AESES Office is exhibiting the behaviour we would like to see from the universities. With social distancing in mind, we are busy cancelling all non-essential events. Staff are working remotely, and we are ensuring that only one staff member at a time is in the office. More importantly, everyone will continue to be paid.

We have met with the University of Manitoba and indicated our willingness to work with them on options to allow our members



Laurie Morris is President of Association Of Employees Supporting Education Services

to work remotely or in a safe environment on our campuses. Many necessary operations still need to continue and, in most cases, it is the support staff who need to come into work to perform those functions. Fortunately, the lines of communication are open between AESES and the University, and they are responding as quickly as they can to the issues we raise.

It has not been so easy with the University of Winnipeg as they have yet to accept our offer to meet and to work together. Their messaging to employees has not reduced the anxieties people are experiencing, and many questions are still unanswered. Unfortunately, they've already moved to laying off employees where operations are being shut down and have decided not to continue their pay. We remain hopeful that our continued efforts to reach out to them will eventually lead to cooperation between our offices.

For now, we continue to try to work with the employers for the betterment of our members. May we all be successful in protecting our members through this crisis.

Stay healthy, everyone! ■

THE UNEXPECTED WARRIOR

The unexpected warrior awakens to empty streets and sidewalks

With buses sparse and fearing distance, they make their way to the front line

Unlike white-collar leaders who get praise and rewards from behind an office door, the blue-collar sacrifice is much different

In the public eye, they smile while supplying life's necessities to each home's foot soldiers

While other blue-collar supply healthcare, manufacturing, goods, food, commodities, and maintenance, others clean, cook, and drive

With most being unable to distance themselves, relying often on less than adequate PPE

As each day turns into the next, without ammunition or shields, a blue-collar's best friend becomes luck

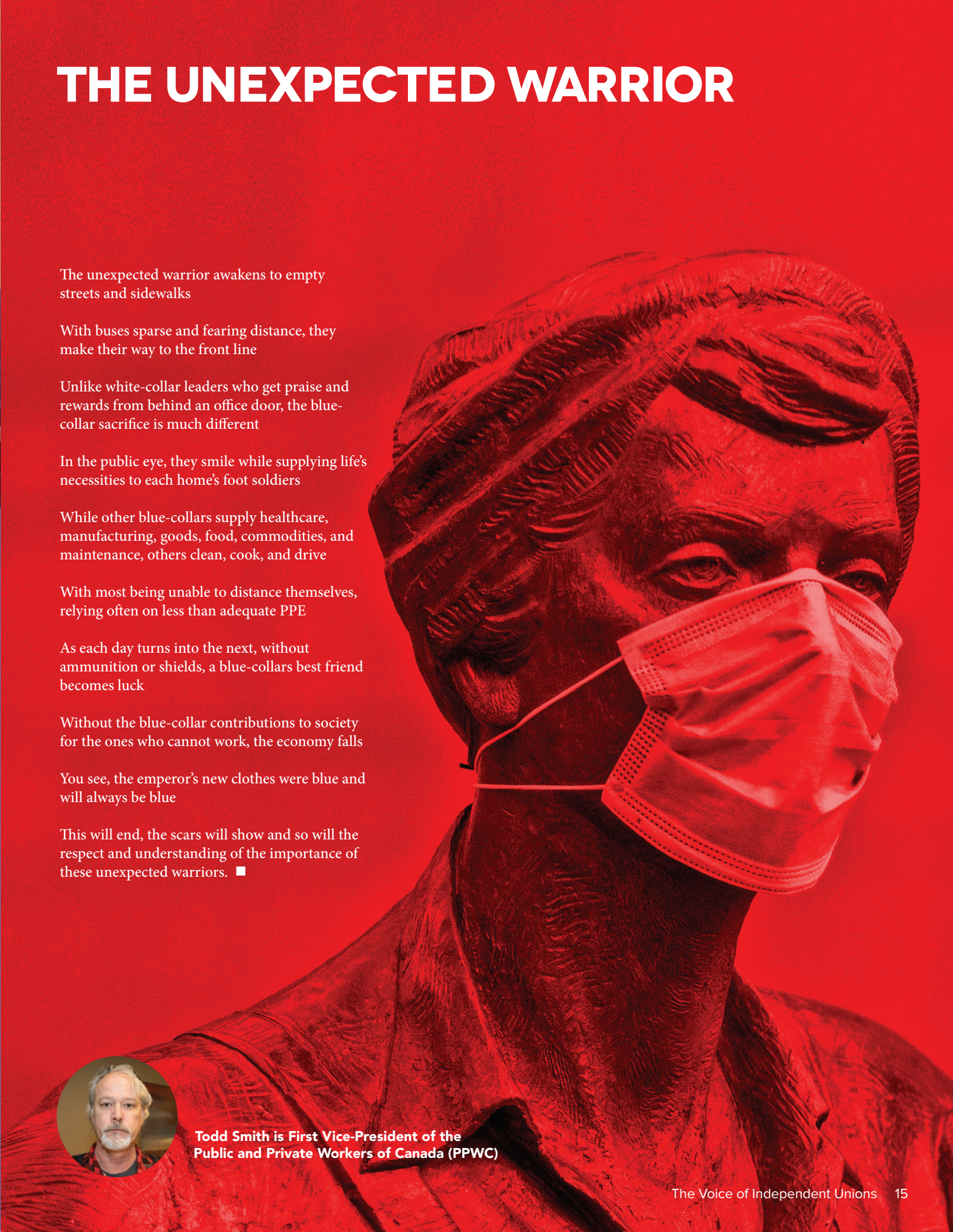
Without the blue-collar contributions to society for the ones who cannot work, the economy falls

You see, the emperor's new clothes were blue and will always be blue

This will end, the scars will show and so will the respect and understanding of the importance of these unexpected warriors. ■



Todd Smith is First Vice-President of the Public and Private Workers of Canada (PPWC)



CUSW REPORT



Geoff Denstedt is President of the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers

The members of CUSW concluded their 20th Anniversary Celebration in Niagara Falls at the Sheraton Hotel on November 2, 2019. The event was well attended and enjoyed by the membership and their families. With the help of the National Social Committee and their members, this event was truly a grand finale to the celebrations that took place throughout the year.

The shortage of skilled workers throughout Canada is still an ongoing concern for government and industry. The current Ontario government introduced a bill "Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018," which reduced the journeyman to apprentice ratio to 1:1. With this thought, the government is trying to address the shortage by encouraging youth and Vocational Institutions to promote the trades in their programs, along with industry leaders. This was evident at a recent event in Toronto.

Monte McNaughton, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, shared his concern on the very subject and how his ministry is promoting the trades via media and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship

Program. The ministry has earmarked 12.7 million dollars to expose youth to the opportunities in the skilled trades. This is not a provincial problem, but a nationwide concern. In the near future, many workers shall be retiring from the trades. We are actively attending events like this in hopes of understanding the direction of the government and the concerns of the industry.

The partnership between Bruce Power, Georgian College and CUSW has recently seen graduates from the Georgian College pre-apprenticeship program receive job opportunities as part of the 12-week placement. Seven members of the program were placed on site as part of their 34-week program. With the success of this program, Georgian College will again offer the course in April of this year, with all 20 participants being offered a job placement on site at Bruce Power. This is a great opportunity for all stakeholders, especially the youth of tomorrow. Teamwork is dream work!

The Nuclear Sub-Committee will be attending this year's Canadian Nuclear Associations Annual Conference in Ottawa on February 26, 27 and 28. The event provides insight into the direction the Canadian Nuclear Industry is headed and the new technologies that are advancing the Clean Energy Industry. Ontario is currently undertaking the largest infrastructure project in North America, via the Darlington Refurbishment program and the Bruce Power Major Component Replacement project.

These work programs will provide Ontario with reliable clean energy for the next 30-40 years while also providing stable careers for the citizens of Ontario. Bruce County (location of the second largest Nuclear facility in the world), also saw many businesses open offices in the area. Again,

we were reminded recently that Ontario alone has 200,000 jobs that need to be filled, and Bruce County is an area that has been struggling to fill those vacancies. This alone has an impact of 24 Billion dollars on the GDP of Ontario.

This year is election time at CUSW. Between the months of January and March, workplace election committees began the task of preparing the workplace for steward and health, safety and wellness representatives. In April, nominations began for National Executive Board with the ballots collected for counting the first week of July. September will be the month for Unit Executive elections and shall conclude in the Fall with appointments to our fourteen National Committees.

CUSW is about to experience growth in the North. Thunder Bay will be the hub of activity over the next 3-5 years with a significant work program underway with our partner Valard LP. Approximately 700-800 members will be involved in the construction projects. The Northern unit has identified the need to create two Units, a Northwest and Northeast Unit to accommodate this influx of membership. The time is now to educate the new members on the importance of Union membership and the need to participate in local communities and the workplace.

The local Indigenous communities have been a great partner in identifying the opportunities within the community for careers in the trades. Partnerships are important for sustainable communities and this is a prime example of working together to make a better Canada. Together, we can all make a difference to improve the quality of lives and advance careers of many as we build the many major infrastructure projects across the country. ■

THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS ORGANIZED UPON A PRINCIPLE THAT THE STRONG SHALL HELP THE WEAK.

- JOHN L. LEWIS



PPWC Local 2 Report



Lynn Lindeman is President of PPWC Local 2

Greeting to all. Here is hoping everyone in the many locals and regions within the CCU are beginning to see signs of Spring. The annual flower count has or will be held in Victoria. This should explain the weather on the west Coast.

It has been a very interesting time at Crofton, to say the least. The Company was hit with a malware attack on February 19, which took total control of all their business systems. At the present time, the Company has only been able to recover a small part of their information. They are attempting to build work around completely new systems.

Their total payroll records were lost, although they did manage to pay all our members on time last week. This has led to only one of six paper machines being able to run due to the inability to place order information onto the winders of the paper machines, and having no ability to process the paper rolls for shipping to customers.

There was a month curtailment announced for both pulp and paper operations, including trade to commence February 28 due to a fiber shortage brought on by the since-resolved Western/Steelworkers strike. The malware attack shutdown all of Paper Excellence operations, and a better than expected start-up of the sawmills has led to the Kraft mill curtailment being cancelled. We have roughly 45 operators and 15 trades laid off.

On February 27, the main mill waterline burst, resulting in the rapid shutdown of the total mill for five days. The only good news from this is that it increased the wood supply for the Kraft mill.

The Local is moving forward with six arbitrations as the Company still doesn't want to settle anything at standing committee. There are two arbitrations on contracting out and others on swipe times, call time, union jurisdiction and temporary workers. ■



Michael Belanger is Vice President of the CCU and a YUSA Steward



April 28 as a Day of Mourning started in Canada in 1984. This is a day set aside each year to remember those who have been killed or seriously injured in the workplace. Internationally, it began in 1989 as an international day of remembrance and known as Workers' Memorial Day. The Canadian Parliament passed an Act respecting a National Day of Mourning in 1991. At the beginning of each

of benefits (funds guaranteed to pay workers), collective liability (a shared common fund), independent administration (separate from government) and exclusive jurisdiction (only workers' compensation organizations can provide the insurance). Prior to this, legislation required workers to sue their employers and prove negligence in court in order to be compensated for their injuries. These foundational Meredith Principles were adopted in similar legislation in all Canadian jurisdictions as Workers' Compensation Boards (WCB's).

A CBC news investigation (2017) found that there is little disincentive, with respect to jail time or fines, for employers that violate workplace safety laws in connection with the death of a worker. The Association of Workers' Compensation Board of Canada (AWCBC) reports there are about 1,000 Canadians that die each year because of their jobs. But according to the CBC (2019), a more accurate figure maybe much more, between 10,000 to 13,000 deaths annually. This is because it includes workers exempt from coverage, stress-induced suicides, commuting fatalities, and occupational disease that are not included in the official statistics. The AWCBC data also does not reflect that only 70 to 98% of the workforce

How the Day of Mourning put Health and Safety on the Agenda

Confederation of Canadian Unions Executive Board meeting we have a moment of silence in recognition for all those workers who have been killed or seriously injured. April 28 was chosen as it is the anniversary of the first comprehensive Workers' Compensation Act in Canada which was passed in the Ontario Legislature on that day in 1914. The Act was based on a historic compromise that saw workers reluctantly give up their right to sue in return for employers to fund the no-fault system that would provide more speedy and secure payments for as long as the disability lasted. This passing of the legislation was the result of Justice William Meredith tabling a draft of the Workmen's Compensation Act as a report to the Ontario Legislature in 1913. The report was based on five principles: no-fault compensation (regardless of how the injury occurred), security

The economic, social and moral foundations of Meredith's ideas and law and the principles that workers fought for over 100 years ago is constantly under attack. Recently, government's have claimed the costs of the system are escalating out of control and have become too "social" as to include incidents that did not "arise in or out of the course of employment." Employers also claim the rise in costs keep workers from going back to work, because they are "over-compensated." The constant pressure to lower insurance premiums in some jurisdictions has resulted in unfunded liabilities of WCB's. When it comes to workers' compensation, the time-honoured approach is to blame the victim, the injured and most vulnerable workers for all economic woes. Many employers would like to offhandedly reject Meredith's ideals altogether.

(depending on Province) is covered by public workers' compensation. Those excluded workers include those maybe self-employed, domestic helpers, banking employees and farmers, among others. On April 28, the Canadian flag on Parliament Hill flies at half-mast. As a worker this year you can have a moment of silence, light a candle, don a ribbon or wear a black armband as you socially distance and while you remember and memorialize all those killed or seriously injured because of their jobs. Please remember that all workers have the right to refuse work when they believe it to be unsafe. If you wish to be an individual who looks forward to going to work each day, you need to fight for your rights every day. They are always worth fighting for. ■

WORK DOESN'T HAVE TO KILL



CMAW Report

Well, where do we start... The world is in a different place since we last met with the CCU, and seems to be changing daily. As self-isolation and physical and social distancing is a thing now, we recognize how heavily reliant we are on the essential services in which hard working Canadians provide us everyday.

We are grateful to all the “Front of the Line” workers going to work every day, putting their own safety and wellbeing at risk to ensure we all have the essential goods and services we need to navigate through the uncertainty of the next few months. CMAW and its members have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Major works at the Kitimat LNG and BC Hydro’s Site C Dam have been wound down to essential/critical services only, while local jobs continue to move forward currently with no disruptions. In the middle of this COVID-19 crisis we also have a Saudi-Russian oil price war that has set the current oil prices to record lows.

This and has not made the situation any easier for our members working at the oil sands in Fort McMurray, but their work has been deemed an essential service and will continue to provide employment for our members. Although the next few months will challenge all of us on how to navigate the future, we will remain optimistic that we will return to a regular routine again, keep marching forward and continue supporting our brothers and sisters during these times. ■



Chris Wasilenchuk is President of the Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers



PPWC LOCAL 8 REPORT

Here at Local 8, we have instructed all our worksites to adopt special protocols due to the pandemic we are all facing across the globe. We have had our sawmills shut down due to the inability to safely distance workers from each other in certain parts of the plants. The sawmills are also waiting to see if they are deemed essential services as they also supply the pulp mills with fibre that is needed to produce certain grades of pulp for the medical field.

They are trying to set up their parameters to ensure that the workers are maintaining the recommended distancing. As this is not only a challenge in the community, it has posed a huge problem in the workplace. Another issue that is impacting our ability to run the facility is the absence of workers that may have been exposed to someone outside of the workplace. We have one sawmill running at 50% capacity because of this.

At Harmac, we managed to meet with the company and come up with a strategic protocol plan just before all the government announcements came into effect on March 16. This, of course, changed marginally after the announcements. We have had to put many workers into self-quarantine that had returned from trips abroad. The workers were all okay with this.

A specialty order at Harmac has been recently doubled for a cedar made product that is used to make medical masks, surgical gowns, drapes, screens, and other hospital supplies in the United States. We are going all out to keep this product supplied to the customer as they are much needed during the COVID-19 crisis. The workers are all following the safety protocols that we have established, including the rigorous cleaning of their workstations and the machinery they operate.

On Local 8’s website, we have been putting up any new information that comes our way and are including links to related articles, as well as two sites that allow you to access online doctors.

During this moment in time, where we are locally, provincially and nationally in crisis, and all are reminded of the care and consideration we can give those who are facing the ugly challenges of this pandemic. Working together, we will get through this. ■



Rod Gallant is President of PPWC Local 8



CCU SPOTLIGHT: CENTRAL VICE PRESIDENT MATT TRUMP



CIRCA 2001

Plans after high school?

Had considered university, going into disaster management. In the end, I went and joined the Military in armoured Recon.

Where did I grow up?

Winnipeg born and raised.

Was I a good student?

Varies depending on your definition of “good”. Had decent grades, and I showed up. Lots of extra-cullicular activities, played rugby and other sports. Also was a drama brat!

Most memorable job?

By circa 2001... probably working the sports department in Canadian Tire, only job I had during high school. Also only job I have ever been fired from.

8 track, cassette or vinyl?

I’m not that old! LOL.

Fav band and song?

Depended on my mood, I liked a lot of different stuff back then, still do. Probably Metallica, with King Nothing being top song.

Go back and change a thing?

Only change one thing? That’s just not fair to change ONLY one thing... next question!

Career aspirations?

Back then, I wanted to be in a profession that protected and helped others, law enforcement or fire fighting. Hence, the interest in Disaster Management. I joined the Military with the intent to get into the DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) but that never panned out.

Best Friend?

I’ve known my friend Kris since kindergarden, and now it’s at the point where we don’t know who’s the bad influence in our friendship.

Fav food?

Chinese! Great restaurant near my home that’s easily top three in Winnipeg, in my humble opinion. Mix of Chinese and Polynesian.

Fav Author, Book, and Movie?

J. Micheal Straczynski, *Enders Game* and *Lord of the Rings* (ironically neither by my fav author) and movie would be *Star Trek: Wrath of Khan*.



TODAY

Did my plans change?

Yeah, quite a bit. Joined the military and now do security for the University of Manitoba.

Where do I live now?

Still in Winnipeg, and basically in the same part of town, too.

Educational background?

I reached my third level of being an electrical apprentice, through the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology. Otherwise, most of my formal training is military and security related.

Most memorable job?

Military for sure. So many great experiences, things most people would never get to do otherwise. Spent eight years there, and it was all unique. Where else can you call in an artillery strike, or ride around in a legit tank?

CD’s or live stream?

Yeah, spotify is my new favourite thing in the world.

Fav band, song?

Metallica is still strong, but I have and appreciate a wide range of music. No country though.

Time travel question again? How far back can I go?

I mean, winning lottery numbers are really high up on that list...

Career Choice?

Currently I am in security, but thats a plan B. I have aspirations to be a writer, and hoping that some day my stuff will be published!

Best Friend?

After 30+ years of knowing each other, yeah, my buddy Kris has gotta be the best friend. That or my dog, Tyrion. Don’t tell my wife I said that.

My food, books and all that haven’t changed, I am a creature of habit. ■

“

Was I a good student?

Varies depending on your definition of ‘good’. Had decent grades, and I showed up...

...After 30+ years of knowing each other, my buddy Kris has gotta be the best friend. That or my dog, Tyrion.

Don’t tell my wife I said that.

”

Interview by YUSA Second Vice President Breanne Whitwell

HOPE AND OUTRAGE:

CONTINUED AND RENEWED UNDER COVID 19

The presentation I made at the CCU Executive Board meeting in January was titled “Hope and Rage,” inspired by two things: a book I was gifted, “The Optimist’s Telescope: Thinking Ahead in a Reckless Age” by Bina Venkataraman, and a Winnipeg branch of unionized Tim Horton’s workers protesting their lock out while fighting for fair bargaining, backed by workers and labour organizations.

By sharing a story of many pulling together to successfully fight for the few, I hoped to inspire attendees to think about the issues that hit their heart and those that infuriated them. Then to think about the ways in which they could use that love and outrage; to push for a less reckless and better future, to speak up and take action where it is needed, because mass actions usually start with the few and build momentum. Mass actions have and can create change. This article is continuation of that hope, in lens of COVID-19.

Many Canadians seem to agree that COVID-19 essential workers – grocery store clerks, delivery drivers, basically anyone not working from home – are deserving of at least \$15 an hour, with some even campaigning for hazard pay as well. In both Canada and the United States, employees are asserting their rights for safe working conditions with threats of strikes and strikes over precarious

working conditions.

This May Day, for example, an unprecedented coalition of essential workers from Amazon, Instacart, Whole Foods, Walmart, Target and FedEx are calling out sick or walking out during their lunch breaks to demand better health and safety conditions, along with hazard pay.

With the announcement of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) of \$2,000 a month for those who are eligible, many are questioning where



Leanne Shumka is Secretary of the CCU

from either EI or new CERB.

Interesting conversations have also begun as a result of the ability for a large portion of the workforce to transition into working from home. It demonstrates that had these provisions been made for people with disabilities or other conditions making it difficult to work remotely, they could be a much larger part of our workforce today. Many of them must rely on social assistance instead, which provides much lower monthly allowances than the CERB program. COVID-19’s isolated world is the norm for people with disabilities.

On April 1, many people across Canada were struggling or unable to pay rent. Rent Assist programs have been largely lacking with only eviction prevention or delay measures being put in place. Some landlords, due to greed or financial need, are seeking ways to keep their rental property income in-tact by all means, legitimate or not. See pressprogress.ca/some-landlords-found-a-loophole, and see more in PressProgress article archive.

Under these conditions, we start to see calls for a universal Basic Income. Ever

“Let us not fail to heed the warning signs of future consequences from poor and short-sighted choices until it is too late. History, as well as the spread of this pandemic, has repeatedly shown us the devastating effects of doing so.

the supports are for those who don’t qualify, hoping that a new relief program will become available for them. A third of unemployed Canadians will receive nothing

heard of the 1970s Basic Income Experiment in Dauphin, MB? A Canadian city once eliminated poverty and nearly everyone forgot about it. It was a successful experiment and could be proven to be successful again on a national scale.

At the start of COVID 19, when the private sector began announcing lay-offs, public shaming and outcries forced governments and businesses into progressive actions. Wealthy businesses were pushed into keeping employees paid during closures until the government benefit programs arrived. Students graduating high school and in post-secondary studies collectively voiced their financial and career prospect concerns, and federal and provincial governments have been responding with recent program announcements awaiting legislation.

Collective action, especially using social media, has been proven to work time and time again. Let us remember

this as the pandemic causes economic disruption, and the need to advocate for the many Canadians still financially struggling, continues. Some governments take advantage of the crisis to fund multi-million and multi-billion dollar companies and push on with unnecessary austerity measures, which is the shock doctrine in action.

Let us not fail to heed the warning signs of future consequences from poor and short-sighted choices until it is too late. History, as well as the spread of this pandemic, has repeatedly shown us the devastating effects of doing so.

United by our shared principles and struggles, the CCU-CSC will remain strong in our convictions. Stay motivated by your outrage (passion) and hope (optimism) as we forge a better future.

Let’s prepare for a new normal. ■



YUSAPUY REPORT

YusApuY has been busy since the last meeting of the CCU. We concluded our annual elections in early November 2019, with all three full-time Officers and most of our existing Board members being re-elected for 2020. In the Board's annual planning session in early January, the disparity between our Unit 1 and Unit 2 members was something we set our minds to focus on for this calendar year.

Our goal was to develop a membership engagement campaign that will address the intertwined issues of overwork and precarious work. We're hoping to build solidarity between our two Units and draw attention to the issues of understaffing and over-work for our Unit 1 members and the precarious conditions of work for our Unit 2 membership, who often backfill Unit 1 positions, but for considerably lower wages and without any of the protections of continuous-status work. This will be an experiment for us, and we're optimistic that we'll bring the membership together and ultimately go into our future bargaining in a position of power.



Breanne Whitwell is 2nd Vice President of the York University Staff Association

COVID-19 has radically shifted our landscape and the last number of weeks have brought a continuously and rapidly changing set of circumstances in terms of the University's operations and our members' work environments. Most of our members are now working from home, with only 'required' staff permitted to be on campus. The contrast between the collective bargaining provisions for our full-time, continuing members and our temporary, casual members has never been more evident. We've been working tirelessly to advocate for the health, safety, welfare and security of all our members in this difficult and unprecedented time.

We're trying to keep all ongoing business of the union carrying on, with our own administrative staff working fully from home and a rotation of the full-time Officers on campus to ensure physical distancing.



PROTECTING WORKERS AND STUDENTS ON-CAMPUS DURING COVID-19

Using the precautionary principle



PROVIDE SERVICES REMOTELY

Until the threat of COVID-19 has passed, whenever possible staff and students should work and study remotely. Services can be provided through email, telephone, video conference or the web. Payments can be processed remotely or through student accounts. Providing all services remotely protects staff and also students who won't have to take public transit or deal with long line ups in-person to conduct business with the university. It also enables international students who may have issues with traveling the ability to receive all services.

SHIELDS UP!

If work must be conducted in person, protections must be put in place. For example at a service counter, students should be provided markers on the floor to ensure two meter distancing is maintained and a plexiglass shield be provided to separate and protect staff and students.

The university has an obligation to take every precaution reasonable to protect workers including the provision of Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, masks, and face shields. This is especially important for staff who need to touch shared objects or come into close proximity with others, such as in teaching labs, IT, libraries, bookstores, parking, front desks, etc.



MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

It's critical that people are able to keep at least two meters apart. If workers are required to come on campus, this could mean that days are staggered so some staff work from home while others come on campus to ensure that offices do not become overcrowded.

Working and studying from home is still the safest option. As it allows individuals to maintain social distance and avoid using public transit.



Infographic Design by

YORK UNIVERSITY STAFF ASSOCIATION
YUSAPUY
ASSOCIATION DU PERSONNEL
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

ENSURE ADEQUATE CLEANING

Areas need to be disinfected regularly, especially high touch point areas and washrooms. Items and equipment should be disinfected between uses and access should be provided to disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer when appropriate.



ACCOMMODATE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Extra precautions need to be taken with staff and students who have underlying conditions (immune, respiratory, etc.) that make them more susceptible to COVID-19.

Some may have childcare or elder care obligations that will make it impossible for them to come on campus while schools or care facilities are closed.

Some may face long commutes on crowded public transit systems which puts them at increased risk. These individuals may need to continue to work or study remotely after others have returned to campus.

Forcing students and staff to go to hospitals or crowded clinics to get medical notes also puts them at risk and should be avoided.



We continue to have three active job-evaluation projects underway.

There's still a tremendous amount of Constitution and policy work to be done (we're hoping to finally bring Constitutional changes to our membership this year to shift to a minimum of a two-year term to allow for more strategic initiatives). We continue to actively watch the University job board to ensure that we catch all the "management positions" that we believe ought to be in our bargaining unit and file grievances accordingly.

Earlier this year, we launched some new initiatives to ensure that our stewards have meaningful opportunities to participate in our grievance processes. We're all working in this new normal while trying to stay safe as we determine what can go forward and what we may need to postpone.

Unity, solidarity and taking care of one another has never been more important, and I wish for the safety, health and well-being of all our union sisters, brothers and allies. ■

A Motion on Pharmacare Passed in the House of Commons in March

(And You Probably Didn't Even Realize It)

Written by Sean Cain

It was March 13, 2020, and CUSW President Geoff Denstedt and I were sitting in the Vancouver airport, waiting for our flights. We were returning to Toronto from a terrific PPWC National Convention, and COVID-19 was on everybody's mind.

The flatscreen TVs were set to CBC News throughout the airport, and the only item being discussed was the devastating pandemic, the soon-to-be economic downturn and unemployment explosion, and the multi-trillion dollar, corporate welfare bailout package being prepared by President Trump for Wall Street. It seemed like the world was ending.

"Hey, Sean. Did you hear this?" Geoff said, holding up his cell phone. "A motion on a national pharmacare program passed in the House of Commons today."

"Oh, cool," I retorted, with my mind on the horror that was COVID-19. About three seconds went by.

"Wait... WHAT?!" I said.

"Yeah, it was an NDP opposition motion, and it passed with unanimous consent."

"Are you serious?" I said, believing he was playing a joke on me.

"Yeah. It really happened."

"Oh, my God!" I retorted. Although my actual words were probably more along the lines of: "Holy s**t!"

A stop-and-smell-the-roses metaphor here would be too obvious, so I won't, but great things really pass people by in life, and they don't even realize them.

Geoff and I just sat there with a sense of both astonishment and pride, believing



the "Pharmacare for All" campaign the CCU created in 2017 had an effect on elected officials and influenced the stunning achievement of passing a motion supporting the creation of a national, universal publicly-controlled, pharmacare program in the House of Commons.

This, of course, wouldn't exactly make Canada a trailblazer or trend-setter. In fact, every single country in the industrialized world that has a universal health insurance system also has some kind of universal drug program.

The **online petition created by the CCU**, an idea developed by former YUSA president Giulio Malfatti, has garnered almost 35,000 supporters, and continues to gain support. Likewise, according to recent opinion polls, almost 9 in 10 Canadians support a universal pharmacare program.

The hero of this parliamentary motion was the NDP MP for Vancouver Kingsway, Don Davies, whose effort was designed to attain broad party support and commitment to move forward with a national drug program. The motion also specifically called on the government to implement the full recommendations of the Hoskins Advisory Council, which recommends the creation of a national Pharmacare program by 2027, and estimates it will save the Canadian economy \$5 billion every year.

The Trudeau government promised in the federal election to create Pharmacare for All but have not yet delivered. And not to get anyone's hopes up, but the NDP motion, of course, didn't specifically create any actual Pharmacare program or raise the necessary tax funds for it, but it does hold the Liberal government to account to do so, and hopefully soon.

"Hey, Sean. Did you hear this?" Geoff said, holding up his cell phone. "A motion on a national pharmacare program passed in the House of Commons today."

"Oh, cool," I retorted, with my mind on the horror that was COVID-19. About three seconds went by.

"Wait.... WHAT? Holy St!"**

Our lives are worth
more than their profits



PHARMACARE FOR ALL NOW



www.ccu-csc.ca

As far back as 1964, the Royal Commission on Health Services recommended that Canada implement a pharmacare program following the introduction of universal coverage of medical care, which finally took place in two years later 1966.

Pharmacare was also a central feature of the original vision of Tommy Douglas, when he began creating universal health programs as Premier of Saskatchewan in the late 1940s. Although even he couldn't have foreseen the development of global pandemics spreading throughout the planet as quickly as COVID-19 has.

As CBC News continually blurted out the coming doom from COVID-19 on Vancouver airport TV screens, Geoff and I quickly realized that during a global health crisis, the timing of the motion on

Pharmacare for All wasn't without irony.

Prescription drugs are among the most important components of modern health care. When prescribed and used appropriately, they can prevent and cure disease, and extend and improve the quality of life, COVID-19 or not.

Just as Canada did with universal health care over half a century ago, Canada must live up to its original promise and establish a universal, comprehensive, publicly-administered and sustainable pharmacare program that works for everyone.

Okay, I'll just say it. Maybe once in a while, the labour movement and the Confederation of Canadian Unions should stop, smell the roses, and witness the fact that the work we do really does make a difference. ■

PPWC LOCAL 1 REPORT

Cheryl Buckley is an executive member of PPWC Local 1



Good Day All. A lot has happened since our last meeting so I will try to keep it chronological.

The 58th annual PPWC convention took place in Vancouver March 9-13, 2020. I attended as a National Executive Board Alternate. The convention was excellent. A lot of business, learning and networking were done.

As we all arrived back home, the real changes due to the COVID-19 started to set in. At Mercer Celgar, our shift schedules have been modified to minimize the number of people we come into contact with, and there have been new cleaning routines implemented in the high traffic areas. Also, those whose jobs can be done from home have been doing so.

Management has been doing the things that the union is requesting in order to protect the health of our members but

then trying to take advantage the unique circumstances to ignore our collective agreement. Changing schedules with no notice, changing pay, and going back on agreements. The union executive and the standing committee have been kept very engaged over the last two months holding the company to the contract.

We have a third stage grievance pending on the termination of a probationary employee for which the company refuses to disclose their reasoning. Last week we went through the final stages of a long-awaited arbitration for failure to accommodate. This arbitration was started last November but was postponed due to weather-related travel challenges, just one of the dangers of living in the Kootenays.

There have been two serious injuries to two of our members in the last month and a half. The first occurred on April 30 when one of our members sustained deep lacerations and blood loss. He managed to get himself to where there

were others and get help in time. His injuries required surgery but he is expected to make a full recovery. The injury happened on May 17 when a member was performing work at an awkward angle, causing his bicep to separate. This member has also required surgery and is expected to recover fully.

On May 30, Mercer International announced in a press release the projected 30-day production curtailment at their Celgar Pulp Operations starting July 1, 2020. On June 1, supervision told our woodroom crew that they would be shut down effective immediately. This crew is comprised of mainly senior members who would be dispersed throughout the mill doing other work that they either have previous experience in or are entry level jobs. The fallout of this would be that junior members would end up being laid off, also effective immediately. Our executive is currently investigating our next best course of action to keep as many of our members at work for as long as possible.

Wish us luck! ■



PPWC LOCAL 9 REPORT

Ron Richardson is a member of the CCU Connections Editorial Board

Local 9 is quiet right now due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The executive decided that it would be a good idea to close the office during this time.

Both of the pulp mills and Pacbio are running as per usual with no signs of change at this time. Canfor has announced some curtailments around Prince George with Northwood Pulp shutting down from April 25 until May 17. There are also a few Canfor sawmills affected around this time as well.

I hope everyone is doing their part and isolating themselves and practicing social distancing. Stay safe during this trying time. ■



PPWC LOCAL 26 REPORT



Amy Walters is an executive member of PPWC Local 26

Hello from Local 26! Hope this update finds you all safe and well.

Project Aurora continues to make changes to our general operations here at Selkirk. The payroll module was launched into live operation for the first payroll of the New Year. There were a few growing pains, and some adjustments required, but as I write this, it appears that the majority of the bugs have been worked out, and for the most part, employees are happy with the new system.

The next step in this module is to begin having the employees fill in their own time sheets, electronically, through the module's time keeping function. It will be a big change for our members in particular. Further Aurora modules to come are: HR, Finance, and Admissions.

Bargaining for our new collective agreement took place from February 15-28, and we were scheduled to meet again from March 31 to April 2. But with social distancing protocols and uncertainty for the foreseeable future looming, we are facing a different type of protocol. Due to the pandemic, we will be reviewing a "skinny package" which houses the main points of our bargaining process thus far, and if unsatisfactory,

minimal to no further bargaining may occur until September.

The PSEA mandate for contracts this year is a 2% general wage increase, per year, for three years, plus some other small incentives. Even if we can finish this up by April 2, there is some uncertainty about how we would ratify within the confines of social distancing. But for now, one step at a time.

A president's meeting was held at the end of March, and with these trying times upon us, a few issues were discussed. First, childcare. A number of employees are having issues with workdays being interrupted due to children being at home, while schools and daycare centres are closed, and while employees are also trying to adapt to working remotely. Management would like employees to contact our H&B officer in order to discuss any issues, and it is assumed that there is a duty to accommodate. Another hot topic was training during the quarantine period. Online courses such as bullying & harassment, and courses such as WHMIS, are being discussed.

Life, in general, at the campuses



has been dramatically altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All students are now learning online. All employees who can work from home are doing so; those who cannot work from home, are working modified shifts, or alternating with fellow workers to maintain a safe environment. Some are simply opting to use banks of time to stay home, or in a safe place away from civilization in general.

The College has been vigilant in supplying detailed communications and protocol updates frequently. When compared to a lot of other workplaces, I feel we are fortunate at Selkirk, as it has, so far, done very well in the face of this magnificent adversary. The health and safety of employees has remained a top priority, as well as minimal to no loss of income. For that, I believe unions have paved the way for us to maintain some semblance of a living during this unprecedented time. ■

PPWC Local 15 Report

Hello to all my brothers and sisters of the CCU. I hope this letter finds you all in good health as we all come to grips with this crisis. I wish I could say that the company was a pleasure to be doing business with, but that would make my nose grow if I did. The company has gotten more and more belligerent when it comes to upholding the JLA, and it's making our lives harder and harder. We can't get timely responses to grievances whether that be at the first stage or the last.

They drag their feet on everything and then ask us to abide by timelines. Hopefully one day, we can actually get them to live up to what was fairly bargained, but I have my doubts. On March 14, the Local held a member appreciation dinner and curling bonspiel, and the event was well attended.

Fun and comraderie was the order of the evening. I must say I do look forward to the next time we all can get together and look back on these days and give a big sigh of relief. ■



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