

# public employee



## **STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE**

**CUPE MEMBERS PLAY  
A LEADING ROLE IN  
COMMUNITY ELECTIONS**



**PLUS MULTI-LINGUAL ELECTION INSERT**

“Efforts to support local development should never be guided by partisan loyalty ... we all want to make our communities better.”

## Here's to public-private partnerships we can really get excited about

A few years ago, when I began touring the province to talk about strengthening local economies, some reporters asked why “Big Labour” was spending so much time hobnobbing with business people, chambers of commerce, and even BC Liberal MLAs. The implication seemed to be: “You’re natural enemies. What common ground could there possibly be?”

That thinking was misguided. Sure, I’m not exactly chummy with these folks when our members are being legislated back to work – or the local board of trade is endorsing Philip Hochstein’s view of the world. But regardless of what side of the political fence they’re on, Liberal MLAs and business operators are part of a local community, just like us. And, when it comes right down to it, we all want the same for our communities: good jobs, a healthy and safe environment for our kids, and a local economy that doesn’t depend on global capital for its very survival.

**Efforts to support local development should never be guided** by partisan loyalty. That’s why CUPE BC is proud to work with small- and medium-sized, independent private businesses – just as we do with charities, church groups, community coalitions and other local organizations. We all want to make our communities better – regardless of our political biases, religious beliefs or even ethnic backgrounds.

Nor should our status as public or private sector workers be a factor. CUPE and the United Steelworkers – B.C.’s largest public and private sector unions – have done a lot of work together in recent years. When USW forestry workers were being laid off and their communities began to suffer economically, they relied more, not less, on the services that CUPE members provide. When our members are threat-



□ **MEET YOU HALFWAY** Whenever he’s on the road, CUPE BC president Barry O’Neill enjoys a good roundtable discussion – like this one, with the mayor and councillors of Williams Lake – where people of all political stripes can find common ground on local development issues.

ened with lockouts or lay-offs, the Steelworkers have our back – because they’ve been there. It’s a natural alliance.

**But when it comes to those who seem more like natural** adversaries, we need to think outside the box and emphasize what unites, rather than divides us. If you talk to your local, BC Liberal-voting mom & pop storefront owner, or board of trade representative, you may be surprised by how much agreement you’ll find, for example, on our opposition to trade deals like the TILMA and CETA, or our support for the Ten Percent Shift and other local investment initiatives.

Last year, I attended the official opening of the Seymour Water filtration plant. I didn’t get to speak, and there was no announcement of new CUPE jobs or anything like that. Really, there was nothing in it for us except the satisfaction of seeing a core public service defended and proven to be world-class. In the fight to keep this plant public, CUPE had stood beside small business owners and local activists alike, from secular private citizens to church groups.

The success of that campaign is a good reminder that – now more than ever – we need to break down barriers to keep our communities strong.

**Barry O’Neill is president of CUPE BC.**



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Commentary + Leaders’ voices

## NEW DEAL – AND CUTS – IN COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES

**BURNABY** | After several months of on-again, off-again bargaining for British Columbia's 15,000 community-based social services workers, a tentative agreement was finally reached in mid-August, averting a strike only days before the nine unions involved were prepared to take job action.

Key bargaining demands were met, including those for job security and fair work practices for workers, such as bumping, job selection language and bullying. In addition, the government approved a \$600,000 retraining grant for workers in the sector.

"This agreement offers important improvements for workers who support children, women, adults with developmental disabilities, and other vulnerable members in our communities," said CUPE's CSS bargaining coordinator Cheryl Colborne.

However, Colborne added, cuts and closures continue to occur in group homes, employment support and volunteer programs throughout the province.

"Premier Clark's announcement of \$8.9 million in additional funding does very little to address continuing needs when the shortfall is \$70 million – \$85 million if we were to maintain 2005 levels."



□ **A MATTER OF RESPECT** Hundreds of people showed up at SFU's main campus in Burnaby on September 13 to support locked out CUPE members whose employer wants to cut wages by up to 40 per cent.

## Taking a stand on the SFU campus

### Student Society lockout of support staff draws fire

**BURNABY** | As a bitter lockout of Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) staff entered its third month in mid-September, CUPE 3338 members were encouraged by the broad range of public support for their struggle with a disrespectful employer.

At SFU's main campus on September 13, hundreds showed up at a rally to support the workers. Speakers including CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill, SFU Labour Studies instructor John-Henry Harter, NDP MLA Spencer Chandra-Herbert and SFSS staff member Nadine Chambers called on the SFSS board of

directors to end the lockout, return to the bargaining table and restore student services.

O'Neill brought greetings from CUPE National president Paul Moist and described the staff's efforts to reach a fair collective agreement as a "just and right" cause that CUPE BC will support one hundred per cent.

He also called out the SFSS board for its "insulting" treatment of staff. In its last offer, the board wanted to cut wages by up to 40 per cent, reduce permanent positions and pit current staff against future employees by reducing wages for new hires. At press time, the lockout, which began on July 10, was still in effect.

## Pitt Meadows, Surrey embrace "City Watch"

CUPE BC's City Watch program continues to grow, with new participating municipalities Surrey and Pitt Meadows the latest to join. Nearly 30 B.C. communities are now participating in CUPE's popular program, which brings the eyes and ears of civic workers to fight and



□ **TEAM EFFORT** "City Watch" combines the resources of city hall, police and CUPE.

reduce crime and increase public safety. "We're very pleased by how many com-

munities want to work with our members to help make neighbourhoods and communities safer and more secure," said CUPE BC secretary-treasurer Mark Hancock.

"It's such a natural fit with the work our members do every day, and it should serve as a reminder that CUPE members don't just work in their communities—they're part of them."

## 66 VOICES

**“Our caretakers.... felt the impact of the cuts last year when all their sections were increased by an average of 1,000 to 1,500 square feet—the equivalent of a medium-size house.”**

CUPE 728 president Janice Meehan, in a letter to the editor, comments on the impact of budget cuts on Surrey schools. *Cloverdale Reporter*, Tuesday, August 30, 2011.

**“They drive the competition out of the area. They buy buildings, set it all up and then they’ve got themselves a real estate investment. They are not really in this because they believe in child care.”**

CUPE 1936 president and CUPE BC child care working group chair Michael Lanier describes the modus operandi of the for-profit, publicly traded Education Learning Universe (Edleun) Group, which plans to open seven child care centres in B.C. *Maple Ridge News*, Wednesday, August 3, 2011.

**“We are certainly not there to cause any disturbance. We do have a letter for the captain of the ship and for the members of the Esmeralda.”**

CUPE 50 member Carlos Flores pledges to protest the impending August 1 arrival of a Chilean navy ship that was used as a torture vessel under the fascist regime of Augusto Pinochet. *Victoria News*, Wednesday, July 27, 2011.

**“I question this logic as it would mean that Bennett himself (considering he received close to 2,500 votes last municipal election) is opposed by roughly 75 per cent of the population.”**

CUPE BC general vice-president Trevor Davies, with tongue firmly in cheek, dismisses a Sooke councillor’s argument that a 2,000-name petition against a 21-year P3 contract represents only 20 per cent of the population. *Sooke News Mirror*, Wednesday, July 20, 2011.

**“We don’t think it’s a money issue. It’s a philosophy issue. They want to break the union.”**

CUPE 3338 business agent John Bannister, noting the Simon Fraser Student Society’s intention to reduce wages and cut the number of staff, says he suspects the society wants to replace full-time unionized staff with cheaper labour from students. *Burnaby Now*, Wednesday July 13, 2011.



□ **TOMORROW'S LEADERS** CUPE BC's third young workers conference inspired delegates with a range of ideas on how to engage in union activism. Keynote speaker Spencer Chandra-Herbert reinforced the message that you're never too young to have your voice heard.

## Young workers inspired

**NARAMATA** | CUPE BC's young workers task force held its third two-day conference July 6-8, with more than 70 CUPE members under the age of 30 taking part. Delegates participated in workshops and heard guest speakers on a range of topics. The keynote address was delivered by NDP Opposition MLA Spencer Chandra-Herbert, himself a “young worker” (he was first elected to the BC Legislature when he was just 27).



CHANDRA-HERBERT

CUPE BC general vice-president Trevor Davies, also co-chair of CUPE National's young workers committee, said the conference went even better than he had expected. “Most delegates were attending their first ever CUPE conference,” said Davies. “This was an amazing opportunity to engage and inspire young CUPE members to become more active in their union and communities.”

To learn more about the young workers task force, check out [cupe.bc.ca/committees/young-workers-task-force](http://cupe.bc.ca/committees/young-workers-task-force). If you're a young worker, or know another CUPE member who is, get in touch with one of the task force members to find out how to get involved with the YWTF.

## NATIONAL CONVENTION COMES TO WEST COAST

CUPE members from across the country will gather at the Vancouver Convention Centre from October 31 through November 4 for the union's biennial national convention.

Among the agenda items will be a fond ‘adieu’ to National secretary-treasurer Claude Généreux (pictured), who retires this year after 10 years in office, and the election of his successor.



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## SCHOOL I.T. SERVICES BACK IN-HOUSE

**MAPLE RIDGE** | In June, CUPE 703 applauded School District 42 (Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows) for its decision to bring Information Technology services back in-house. The District anticipates annual savings to be about \$100,000.

“The District questioned the assumption that private is cheaper and in-house or union is more expensive, and the result is that they have already found cost savings,” said CUPE 703 president Leslie Franklin.

The I.T. services were contracted out close to ten years ago. Some estimates suggest that the private contract may have cost the district more than \$500,000 during the contracted-out period than if the service had been provided by district staff.

### ANTI-PRIVATIZATION CONFERENCE

Want to help your union’s efforts to defend public services? You still have until October 21 to register for CUPE BC’s Anti-Privatization conference (November 22 – 24), to be held at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites in Vancouver.



□ **WAVE OF SUPPORT** Canada Day in Abbotsford was a sea of blue as members of Water Watch Mission-Abbotsford took to the streets.

## Water Watch campaigns spring up

### Activist campaigns take aim at longer contracts

**SOOKE** | As more B.C. municipalities attempt to privatize our most precious resource, CUPE activists have been stepping forward to put a stop to their efforts.

In Sooke, the district council tried to extend a contract for wastewater services.

The result would have been a 21-year sweetheart deal for Edmonton-based Epcor. Once word leaked out, Sooke Water Watch was formed.

CUPE helped the community-based group get enough local signatures to force council to put the question to

public referendum. Faced with this prospect, the district council voted on August 8 for a five-year extension only.

In Mission-Abbotsford, the fight – centred on an attempt by Abbotsford council to give away control of public water services for the next 25 years – will go to referendum in November. In March, residents in nearby Mission voted ‘no’ to the same deal – a proposed \$300-million P3 for Stave Lake.

“While private companies are often used to design and build water infrastructure, they have rarely – if ever – been used to maintain the operation of our public drinking water systems,” notes Water Watch Mission-Abbotsford spokesperson Lynn Perrin.

## K-12 bargaining priorities set

On June 10, representatives of CUPE’s BC K-12 Presidents’ Council Provincial Bargaining Committee began provincial discussions with the BC Public School Employers’ Association. Bargaining continued throughout the summer with four meetings and four more set for early fall.

CUPE has identified a number of priority areas for members, including stable funding and improvements for the Public Education Benefits Trust, job security, and improved wages and benefits. CUPE also made a significant presentation on recognition and respect for Education Assistants and the need for more hours to properly serve students.



□ **LOCAL PRESENCE** A new on-campus ad campaign from the three CUPE locals at UBC seeks to introduce our members to a new generation of students, show the diversity of the membership, and educate students about the value of their work.



# Taking us into the future

Delegates at CUPE BC's 48th annual convention elected a new executive to prepare the union for 2012 bargaining and the many community and political action campaigns that lie ahead.

Barry O'Neill was re-elected to an eighth term and secretary-treasurer Mark Hancock to a fourth, while all four general vice-presidents were re-elected. In addition, delegates elected seven new faces to the executive.

"I thank all of the executive members, past and present, who have dedicated their lives to this great union and still do," said O'Neill. "I look forward to working with all of you in the years to come."

Barry O'Neill,  
CUPE BC President



Mark Hancock,  
Secretary-Treasurer



Trevor Davies,  
General Vice-President



Paul Faoro,  
General Vice-President



Cindy McQueen,  
General Vice-President



Deb Taylor,  
General Vice-President



Paul Albrecht,  
Regional Vice-President  
Fraser Valley



Susan Blair,  
Regional Vice-President  
Kootenays



Michael Lanier,  
Regional Vice-  
President, Metro  
Vancouver



Ian Norton, Regional  
Vice-President, Metro  
Vancouver



Colin Pawson, Regional  
Vice-President, Metro  
Vancouver



Brad Kent, Regional  
Vice-President, North



John Hall, Regional  
Vice-President,  
Okanagan



Doug Sprenger,  
Regional Vice-  
President,  
Vancouver Island



Keith Todd, Regional  
Vice-President,  
Vancouver Island



Dale Whitford, Diversity  
Vice-President,  
Aboriginal Workers



Dal Benning, Diversity  
Vice-President, Workers  
of Colour



Amber Leonard,  
Trustee One Year



Laurie Whyte,  
Trustee Two Year



Frank Lee,  
Trustee Three Year



Brian Harvey, Alternate  
Regional Vice-  
President, Kootenays



Ken Davidson,  
Alternate Regional  
Vice-President,  
Metro Vancouver



Brent Soroka,  
Alternate Regional  
Vice-President,  
Okanagan



Alison Pringle,  
Alternate Regional  
Vice-President,  
Vancouver Island



Michele Alexander,  
Alternate Diversity  
Vice-President,  
Workers of Colour



Edie Charley,  
Alternate Diversity  
Vice-President,  
Aboriginal Workers

Alternate regional vice-president positions for the North and Fraser Valley are currently vacant.

## 'Local' is still where it's at

### Delegates embrace focus on community-based economic development

**VANCOUVER** | While this year's "Arab Spring" popular movements in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya were inspired by a growing thirst for civil rights in those countries, delegates to CUPE BC's 48th annual convention were reminded of how easily democratic rights can be eroded in so-called developed nations.

And they resoundingly passed an action plan to defend those rights.

The convention, themed "Community Action – It Works!", paid tribute to the efforts of CUPE members to defend public services. Apart from the need to organize politically to prevent another election win for the BC Liberals, delegates discussed various ways CUPE members can strengthen their communities at the local level.

#### A commitment to community

In the convention gallery, delegates signed a pledge to shift 10 per cent of their household spending from imported to local goods and services.

"The Ten Percent Shift is a simple, doable action that benefits local economies and helps local governments develop revenue streams independent of senior governments or commodity prices," said CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill.

Delegates adopted a range of progressive resolutions, including motions advocating for a comprehensive public child care system for B.C. and Canada and calling on the BC Liberal government to restore appropriate levels of funding for education.

This year's guest speakers continued the local action theme. Gati Malete, trea-



□ **HERE COMES TROUBLE** CUPE Keynote speaker Linda McQuaig, best-selling author of *The Trouble With Billionaires*, had delegates – including CUPE National president Paul Moist and CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill – in stitches with her well-aimed barbs at corporate tax evaders.

surer of the South African Municipal Workers' Union, thanked CUPE for its assistance in an anti-privatization campaign that returned several services to public operation in various communities in her country. And Linda McQuaig, who signed copies of her latest book, *The Trouble with Billionaires*, ridiculed the Right's call for the corporate vote in community elections. She also urged delegates to elect progressive governments that will make fair taxation a priority.

#### Dedicated service

United Steelworkers of America's Steve Hunt joined O'Neill to pay tribute to former BC Federation of Labour Secretary-Treasurer Angela Schira, who retired last year. O'Neill thanked Schira for her more than 25 years of dedication and service to the labour movement, and said her role as mentor to hundreds of women activists continues to inspire.

Former BC NDP Leader Carole James also received thanks and appreciation, for her seven years as leader of the party. Delegates gave James two standing ovations during an emotional presentation. Interim NDP leader Dawn



□ **SOUL SISTERS** CUPE BC delegates paid tribute to outgoing BC Federation of Labour secretary-treasurer Angela Schira (L) and former BC NDP leader Carole James (C), while interim BC NDP leader Dawn Black (R) brought greetings from the party.

Black then thanked CUPE members for their past and future support.

On April 17, the day after convention adjourned, the NDP selected Adrian Dix as its new leader and Leader of the Opposition (see interview, p. 13). Black later announced her retirement from politics. HEU secretary business manager and former CUPE National president Judy Darcy, acclaimed as the NDP candidate, will run to replace her as MLA for New Westminster.

Next year's CUPE BC convention will be held in Victoria.

“Scratch the surface of the **Where’s The Fairness** campaign and you find an attack on pensions.”

## To the CFIB, “fairness” is a gutted pension plan

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has launched a media campaign against public sector pensions. Their whine is a familiar one: “overspending” on public-sector employees is to blame for just about everything.

This time, the target is pensions – specifically: “unsustainable public sector pension commitments and the lack of fairness in the Canadian pension system overall. There is already too large of a gap between private sector and public sector retirement benefits ...”

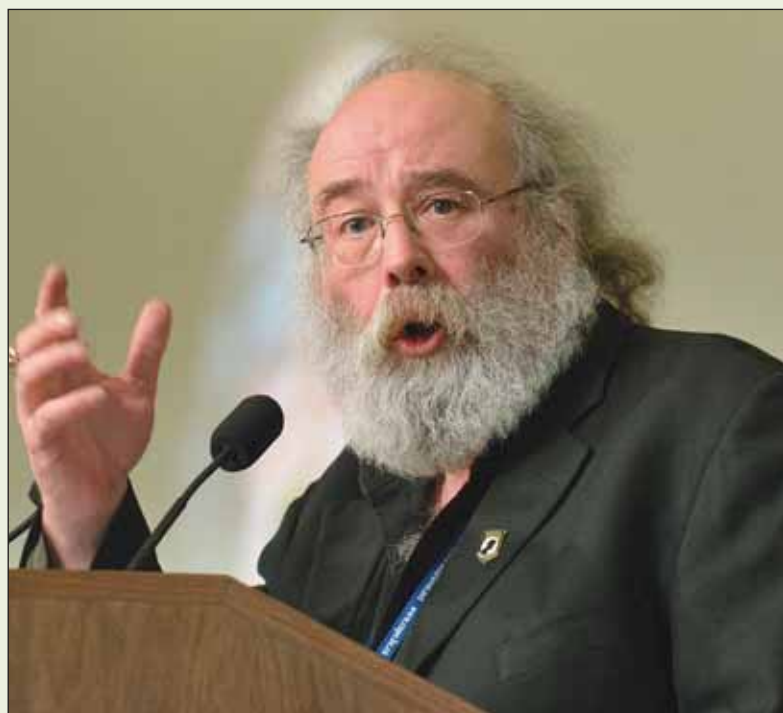
Sadly, but predictably, the CFIB’s answer is not to improve pensions for all workers but to get rid of ours. So, despite decades of privatization and federal governments bending over backwards to appease business with lower taxes, bailouts, and unfair trade deals, it’s still public pensions that are ruining Canada.

From the CFIB’s website:

“These public sector unions and employees do not live in the real world and neither does the government with increasing minimum wage and benefits. The economy would do much better if increases in wages were due to merit. [The] Public sector needs to revisit merit raises and benefits. No buyouts and reasonable pensions with [employees] paying at least half or more of the portion out of their wages...”

Scratch the surface of the *Where’s The Fairness* campaign and you find an attack on pensions. The group is “calling on governments to reform public sector plans along the lines of what is happening in many private sector plans – reducing benefits and converting defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans.” This comes as no surprise to CUPE members – their pensions are under attack by employers across the country.

Defined contribution plans are less costly for the employer. For the employee it just means less – less security, less



**KEY DISTINCTION** CUPE members need to be aware of the differences between defined benefit plans, which are good, and defined contribution plans, which are not, says Robin Jones.

guaranteed retirement income. CUPE members negotiated long and hard for defined benefit plans.

Defined benefit plans are based on earnings multiplied by years of service, and the onus is on the employer to maintain contributions. The end result is a steady and predictable level of benefits. Defined contribution plans, on the other hand, are based on fluctuating factors – like returns on investment – that let the employer off the hook.

A CUPE National convention resolution back in 1997 put it this way: “Defined benefit workplace pension plans are the main factor separating seniors with financial security from those in poverty...”

Where’s the fairness? In improving retirement security for all Canadians by immediately doubling Canada Pension Plan benefits, in increasing old age security and guaranteed income supplements, and in passing legislation that will safeguard our defined benefit public service pension plans. We can’t afford not to.

Robin Jones is director for CUPE’s British Columbia region.



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# STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

**CUPE MEMBERS  
PLAY LEADING  
ROLE IN LOCAL  
DEMOCRACY**

**Though it may seem like 2011 has been one long election campaign already, it's important that CUPE members in B.C. gear up for what is in many ways the most important campaign of all – the local elections on November 19.**



***"Far from painting us as big, bad union types, the other trustees are more willing to hear criticism of P3s, and they are more interested in understanding the realities of workers' lives."***

"We get involved in local elections because we're a big part of all the communities we live and work in," says CUPE BC secretary-treasurer Mark Hancock. "The support that Locals give to endorsed candidates for council and school board all across the province makes a huge difference in the kind of representation and leadership in local governments.

"That's important to our members, who want to see their communities prosper and provide opportunities for their families to succeed and lead quality lives."

In preparation for the local elections, CUPE BC's Political Action committee held a Political Action conference in June (see sidebar). PAC chair Paul Faoro says the enthusiasm of conference delegates has spread to the general membership, leading to greater involvement and activism in local election campaigns than ever before.

"The 2008 civic elections showed us how important the activism of CUPE members really is," says Faoro, president of CUPE 15 and a CUPE BC general vice-president. "Our members understand that local government is really the most accountable level of government and how important it is for us to be involved."

## **Taking the leap**

For some CUPE members, it's a natural evolution to move from activism and elected office within CUPE to seeking a spot on council, school board or even the mayor's office.

"A decision made on a Monday night can be felt in the whole municipality on a Tuesday morning," says City of North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto, a member of CUPE 873, summing up what he's learned since first being elected in 2005. "Your day to day activities are greatly influenced by municipal government, and this is your one chance in three years to decide who represents you, so it's important to choose wisely."

Mussatto says that municipal council decisions regarding funding and bylaws have such an immediate impact on people's lives – from garbage collection to recreation – that the vote on November 19 is critical. In tough economic times, a more right-wing council will look at cutting hours to libraries, rec centres and even daycare facilities.

"Union members and other

progressive candidates want to be there for public services you not only enjoy but need,” says Mussatto, who is seeking re-election for a third term as mayor.

“I’m very thankful to CUPE, who have always shown a great deal of support.”

### Building a campaign – one member at a time

CUPE BC’s community election campaigns are focussed on member-to-member communications. As in past campaigns, the union will be setting up phone banks to contact members in every corner of the province to encourage them to vote – and to get involved. There is also election funding in place for CUPE locals: any local that contributes a donation to an endorsed candidate can get matching funds from CUPE BC for their candidate. If that candidate happens to be a CUPE member, additional funding is available.

CUPE BC will also be launching a new website focused on local elections – [votelocal2011.ca](http://votelocal2011.ca). The site will feature resources for CUPE members working on election campaigns, or running as candidates themselves.

Surrey’s Laurie Larsen, for example, isn’t just the president of CUPE 402 – she’s also seeking her second term as Surrey School Board trustee.

“I think that, for the other trustees, having two of us from CUPE on the school board has opened their eyes to a lot of our issues,” says Larsen. “Far from painting us as the big, bad union types, they are more willing to hear criticism of P3s, and they are more interested in understanding the realities of workers’ lives. So it’s important that union members run for these positions.”

Larsen says that her first term on the local school board has allowed her to work on poverty issues in Surrey, giving her a voice on matters such as the aboriginal graduation rate, the school lunch program – making sure that children get at least one good meal a day – and other needs of the North Surrey area.

“People feel that they can talk to you and address you on a one-to-one level, as a trustee,” she says.

“Without the support of my local and of CUPE, I wouldn’t be able to run, get elected,



*“As an activist, you already have the heart. So if you want to run for public office, you can count on the support of your union to do it. There’s all kinds of support and training available, so go for it!”*

and work on these important issues.”

### Making a difference

Louise Piper, a Chilliwack Board of Education trustee running for re-election this fall, points to local education and enhancement agreements aimed at aboriginal learners as a highlight of her first term.

“These agreements are aimed at improving aboriginal experience in our school system, so that their lives are better outside of it,” says Piper, a former president of CUPE 458. “That work is extremely important, and you can participate in this kind of work by running for your local school board.”

Piper says that the partnerships between CUPE, teachers, parents, admin groups, and students can be very rewarding.

“We work on policy together, and there are opportunities to hear everyone’s input,” she says. “When I first got on the school board, and saw the opportunities to improve public education with this kind of consultation, I thought, ‘That’s what building strong communities is really all about.’”

Colleen Jordan, a former CUPE 379 (Burnaby schools) member, served 14 years as CUPE BC’s secretary-treasurer before retiring in 2005. She was first elected to Burnaby city council in 2002, and is now running for a fourth term.

Like the other CUPE members interviewed for this article, she emphasizes the importance of politics at the community level as having the most impact on people’s lives. She encourages younger union activists to consider running for their local councils or school boards.

“It’s really a great way to give back to your community,” she says. “Being an activist, you already have the heart, and you’re motivated to make things better. So if you want to run for public office, you can count on the support of your union to do it. There’s all kinds of support and training available, so go for it!”



*“Progressive trustees need to play a bigger role with the BCPSEA. Trustees who care about education in their community need to advocate for better education where the decisions are made.”*

### ON THE COVER

From left, Colleen Jordan, Louise Piper, Terry Allen, Darrell Mussatto, and Laurie Larsen are CUPE members all seeking re-election to their respective councils and boards of education on November 19.



*“When I first got on the school board, and saw the opportunities to improve public education with this kind of consultation, I thought, ‘That’s what building strong communities is really all about.’”*



## Standing up to Victoria

CUPE 379 president Terry Allen, running for his fourth term as Surrey Board of Education trustee, says that school trustees function as important messengers to parents and the community at large.

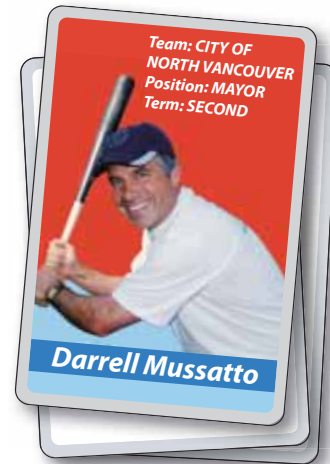
“The influence we have is critical,” he says. “All school boards are funded by the provincial government, but the fact that the government finds itself in a budget shortfall does not give them the right not to provide our children with equal opportunities for the best education possible. So by lobbying the government, advising parents through forums and informing them of what’s going on helps them decide who to vote for provincially.”

Allen says his upcoming retirement next June should clear the way for him to represent the Surrey board at bargaining talks with the BC Public School Employers’ Association.

“Progressive trustees need to play a bigger role with the BCPSEA,” says Allen. “Trustees who care about education in their community need to advocate for better education where the decisions are made.”

In the last federal election, CUPE members worked the phones tirelessly to get out the vote for NDP candidates in key ridings all over the province, helping re-elect incumbents and win new seats for the party. And in the last provincial election in 2009, CUPE members made the difference in a number of close races. CUPE BC president Barry O’Neill expects much the same result this fall, in the community elections.

“CUPE members are active in our communities 365 days a year, so there’s no doubt we’re committed to making our communities stronger,” says O’Neill. “But I encourage all CUPE members to work even harder as November 19th gets closer. Not just to elect great folks who come from our great union, but because it’s more important than ever that we elect representatives who will stand up for their communities.”



*“A decision made on a Monday night can be felt in the whole municipality on a Tuesday morning. This is your one chance in three years to decide who represents you, so it’s important to choose wisely.”*

## POLITICAL ACTION CONFERENCE: IT’S TIME TO USE OUR STRENGTH

**BURNABY** | In preparation for a jam-packed political calendar in 2011 – the HST referendum, an anticipated (but postponed) provincial election call, and civic elections in November – CUPE BC’s Political Action Committee held a three-day conference in June attended by more than 100 delegates from across the province.

The conference workshops touched on a wide range of topics, including the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook during campaigns, capacity building at the local level, and campaign

skills, techniques, and tactics – including communication strategies.

CUPE BC president Barry O’Neill, opening the conference, addressed the importance of CUPE’s active involvement in politics at all levels. NDP Opposition Leader Adrian Dix, picking up on this theme in his keynote address, delivered a rousing speech that foreshadowed the NDP’s campaign for the next provincial election. Dix shared his vision for a more equitable society that treats every citizen with dignity and respect.



□ **ON MESSAGE** BC NDP leader Adrian Dix, seen here with Paul Faoro, Mark Hancock and Barry O’Neill, says the BC Liberals can be defeated.

Delegates responded with several standing ovations.

PAC chair Paul Faoro said participants came away from the conference with a clear message: CUPE members have the ability – by sheer virtue of their numbers – to make the difference in

many B.C. communities on November 19.

“And that’s not just by showing up on Election Day to cast their ballots,” said Faoro, “but by getting involved in the campaigns through volunteering, donating money, or even running as a candidate.”

## ALL "SMILES" AS CUPE AD WINS CALM AWARD

**BURNABY** | CUPE's community health members, volunteers and staff were recognized for communications excellence at the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) awards held in B.C. this year.

CUPE won the Best TV Ad award for "Smile", produced by Janet Szliske and Spring Advertising in support of the B.C. Community Health campaign, and an honourable mention for Best Cyberunion for the same campaign's website, [www.howcupehelps.org](http://www.howcupehelps.org).

The annual CALM awards cap off two days of workshops and CALM's AGM, hosted this year at the HEU's provincial office in Burnaby from May 5 - 7.

## STRONGSTART WORKERS JOIN CUPE ON ISLAND

**PORT ALBERNI** | CUPE 727, representing workers in the Alberni School District on Vancouver Island, welcomed



□ **LEFT COAST SOLIDARITY** CUPE delegates from B.C. assemble at the Canadian Labour Congress' bi-annual convention, held this past May in Vancouver. The convention, billed as "Good Jobs. Better Lives—Unions make a difference," focused on building a strong, sustainable national economy that creates family supporting jobs and ensures no one is left behind.

StrongStart workers as new members just before the B.C. Division Convention.

The new members are certified Early Childhood Educators who have considerable experience in the early child development field and were working in Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet and Bamfield elementary schools.

Under the StrongStart program, children engage in play-based early learning opportunities with the participation of parents and caregivers.

CUPE warmly welcomes these new members and the contributions they make to help parents and children develop early connections with the public school system.

## CUPE 3799 WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS AT UNBC

**PRINCE GEORGE** | CUPE 3799 at the University of Northern BC was proud to welcome English Language Associates as new CUPE members just after the spring issue of *Public Employee* went to press.

"I believe that our local is stronger with the English Language Associates, and we will look forward to supporting them in their work," said CUPE 3799 president Dale Laluk.

The new members work as instructors teaching English to various students.

CUPE 3799 represents approximately 330 staff at the University of Northern BC in Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Fort St. John and other locations throughout northern B.C.

## CUPE BC SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED

**BURNABY** | CUPE BC has awarded the Aubrey Burton-Reg Ford Memorial Scholarship to three students this year.

Receiving \$500 each from secretary-treasurer Mark Hancock on behalf of the Union are Jayme Brown of Quesnel (CUPE 1050), Amy Longo of Kamloops (CUPE 3500), and Darrell Rye of Pitt Meadows (CUPE 703).

The annual scholarship is awarded to children of CUPE members who are planning on entering post-secondary education.

Congratulations to this year's winners!



□ **PURPLE WAVE** Air Canada flight attendants held rallies across Canada on September 20 to demand a fair deal. Less than an hour after the final event was held in Vancouver (left), a tentative agreement was reached – thus averting a strike scheduled to begin the next day.

ADRIAN DIX ON HOW TO BRIDGE THE INCOME GAP, CREATE MORE EQUALITY ... AND TAKE CUPE'S LEAD ON THE ECONOMY

# "People need to be able to pursue their dreams ..."

"My first priority is equality, in the broadest sense."

Those are the first words from BC NDP Leader Adrian Dix during a mid-September interview with *Public Employee*, after a furious five months of campaigning against the HST and preparing for a possible snap Fall election. Dix shared his thoughts about his approach to politics and his priorities for the Fall sitting of the B.C. Legislature.

Dix said that he and his team were more than ready for an election this autumn. But since Premier Christy Clark announced that the next election wouldn't take place until May 2013, his caucus has shifted gears and is ready to work for positive and progressive change in its role as the Official Opposition.

## Time to bridge the gap

Asked to name the biggest changes to British Columbia after a decade of BC Liberal government, Dix focused on the increased disparity between rich and poor.

"The differences between us are growing," he says. "Not just between people, but between communities and even neighbourhoods, leaving us quite a divided society. The government is writing off a lot of people. The practical reality of having the highest child poverty rates in the country is that a lot of people no longer have the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

"I think the provincial government has a role to play in addressing that. The government has jurisdiction over health care, education, and a lot of community living services, and the land base. The work we're going to do will help ensure that everyone has a chance to fulfill their dreams. What all the evi-

dence tells us is that a more equal and just society benefits wealthy people, too."

## Union sets example

Dix said he was particularly inspired by CUPE BC's Ten Percent Shift campaign to support local economies, and added he thought there was great potential to bring the Shift to the provincial level. He said the caucus will be focusing on elements of the Shift campaign during the Fall session.

"The provincial government has an important role to play in supporting communities," says Dix, "and we're going to be focused on those issues in the Legislature and all over the province."

He said provincial health authorities like the Interior Health Authority should be using their purchasing power to support local agriculture and manufacturing businesses.

"The IHA is the largest employer in the region where they have arguably the best food in the world. Why aren't they serving it to patients? Why would they import apples from New Zealand when they are right there in the Okanagan?"

Dix said that if governments at the local and provincial level adopt the approach of the Ten Percent Shift, "then we can really make a difference in communities. We can make our local economies more resilient, we can support small business and we can build links between people, between labour and small business, for example, that we haven't seen before."

A longer version of this article is posted on [www.cupe.bc.ca](http://www.cupe.bc.ca).

■ **ROLE TO PLAY** The BC government should support strong local economies by adopting the principles of the Ten Percent Shift, says the NDP Leader.



## An inter-continental bill of rights for corporations

Proposed trade deal with EU would undermine local democracy, economic development on two continents

By Blair Redlin

If you thought the NAFTA and TILMA trade deals were bad news for democratic rights and local economies, then you'll want to pay close attention to the proposed "Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (or CETA) between Canada and the European Union (E.U.)

The E.U. has a larger economy and larger population than the U.S., and it's home to some of the world's largest corporations. So the CETA should raise alarm bells for average working Canadians. This intercontinental trade deal, which is being negotiated behind closed doors by the Harper government and EU officials, aims to provide major new rights for corporations at the expense of democratic decision-making. Based on leaked drafts of the text, it's clear that CETA threatens public services, municipal autonomy, public water, jobs, and much else.

Among its proposed provisions:

- Changes to intellectual property rules that will increase pharmaceutical costs in Canada by \$2.8 billion per year;
- New rights for corporations to sue elected governments for public policies they don't like;
- New investor rights that will encourage privatization of public services like drinking water, while at the same time making it harder to bring privatized services back in-house; and
- Loss of democratic rights for municipal and provincial governments, especially with regard to public purchasing.

This past summer, CUPE brought its concerns about the deal directly to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) as part of a delegation of Canadian civil society organizations opposed to it. The European Parliament had recently passed a resolution on CETA, raising concerns about public services, Canadian asbestos, Canada's tar sands, and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) from Canada, among other things. So when the eighth round of negotiations was held in Brussels (July 11-15), it was critical that dissenting voices be heard at the table.

CUPE's Carol Ferguson and I were part of the delegation, which not only lobbied parliamentarians but also met with



□ **CETA BUSTERS** The Trade Justice Network delegation made a presentation on CETA to the Intergroup on Public Services at the European Parliament in July. From left, in foreground: Garry Neil, Council of Canadians and the International Network for Cultural Diversity; Scott Sinclair, CCPA; Larry Brown, NUPGE, and CUPE staffers Blair Redlin and Carol Ferguson.

**Seeing the negative impacts of privatization in Europe made defending public services in Canada feel all the more urgent.**

European unions and civil society groups who share our concerns. One thing we learned was that, while many services in Europe have been privatized over the past decade, there is a growing movement by local public authorities to take these services back. Seeing the negative impacts of privatization in Europe made our collective task of defending public services in Canada feel all the more urgent.

Back home, the campaigning against CETA continues.

Municipalities throughout B.C. and Canada continue to raise concerns about the threat CETA poses to their ability to create local jobs and business opportunities through strategic procurement. Last year's Union of B.C. Municipalities convention passed a resolution calling for local governments to be exempt from CETA provisions.

Because so much of what the Europeans want is within provincial jurisdiction, Canada's provincial governments are actually at the negotiating table for the first time. In July, CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill called for Premier Christy Clark to let B.C. citizens in on what her government has offered to give up in these talks. It's long past time that the Province shared with the public the details of its position on public purchasing rights, increased drug costs, public water and the range of other CETA issues that the Province is negotiating.

**Blair Redlin is a CUPE Research representative.**



□ **LENDING A HAND** Members of CUPE 4728 lent their skills to a housing project sponsored by Habitat for Humanity.

## Union know-how helps out the needy

### Project combines City, CUPE, NGO resources

**GRAND FORKS** | CUPE 4728 members have volunteered their services for a community project that brings together municipal workers, the City of Grand Forks and Habitat for Humanity.

City council donated land to enable Habitat for Humanity to build individual houses. With the help of the City and CUPE members in late April, the organization began building a multiplex for people in need.

“This is an exciting project that will

benefit our community,” says CUPE 4728 president Mike Noseworthy. “Our members are proud to help Habitat and to contribute to their extraordinary efforts constructing housing locally. This isn’t the first time we’ve done this type of project for a non-profit, and we hope to continue working with Council and CUPE volunteers to build a better future in our community.”

Grand Forks city council donated materials, supplies and the use of City equipment while CUPE 4728 members volunteered their time, labour and expertise to install the water and sewer services.



□ **CENTURY CITY** More than 800 members of CUPE 1004, including Engineering department workers Dino Martelli and Tom Key (top), showed up on June 9 to celebrate the 100th birthday of the Vancouver outside workers’ local. Local president Mike Jackson (above) hoists a birthday gift from City of Vancouver manager Penny Ballem. The framed collage shows CUPE 1004 workers on the job throughout the past century.

## Mexican miners’ rights activist joins Ginger Goodwin tribute

**CUMBERLAND** | Vancouver Island’s Miners’ Memorial Day festivities in late June were especially poignant this year, thanks to the presence of an international guest who knows all too well the violent struggles that miners face in defending their rights.

Napoleon Gomez, leader of Mexico’s Los Mineros miners’ union, joined members of CUPE’s Vancouver Island District Council and other union activists for the



annual event at Cumberland Cemetery, which holds the grave of miner and union organizer Ginger Goodwin.

Goodwin, who took part in strikes in Cumberland in 1912 and at the Trail smelter in 1917, was shot dead by police

□ **LASTING LEGACY** Members of the Vancouver Island District Council pose near Ginger Goodwin’s grave on June 25.

in 1918. Miners’ Memorial Day honours Goodwin and all miners who have given their lives in the struggle for workers’ rights.

Gomez spoke about the 2006 explosion at Grupo Mexico’s Pasta de Conchos coal mine, which killed 65 Los Mineros members. He has lived in exile in Canada since then, after denouncing the deadly mine explosion as ‘industrial homicide’ and criticizing Grupo Mexico and the Mexican government.

## CUPE 556 DONATES \$1,000 TO HOMELESS

**COMOX** | CUPE 556 (Comox Valley Regional District workers) have donated \$1,000 to the “Dawn to Dawn” project of the Action Homelessness Society.

CUPE 556 voted at the local’s last AGM to make an annual donation to Dawn to Dawn. This funding will be used to assist



in supporting Dawn to Dawn’s two programs. The Residential program provides barrier free housing to the homeless. The

Care-A-Van program operates a mobile health care unit that provides social and health care services to the homeless and those at risk.



**1**

**1 DIVERSE CITY** CUPE members brought lots of enthusiasm to the multi-union entry at this year’s Pride Parade in Vancouver on July 31. The Pride festival was preceded by the international OutGames and human rights conference. To see videos by CUPE members who attended, visit [cupe.bc.ca/news/videos](http://cupe.bc.ca/news/videos).

**2 WEARING IT WELL** CUPE 1004 member Michael McGahey puts on his union face for Labour Day festivities in the Lower Mainland, held at Vancouver’s Robson Square on September 5. This year’s BC Federation of Labour event focused on young workers.

**3 BREAKING BREAD** CUPE BC’s Diversity vice-president (aboriginal workers) Dale Whitford hands out bannock and stew at Vancouver’s Oppenheimer Park on June 18. The theme for the second annual event, which coincides with National Aboriginal Day on June 21, was Respect, Honour and Kindness.

**4 HONOURING OUR FALLEN** CUPE 116’s organizer for Day of Mourning events, Barry Jones, poses with CUPE BC president Barry O’Neill at the UBC campus on April 28. The annual ceremony, held in communities throughout the country, pays tribute to workers killed or injured on the job.



□ **FOR A HEALTHIER START** CUPE Metro Council’s Ian Norton (L), Cindy McQueen (C) and Marcel Marsolais (R) present Edmonds Community School with a donation of \$3,400 to help the school provide a healthy breakfast program for students from the culturally and ethnically diverse community in Burnaby. Kids from more than 48 countries attend Edmonds. Shown here (from left to right) are Angelica Mendaros, Liam Snow, Nafisa Amirova and Rasul Vays. Accepting the donation are Principal David Starr (second from L) and school secretary (and CUPE 379 member) Karen Dawson (third from R).



**2**



**3**



**4**



## Community Cruiser ready to roll

**BURNABY** | At long last, the much-anticipated CUPE BC Community Events Trailer is ready to hit the road and come to a community near you.

The 28-foot trailer, which features its own sound system, barbeque and stage, was constructed with 100 per cent union labour and built using – wherever possible – only Canadian or North American components.

“A lot of people said it couldn’t be done,” says CUPE BC President Barry O’Neill. “And I have to admit, it wasn’t always easy. But our members said they wanted to show all the cynics that you

can still build things here at home, that going offshore might be cheaper but not better. I’m proud to say we’ve succeeded.”

O’Neill singled out CUPE 1004 members for their strong support of the trailer, including project manager Glenn Jones. The graphic design features photographs of members of CUPE 23.

“I’m really looking forward to our first event with the trailer,” said O’Neill. “And everywhere we go with it, we’ll be sure to remind people: we can do it here. ‘Local First’ isn’t just a slogan for CUPE BC – it’s the way we work.”



□ **MUSIC FOR CHANGE** CUPE took its folding chair and reusable water bottle to two major folk festivals this summer, with CUPE BC and CUPE National sponsoring both the Vancouver and Vancouver Island folk festivals. In Vancouver, CUPE backed the No Power Greater workshop featuring Hollywood actor Tim Robbins and his Rogues Gallery Band. At the Vancouver Island festival, VIDC Environment Committee member and CUPE 951 treasurer Michèle Favarger (far right) joined one of the many roving water crews.

## CYCLE OF HEALTH

**DUNCAN** | For CUPE 606’s Joel Canfield, biking to work is win-win. In June, he took part in province-wide Bike to Work Week celebrations and won a new touring bike in Nanaimo. When he arrived back home, he found he had also won a helmet and gloves from a bike shop in Duncan.

For Canfield, biking to work isn’t a once-a-year event. The school district computer technician rides five kilometres to Ladysmith Intermediate “almost every day, unless it’s snowing – then it’s just impossible to stay upright.”

His return to biking a few years ago was actually triggered by the School District. “They weren’t adding more work vehicles, and I had to get to different work sites,” he recalls. “I can be called to any of almost 40 schools, offices or satellite programs. That got me back into biking.”

Canfield’s advice for fellow cycle commuters?

“Wear highly reflective clothing, lights and a helmet. And remember that very few roads are designed for bikes. It may seem daunting at first, but persevere! The adage that there is safety in numbers is true – and that helps motorists get better at sharing the road.”

For Canfield, the real win-win is “reducing my carbon footprint and pollution, and of course my cardiologist thinks it’s wonderful, too.”



CANFIELD

“As Michael Layton said at the state funeral, quoting his father’s advice to him: ‘Always have a dream that is longer than a lifetime.’”

## Rise up: Jack Layton’s legacy and call to action

As CUPE members across B.C. look towards a busy fall of bargaining and community elections, it’s worth taking some time to reflect on the life of Jack Layton and think about how we can turn his message of hope and optimism into action for communities.

In Jack’s stirring letter to Canadians, written two days before his death, he reached out to all of us with a vision of how we can make our country better. He called on each of us to work to ensure that Canada is a “country of greater equality, justice, and opportunity.” He reminded us that “we can build a prosperous economy and a society that shares its benefits more fairly.” It is now up to all of us to take that message to our friends, neighbours, and communities. Together, we can help realize Jack’s vision for Canada.

One of Jack’s greatest strengths was his desire to make a difference in the lives of Canadians from all walks of life. It didn’t matter where you were from or what your beliefs were. And, he wasn’t afraid to say “union.” Jack recognized the importance of the labour movement and the role we play in Canadian society. He knew that our contributions are central to economic development, social justice, and progressive change.

Drawing from his own experience, Jack also understood the crucial role that municipalities have in shaping society. As a city counselor in Toronto, he forged ahead of his contemporaries to champion causes like the environment and care for those affected by HIV/AIDS. He understood that through local politics, we can build bridges and make



□ **LOVE, HOPE & OPTIMISM** Mark Hancock greets Jack Layton at CUPE BC’s 2010 convention. We must rise to the challenge the late NDP leader left for us in his inspiring and moving final words to Canadians, says Hancock.

real, lasting change. And he was able to translate that philosophy to federal politics – first through his time leading the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, then as NDP Leader, and finally as Opposition Leader.

**This fall, we all have the opportunity to take Jack’s lead and** start making Canada a better country, right in our own communities. On November 19, British Columbians will head to the polls for civic elections. CUPE members must play a key role in organizing within our communities to elect progressive candidates to school boards, municipal councils, and regional districts right across B.C.

Sisters and brothers, there is a lot at stake in 2011, but there is also a lot we can accomplish by getting involved. As Jack said only a few months ago, “We’re all in this together. It’s time to roll up our sleeves and make it happen.” And, as Michael Layton said at the state funeral, quoting his father’s advice to him: “Always have a dream that is longer than a lifetime.”

**Mark Hancock is secretary-treasurer of CUPE BC.**



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**POWERFUL LEARNING ... ON THE COAST!**



# Parksville School

## NOVEMBER 13-18, 2011

This year's week-long school, to be held at the scenic beachfront Quality Resort Bayside in Parksville, will feature five courses:

- Advanced Collective bargaining
- Advanced Occupational Health and Safety
- Creating Social Justice
- Facing Management
- Steward Learning Series

Registration deadline is **October 28**, so there's still time to sign up!

For more information, contact CUPE Education representative Ruth Scher at 604-291-1940 or [rscher@cupe.ca](mailto:rscher@cupe.ca)

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Municipal Pension Plan

Plan to attend and learn more about ***YOUR*** pension plan.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12**

Hilton Vancouver Metrotown  
6083 McKay Avenue  
Burnaby, BC

Starting at 9:30 a.m.

Also available by webcast at  
[mpp.pensionsbc.ca](http://mpp.pensionsbc.ca)

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Check out our new and improved website.

Learn how you can support your local economy.

Help others learn to shift in their communities.



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 **B.C. COMMUNITY ELECTIONS 2011** TIME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# It's your vote. It's your community.

On November 19, vote for the candidates for Mayor, Council and School Board who will keep your community strong and represent your values.

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