

LOCAL 191 AT THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS CONVENTION

VANCOUVER, JUNE 10-14, 2002

By Kelly Mazur

Kelly Mazur was one of three delegates of our Local who attended the CLC convention in Vancouver from June 10 to June 14. See our webpage www.mts.net/~num for her full report to the membership.

A huge Thank-you to the Executive of Local 191 and the general membership for giving me both the pleasure and opportunity of attending this most memorable CLC Convention with Brother Paul McKie and Sister Cindy Garofalo.

This year's convention was dedicated to the memory of Brother Dick Martin who served as a senior officer of the CLC for 15 years. I personally remember Brother Martin from when he served as president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL). He certainly was a devoted brother who did so much for the labour movement in general. Brother Martin passed away in 2001.

The theme of this year's convention: "Building a Stronger Movement in the Workplace, in the Community, Across the Country, and Around the World"

The focus of this statement will hopefully give renewed meaning to solidarity, so that a higher standard of living and better quality of life can be achieved for all.

Nancy Riche, secretary treasurer,

was responsible for the opening of the convention and did so with her own unique style. This will be Sister Riche's last CLC convention as she will be retiring this year. Sister Riche introduced Brother Ken Georgetti, President of the CLC as our first speaker.

Brother Georgetti said since the 1999

Toronto Convention through organizing and new affiliates the CLC membership has increased by 200,000 members. What a powerful statement to start off this year's 23rd Convention.

Brother Georgetti touched on the importance of how the labour movement has to get with the times, and emphasised that Labour can become a powerful political force and defend people from the corporate greed and capitalist excess.

"To be successful, to give workers, their unions and the Canadian Labour Congress what they deserve, it is up to us as a labour movement to change our thinking,

and respect our past while meeting the challenges of the future, there's no stopping us."

We in the labour movement often see the glass as being half empty rather than half full, Georgetti said, and when we don't meet the high expectations we set we forget just how much we have accomplished. In other words: Unions are making things better.

Brother Georgetti's address was very informative and covered so many areas all of which



Delegates to the Convention: Paul McKie (president, Local 191), Kelly Mazur (executive board member, Local 191), Cindy Garofalo (Assistant Staff Rep, Local 191).

are of great importance but simply too many for me to cover, therefore I will give you an idea of such areas that were touched on;

- Building a political force - making the political system more accountable.
- Certifications & polling satisfaction - the Ontario Conservatives have done a great deal to make it harder to organize workers, as a result of this certifications last year were up.
- Globalization - workers in Canada aren't against trade - we are for trade and in favour of the jobs and prosperity it can create.
- Medicare - One of the most important campaigns we can take on. Americans spend an average of \$5,668.92 (CDN) per capita for a system in which 43 million people have no health care coverage, and 2 million have inadequate coverage.

But in Canada the country spends approx. \$3,139.99 (CDN) per capita for a system that covers everyone's basic health care.

- Advancing human rights and fighting racism - CLC is proud of the work done on advanced human rights & fight racism.
- Federal government - both the government and opposition know the CLC exists. The most challenging task we have had is to make them understand that this country's working families must come first.
- Educate through winter schools - we continue to educated through winters schools, weekend schools, workshops, labour colleges.
- Political activism - "Get governments to live up to their responsibility by exercising our solidarity."
- The way ahead - I have been listening to all our members, I have been travelling across the country attending federations of labour, labour councils.

A tribute was made to Jean Claude Parrot (JC) who is also retiring this year from the CLC Executive. Brother Georgetti referred to Parrot "As a man ahead of this time." Parrot is known for his work as national president of the Canadian Union Of Postal Workers (CUPW) as well as chief negotiator for 18 years. Another tough act to follow for anyone.

On Thursday, June 13th the tribute to Nancy Riche took place, with many international women speakers addressing the issues & causes that Sister Riche became so involved in and how she helped many women across the world. Sister Riche is considered one of Canada's best know labour activist, who has been with the CLC as an officer since 1986. We will certainly miss her.

New Executive, New Mandate:The final day - Friday, June 14th,

- President... Ken Georgetti
- Secretary Treasurer... Hassan Yussuff
- Executive Vice Presidents:

Barb Beyers, Marie Clarke Walker

CEP Sister Carol Wall is Vice-president - Workers of Colour, and CEP Sister Kim Beemer will serve as Vice-president - Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Workers.

In closing, the 23rd Canadian Labour Congress Convention dealt with many very important resolutions and since so many were brought to the convention we were barely able to touch on most during the short time we were there. Therefore the remaining resolutions are referred back to the executive council.

Free Press'

MARVIN McDONALD DIES

By **Scott Taylor
and Manfred Jager**

On May 26, Free Press sports writer Marvin McDonald, a member of the Media Honour Roll of the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame and for more than 20 years the voice of amateur sport on the pages of the Winnipeg Free Press, died of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, complicated by lung cancer.

Marvin was 62.

Born in Black Diamond, AB in 1940, Marvin earned a degree in physical education from the University of Alberta and started his professional career as a swimming coach. Among the many champion swimmers he developed was Canadian Olympian Graham Smith.

In 1969, Marvin moved from Edmonton to Winnipeg to become head coach of the Cardinal Swim Club, where he met June Nattress, his closest companion for 30 years and his wife for the last 14.

Marvin left the Cardinal Swim Club in the early 1970s and, after a period of time in private consulting work, took a freelance job with the Free Press, covering soccer, writing under the pen name of George Kick.

In 1978, he became a full-time employee of the newspaper's sports department, working for former sports editor Hal Sigurdson. The job enabled him to cover every Manitoba swimming championship as well as swimming champions for two decades.

On Jan. 21, 2001, Marvin was presented with a plaque by the Manitoba Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association, honouring him with a place on the Media Roll of Honour in the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame.



It's easy to forget that as working people we're connected to things greater than just our job.

That's particularly true for many of our members, who have successfully negotiated strong contracts. That's nothing to be embarrassed about. We all deserve a pat on the back for our solidarity.

But for many of us the solidarity stops there. We have a job. It pays decently because we helped the union battle for a strong collective agreement. But we forget we have a greater connection and responsibility to the working world at large - both union and non-union.

I was privileged to attend the 23rd Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress in Vancouver in June, along with delegates Kelly Mazur (from Free Press Classified Advertising) and assistant local rep Cindy Garofalo. The CLC convention is a real eye-opener for people who think of unions as job security and a pay raise.

I was astounded at my first CLC convention in Toronto in 1999. I was a little better equipped this time, but still overwhelmed by the amount of information and the sheer, raw commitment many of our sisters and brothers have to improving the lives of all people.

Sometimes the policies seem outrageous, almost quaint in their stereotypic radicalism. This may be especially true to those union members who still vote for political parties who pass anti-worker legislation.

But the policies of the CLC that are accepted (and many progressive measures did pass) become a blueprint for the labour movement in the country. Many of you may laugh and dismiss a call for international solidarity as loony left-wing rhetoric.

But is it radical to protect the rights of working people in the media? In Manitoba? In Canada? In the world?

Our local has made a small, but significant step, toward reaching out beyond traditional unionism. That step is one of the things I'm proudest of in my five-and-a-half-year tenure as president - the CEP Humanity Fund.

The Fund represents everything that is forward-thinking and positive about modern unionism. It shows that working people in Canada - who enjoy a lavish standard of living compared to developing nations - are thinking beyond their own narrow self-interest.

For a measly penny an hour workers help workers in poorer countries have a better standard of living and labour. Local 191 has



by **Paul McKie**

embraced the fund - not just the union leadership, but the union membership.

Negotiating the fund into collective agreements is the local's policy. Workers at Transcontinental Printing were first. Then the Free Press. Then the Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal. And just recently the Winnipeg Sun bargaining council negotiated the fund into the contract.

If you want to know more about the work of the fund, check out the excellent report from sister Pearl Bainbridge (Free Press, Creative Services) on our web page at www.mts.net/~mum/humanityReport.html.

Pearl went to Peru last year to see the fund at work. Her commitment has been recognized and rewarded. The fund has asked Pearl to sit on its board - a ringing endorsement for the change an individual rank-and-file member can make.

Some people like to equate the work of the fund to donating to a charity. But the CEP Humanity fund isn't charity work - it is the lifeblood of what a union must be.

Unions exist to help all working people, not just the ones in the union. CEP's national constitution mandates that kind of responsibility from its locals under Article 12.07.06. The national union asks that a local "do all things reasonable and necessary to accelerate the adoption of laws which may be beneficial and to encourage defeat or cause the repeal of laws which may be detrimental to working people."

That's the kind of connection I felt at this year's CLC convention. Many of the most progressive - and appealing - resolutions dealt with our global connections.

We live in a world where secretive trade deals enshrine the rights of corporations but completely ignore working conditions for the people who toil for those corporations. That should concern all of us.

If Canadians can't increase the standard of working conditions of workers in other nations, then we face the very real threat that the standards we've come to accept and enjoy will be next on the trading block.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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