

CEP NATIONAL CONVENTION

UNION CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY



The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada celebrated its first decade as a national union with its fifth national convention, Sept. 29-Oct. 3 in Toronto.



By Glen Dawkins

More than 1,300 delegates representing over 400 locals were in attendance, including representatives from Local 191: President Paul McKie (Winnipeg Free Press), First Vice-President Glen Dawkins (Winnipeg Sun), Second Vice-President Rick

Palmer (Brandon Sun), executive board members Kelly Mazur (Winnipeg Free Press), Jamey Rosdobotko (Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal) and Al Sansom (Winnipeg Free Press) and local representative Adolph Setek.

"Your union works for you," said CEP President Brian Payne in his opening remarks to the delegates. "And your support for your union is also working for you and your families."

Delegates voted on a number of motions. Among the key motions, delegates voted to create a National Youth Committee, to increase strike assistance payments and to adopt a comprehensive energy policy including support for ratification of the Kyoto protocol. Strike assistance was increased to \$200 after 15 days and to \$250 every week after that.

Delegates also passed motions calling for the development of a policy for a democratic Canadian media and for the CEP to urge the federal government to prohibit cross ownership of newspapers and TV stations and the establishment of media advisory committees at all newspapers and TV stations "of significant size" made up of representatives from management, union and the general public.

Delegates defeated a resolution to hold national conventions every three years instead of every two, although a committee was struck to study the pros and cons of the matter and report back at the 2004 convention.

Local 191 presented two motions for consideration. Delegates passed a motion drafted by Sister Mazur to streamline the procedure for handling disciplinary matters in a timely and effective manner. However, delegates defeated a motion requiring National Board rank-and-file members to provide quarterly written reports to each Local in their region. It was felt that this is information that could be obtained through the minutes of National Executive Board meetings.

Several guest speakers addressed the convention. Among them was actress and national spokesperson for the Canadian Health Coalition Shirley Douglas, who spoke against privatization of the health care system. "The very same health companies and insurance companies that were fighting in Saskatchewan from 1944 to 1962 are the same companies that trying to take health care away in this country," said Douglas, the daughter of the late Tommy Douglas the former NDP leader who introduced Medicare as premier of Saskatchewan.

Further information on the CEP energy policy can be obtained on the CEP web site at www.cep.ca.

Free Press strike - continued from page 1

"We were looking for some way of getting the two sides back to the bargaining table," McKie said.

"We were getting concerned that local management had boxed themselves into a corner here. Some way had to be found to resolve the deadlock.

"We soon found that the owners were amenable to start talking again."

Media Union Local Representative Adolph Setek and John Webster of the pressmen's union flew to Vancouver on Oct. 12 to meet with the Free Press owners. Full-fledged negotiations resumed on Monday, Oct. 14.

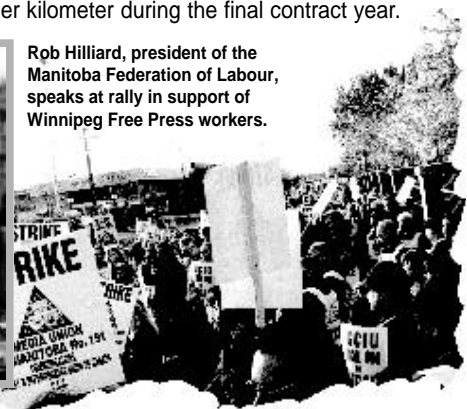
A tentative agreement was reached during subsequent days and picket lines in front of the Free Press Building on Mountain Avenue came down at 7 p.m. Oct. 17, when union members met to ratify the new contract.

It covers all three employee groups – inside workers, press operators and newspaper carriers – and expires Sept. 30, 2005.

Contract provisions include pay increases of two per cent for each of the first two years, followed by a final increase of 2.25 per cent for inside workers and press operators. Carriers will receive an additional half cent profit per paper in each contract year and an extra 2 cents per kilometer travelled during the first and second years of the contract with another 1 cent per kilometer during the final contract year.



Rob Hilliard, president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, speaks at rally in support of Winnipeg Free Press workers.



McKie said the Free Press suffered little or no circulation setback because of the strike.

"The first paper after the strike, Sunday, Oct. 20, sold 35 per cent more copies than average, probably because people expected the

weekly TV-plus section, which did not reappear until the following Saturday."

As for after-effects of the strike, McKie said there has been steady improvement in the workplace environment, "but there still is quite a bit of tension in the building.

"A lot of the managers continue to be a bit uptight. I'm sure things will get back to normal before very long," McKie said.



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MFL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

WINNIPEG
OCTOBER 17-19, 2002



By Alice Sebastian



I attended the MFL Women's conference held in Winnipeg on Oct. 17, 18 and 19 and gained a lot of knowledge from the workshop I participated in.

My workshop was "Finding Our Voices," facilitated by Heather Grant-Jury and Cecile Cassista. Both are excellent speakers.

The workshop focused on public speaking. I found out that speaking in front of a room full of people was entirely different than my job, which involves dealing with the public every day. We had a full day of instructions and lessons in preparation for a three-minute speech to be given the next day. Three minutes doesn't sound like a lot, but when you aren't used to standing at a podium and speaking to a group of people, it seems like an eternity. I did manage to do fairly well, but I don't think I'll be out speaking in public anytime soon.

The Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) Women's Committee organized and sponsored this event. This committee is comprised of women from the unions affiliated with the MFL. Part of the committee's mandate is to promote women's participation in their unions, raise awareness of issues as they relate to women in the workforce, and liaison with other community groups.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DID NOT ATTEND THE LAST LOCAL 191 GENERAL MEETING IN SEPTEMBER ... at which time nominations for the executive board took place. A new executive board was declared by acclamation. We welcome the new faces on the Board, as well as the returning Board members.

ANNOUNCEMENT



The local has just been through its most extensive strike ever. The gory details of what happened are to be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The bottom line is almost 1,100 of CEP 191's nearly 1,800 members went for eight days without a paycheque in order to support their efforts to get a fair collective agreement at the Winnipeg Free Press.

The rest of our members at our other shops looked on with interest — many of them walking the line in their spare time or helping out with the strike.

I was proud to see our members on the line supporting the bargaining committee. Walking outside your place of employment without knowing when you're returning is a scary proposition. Once again, the membership proved they would back up their bargaining committee. That kind of solidarity results in gains for you at the bargaining table — even against a ruthless employer.

When I say membership, I refer also to our brothers in the GCIU (they tell me they DO have sisters at other shops). CEP 191 and GCIU 900M have bargained together for so long I forget there's another union. We act as one and the employer treats us that way.

The strike showed that people in different departments — and unions — will walk the line for a principle and to help other departments.

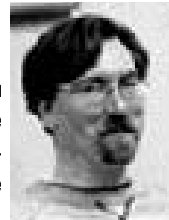
Not every member goes to bargaining with an agenda. For many of us we have a mature contract — as old as 40 years for some people. Those contracts had their battles on language and basic rights and pay grids a long time ago. The strike showed we recognized not everyone is that far along.

The number of part-timers at the Free Press has increased dramatically over the last 10 years. The union has recognized that while our contract is mature, the language for part-timers was not.

The last several contracts have seen steady, if slow, improvements for part-timers. The most recent advance was the ability for part-timers to take their vacation pay when they go on vacation.

Did we go far enough? No, we did not. But we did make progress. As long as the Company continues to use part-time workers — and treat them as disposable commodities despite long-term service from many — we will take part-time issues to the table.

Our carriers had the hardest time of all during these negotiations. Their contract is very young — this is only their third agreement and only the second negotiated one. (The first carrier contract was imposed by the Manitoba Labour Board.) They are also the only unionized carriers in North Amer-



by Paul McKie

ica, and they break new ground with every step.

I know the carriers wanted to go farther with this contract. And it's difficult to have patience when you've been on the bottom rung.

But our unionized carriers have made great strides since they were first certified in 1998. By the end of this contract in 2005, their compensation package will have increased more than 50 per cent from the pay they received when they first signed union cards in 1997.

Solid collective agreements aren't made overnight — or even over two or three contracts. They are living documents that react to the membership and the fortunes of the economy and the employer over years, even decades.

It is the fondest wish of all Free Press employees — and indeed our members at all of our shops — that the companies for whom we work do well. That means increased benefits for all of us.

Which raises the stickiest question over this, or any other strike. Why strike when you hurt the very business you want to succeed?

A strike is a powerful weapon — the ultimate weapon. We don't own the company or control the bosses. But we own our labour. A strike shows that we will withdraw our labour until we see something better at the table.

A strike should not be used foolishly or maliciously, but be used to further the cause of the membership. The economic impact of such a strike — and the Free Press owners have publicly declared the strike cost them \$2.5 million — is our ultimate leverage.

Make no mistake — the Company management team bears full responsibility for putting you on the street. Their failure to recognize your concerns in normal bargaining made us use the ultimate weapon.

We're back at work now and the business is prospering once again. (The owners have made shareholders in the investment trust pay for at least half the strike by reducing their monthly dividend.)

We've learned a lot about our membership because of the strike. Let's hope the new owners have learned something too.

The owners must do something inside the building to change the abysmal relationship management has with its employees. They better move soon — 2005 is sooner than they think.



THE BARGAINING UNITS AT A GLANCE ...



Local Rep Adolph Setek reports to the membership,

Brandon Sun: The Media Union of Manitoba attempts to reach a new collective bargaining agreement for workers at the Brandon news paper to coincide with the new contract for their colleagues at the Winnipeg Free Press have failed. Both papers have been under the management of the same new owners, FPCanadian Newspapers Limited Partnership, since Thomson Corp sold them last year.

CEP Local 191, the Media Union of Manitoba, is about to commence bargaining with the company in Brandon. The current two-year collective bargaining agreement covering about 100 workers at the newspaper expires Dec. 31. Some insiders have indicated that provisions of the new Winnipeg Free Press contract, reached after a nine-day strike would have had a good chance of being accepted by the Brandon workers. Said Setek: "It's not a very good situation for the union to have to bargain with the same owners in Brandon so shortly after reaching an agreement at the Free Press. Our people out there feel left out. Now we have a situation where our people in Brandon look in from the outside."

MUM officials in Brandon have indicated a desire to have their future contracts expire at the same time Free Press contracts end so joint bargaining can take place.

Winnipeg Free Press: At press time, the Manitoba Labour Board had scheduled three days of hearings on an application by the Union to pass judgement on the Union's refusal to grant membership to a Free Press newsroom employee hired by the newspaper from Calgary in June, 2001.

The Union's membership committee last spring refused membership to the employee because he crossed CEP picket lines during the Union's strike against the Calgary Herald in 1999, thereby acting as a strike breaker.

Since the Free Press has con-

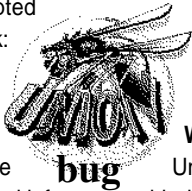
tractual obligations to operate as a closed shop, the Union argues, union membership is a condition of employment and only union members should be employed by the Free Press in non-management jobs. MUM asked the labour board for a ruling in the matter earlier this year.

Winnipeg Free Press: The Manitoba Labour Board has scheduled Dec. 10 and Dec. 13 for final hearings in Media Union of Manitoba grievances regarding the company's contracting-out practices. Contracting-out has particularly affected the jobs of workers in the newspaper's distribution department. Two earlier hearings on the grievance took place in September.

Naylor Publications Ltd.: The Union has filed application for bargaining rights on behalf of 12 additional employees of the company. The Manitoba Labour Board has scheduled two days of hearings on the application. Naylor management has refused to recognize the Union's application, arguing it is inappropriate since the employees involved are part of the company's sales force.

Winnipeg Free Press: The Union has an on-going battle with the Freep on the status of the Circulation Department district managers. For several years, the employer has been attempting to have DMs excluded from the bargaining unit. The company has appealed the Labour Board decision which included these members in the contract. The company has now agreed to abandon their application to appeal the decision at the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal, Horizon Publications Ltd.: The Union is preparing for arbitration hearings regarding policy changes at the newspaper. The changes, effective Jan. 1, 2003, would compel employees to use their own vehicles to carry out company business. This new company regulation would particularly apply to reporters, photographers and circulation district managers and impose considerable financial hardship. The Union has referred the matter to arbitration. The hearing has been scheduled for December. The Union has been assured of a yes or no decision within seven days of the hearings.



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by Ted Kinsella



Our strike has come and gone.

Like many of the carriers, I too am disappointed in our gains. With no retro pay and only a \$200 signing bonus, my \$1.07-per-day increase will take more than 100 days to repay my loss of 10 days' pay.

My wife's route, which pays about 50 per cent more than mine, will show an increase of \$1.28 a day, and it will take about eight months to recover the 10 days of lost pay.

This having been said, you must be wondering why I and the other two carriers on the bargaining committee endorsed acceptance of the new contract.

What it came down to was that the alternative would have been much worse.

I believe that any one of the three of us could have swayed enough votes to reject the company's last offer. The company could then have locked us all out, gone to arbitration and could have tried to find another way to carry on and have the papers delivered.

Arbitration, I am told, is a 60-day process. We would have been out until at least Dec. 9. While it is no hardship for us to live on strike pay, expecting someone with a weekly income of \$1,200 to live on strike pay is another thing (it means "welcome to the real world.")

As it turns out, the whole event was a victory for the Union. The company's first position consisted of a number of concessions which would have affected almost all inside workers. When they withdrew all the concessions and threw some money on the bargaining table, it was obvious that a deal was in the making, even though the part timers did not fare as well.

Who were the biggest winners? I'd say the district managers and the advertising sales people. The company had other plans for district managers, and not only were these dropped, but we succeeded in having the court challenge against them withdrawn. In ad sales, the company wanted to cut commissions drastically. These are straight commission people and it's tough to tighten one's belt by 40- to 50 per cent.

So that is my strike story. I will have lots of comments and observations in future newsletter editions. Plainly: Carriers need to gain some respect and strength in the Union. I am hoping for a good turnout at the Dec. 1 meeting.



PrintCEPles is the official news bulletin of CEP Local 191. Chapel chairpersons are encouraged to forward news items to newsletter editor Manfred Jäger at 257-8800, manfredjager@hotmail.com or mail to CEP, Local 191, 23-1313 Border St., Winnipeg, MB R3H 0X4. Email stories to mum@mb.sym-patico.ca. phone: 949-2770, fax: 949-2774

