

Local 500 honors life members



Honorary life members Ann Robins (left) and Mike Davidson

Three CUPE members were welcomed into the Local 500 honorary life membership at a dinner held in their honor on October 29, 2010.

The members added were: Mike Davidson, Civic Services Unit, Alex McClurg, Public Works Unit and Ann Robins of the former Clerical Unit.

Also attending the dinner were current honorary life members who received their award in previous years.

Honorary life membership is awarded to outstanding CUPE members for their services given to the Local over an extended period of time.

Honorary life membership may also be given for meritorious service to the Local.

Life membership can be awarded when the person is within five years of retirement or after retirement or termination of their employment.



Local 500 President Mike Davidson (left) presents honorary life award to Alex McClurg

Honorary life membership allows you to continue to attend CUPE Local 500 meetings with voice but not vote.

Congratulations to all three inductees.

New Education for Stewards!

The CUPE Education Department has launched an exciting new education program just for stewards!

The new steward learning series recognizes that the steward has an important role to play in a number of areas in the workplace and the union. It provides an opportunity for stewards to explore a number of topics – all from a steward's point of view.

You can find out more about the steward learning series by visiting the Local 500 website or by contacting Union Development – Manitoba Region at 942-0343.

Communicator



From the President Mike Davidson

Plenty of challenges ahead for 2011

Another year is coming to a close and the holiday season is fast approaching.

The year ahead will be a challenging one for our Local both on the bargaining front and through our continued efforts to protect public services.

In addition to the day to day services we provide to our members, a number of priorities will keep us busy in 2011. These issues include the following:

- Contract negotiations with the City of Winnipeg, RM of East St. Paul, Assiniboine Park Conservancy, Canlan Ice Sports, Commissionaires (RCMP "D") and Kirkfield-Westwood Community Centre;
- Ongoing contracting out fight-back efforts in response to proposals to off-load responsibilities such as pavement cut restoration services in the Public Works Department;
- Continued work through various media ads to shine a light on public services;
- Active participation in the City of Winnipeg operating budget debate;
- Finally, membership communication efforts including workplace meetings to discuss these and other issues with you. During the past year, the Local attended a good number of these meetings and we encourage you to contact us to arrange a visit at your workplace.

Further on communications, the Communicator is an important means of reaching out to our members who do not have email or other electronic access. The other way we keep you informed is through bulletin updates. You will find these posted on your workplace bulletin board. You can also visit the Local's website for the latest news.

For those of you who are in bargaining or will be soon, I encourage you to support your respective negotiating committees. It will be crucial for their success.

In closing, we should all be proud of the many public services we provide for the citizens of our city every day.

I would like to thank the activists of our Local for the very important work you do on behalf of our members. I would also like to thank each of you for your continued support.

I wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and health and happiness in the New Year.

SEASON'S GREETINGS



CUPE OFFICE HOURS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

THE CUPE LOCAL 500 OFFICE will be closed Friday, December 24, 2010 and will open again on Tuesday, January 4, 2011.

If you need to reach someone from the Local 500 office, please call 942-1001 and leave a message. We will be checking for messages regularly.

Local 500 Table Officers

President

Mike Davidson

1st Vice President

Brian Barron

2nd Vice President

Shane Westover

Treasurer

Howard McCubbin

Secretary

Joan McMahan

Warden

Dave Gaudreau

Trustees

1 year

Keith Bousquet

2 year

Phil Dembicki

3 year

Margaret Feliksiak

Union benefits and services

Death Benefit

For members in active service, a \$500 death benefit payable to the member's declared beneficiary.

Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit

\$3,000 at no cost through American Income Life Insurance Company.

Legal Assistance Program

Free 30 minute consultation with Myers Weinberg after which members pay a reduced rate from the firm's regular rates. All Local 500 members in good standing and immediate families and retired members are covered by the program.

Stay Connected!

Sign up for the latest happenings on one or all of these sites by visiting www.cupe500.mb.ca



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Moving? Change in beneficiary? Name Change? Please let us know!

In order to keep our membership database current, please keep us informed of any information changes including addresses, names and changes to your beneficiary.

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Honorary Life Members



Q&A: Your pension questions

The Winnipeg Civic Employees' Benefits Program (WCEBP) includes a retirement pension and long term disability plan. It is the key to assuring a life with dignity and adequate income upon retirement or disability.

How does my pension plan work?

The WCEBP is a defined benefit plan. When you retire, your pension is based on a formula that takes into account your earnings history and your years of pension plan participation.

Who funds the Plan?

Both the plan members and the employer make matching contributions to the Program. These contributions along with income earned from investments, make up the Plan's financial assets that fund your pension and disability benefits.

How much do I pay for my pension?

As of January 1, 2010, member contribution rates were set at 7.6% of your salary up to the year's maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE) and 9.4% above the YMPE. This works out to an average of 8% of pay. While the combined employee and matching employer contributions amount to 16%, the current cost of benefits accruing each year is approximately 24% of pensionable earnings. This poses a significant challenge for the Program.

What happens if there is not enough money to fund benefits?

The signatory parties (Civic Unions and the City of Winnipeg) could agree to increasing contributions or to a combination of contribution increases and benefit reductions. In the event that investment returns generate a surplus, they could be used to fund pension plan improvements or reductions in contributions. However, if there is a shortfall that the parties haven't resolved, the Trustees are obligated to reduce benefit levels in accordance with the Plan Text.

Isn't the City fully responsible for all funding deficiencies of the Plan?

No. The WCEBP is jointly-trusted which means the health of the Plan is equally shared between the employer and employees.

Will there be future contribution increases to our Plan?

The Pension Plan Trust Agreement outlines how benefits will be adjusted should the plan experience funding deficiencies. In order to sustain the Plan into the future and avoid large scale benefit cuts, the Plan requires an increase to contribution rates higher than the current 8%. Without a contribution increase, the next step is to reduce benefit levels on a going forward basis.

Is our Plan the only one facing contribution increases?

Other public and private pension plans have also experienced contribution pressures. In the City of Regina, plan members pay 9.42% and 13.96% with further contribution increases and benefit reductions recommended. In the Alberta Local Authorities Pension Plan, members pay 8.06% and 11.53% with contribution increases scheduled for 2011 and 2012. Here in Manitoba, the Health Care Employees' Pension Plan (HEPP) has contribution increases scheduled in 2011 to 2015. It is important to note that in the above plans, the employers and/or employees also pay additional fees for long term disability plans. The WCEBP provides a disability pension in addition to its retirement benefit with the contributions it receives.

What's the deal with Veolia?

There's been a lot of discussion about City Council's decision regarding Veolia, a private multi-national company, chosen for the design, construction and partial operations of its wastewater treatment facility upgrades.

Who is Veolia?

Veolia Water Canada is a private water corporation owned by the French corporation Veolia Environment, the largest water and wastewater multi-national corporation in the world.

What's the issue?

While a contract is yet to be finalized, there are a lot of unanswered questions and unknown details about the deal. According to the City's administrative report, "the 30 year contract is expected to save taxpayers from 10 to 20% of the entire sewage treatment program costs," but doesn't say where those savings will come from (besides vague references to "improved design," "innovation" and "bulk purchasing") or offer any numbers to back this claim up. The report also promises that Veolia will share with the City in the financial risks associated with the project, but doesn't say

what Veolia will get in return for assuming this risk or how much it will cost Winnipeg.

What does the public think?

A recent poll conducted of city residents shows that 78 per cent of those surveyed felt that all of the details of the contract should be publicly released. Residents also strongly oppose private companies providing services like drinking water and sewage treatment.

What does this mean for CUPE members?

CUPE Local 500 is concerned that this deal is the beginning of a move to make the Water and Waste Department a standalone utility. In order for this to occur, the Provincial government would have to approve this motion. To date, we are aware that the Province has not amended the City of Winnipeg Act to allow this to occur.

The Local will continue to monitor this issue. Once further details are known, we will inform the membership as to its meaning and long range effects.

Local 500/City of Winnipeg bargaining underway

CUPE Local 500 and the City of Winnipeg have exchanged proposals in the negotiations of a new contract. The two parties met on November 29, 30 and December 1 to review and discuss the proposals. More dates for bargaining are set for January.

The proposals developed by the Union's Negotiating Committee are based on the membership priorities identified in the bargaining survey conducted in May. Copies of the Union's proposals are available from the Local 500 office. You can drop by the office at 702 – 275 Broadway.

The City's proposal package contained a number of concessions. Concessions are requests by an employer to give up rights we previously fought for and gained in bargaining. While the Local has a good track record of achieving results, it can never be guaranteed that job action will not be needed. It is important to hope for the best, but plan for the worst. In view of this, you may want to put off any discretionary spending, just in case.

Watch for more information

Keep an eye on your bulletin boards or go to our website for more information. The other way to stay informed is through email updates. You can sign up at www.cupe500.mb.ca to receive the latest news by email.

2010 scholarship and bursary award winners

Four students have won awards from the Les Butterworth Scholarship Fund sponsored by CUPE Local 500. One scholarship of \$1,250 and three bursaries of \$750 each were awarded this year.



(From left) Steven Honcharik, Jemma Palson, Trista Webb

Steven Honcharik won the scholarship which is awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Bursaries are awarded on the basis of high marks and financial need. The bursary winners are: Jemma Palson, Trista Webb and Rose Kennedy.



Rose Kennedy

The annual awards competition is open to Local 500 members and their families. Applications are available in mid-April and the competition closes at the end of June.

The scholarship was set up in 1980 in memory of Les Butterworth, a past CUPE education representative who had a strong belief in the value of education.

The success of our scholarship and bursary program would not be possible without the generous and ongoing support of American Income Life and the Local 500 Social and Sports Committee.

Steward Profile



Pierrette Boily, Curator
St. Boniface Museum

Pierrette brings a lot of experience to her job as a shop steward. She's been at it for the past 26 years and has never looked back.

"I like the interactions with and the quality of people I meet through the Union," she said. "I also enjoy taking an active part in improving things for the members in my workplace, especially through contract negotiations."

When asked what things would help her to be more successful as a steward, Pierrette says "without a doubt, more time."

"Like every steward, you always need more time to stay on top of things, take more training and promote the Union," she said.

Pierrette is also very passionate about the environment and says she's really taken the concept to heart.

"I've tried to reduce my ecological footprint as much as possible over the years. In fact, members of my extended family and I have been recycling newspapers and metal since the 1980's – well before any public recycling programs were put into place. I've also been riding my bike to work over the past 23 years and I always encourage others to do the same," concluded Pierrette.