



CALL CENTRE MEETING – APRIL 6, 2008

Recognizing serious concerns, a resolution was adopted by Executive Council, to hold a meeting of representatives from Locals with Call Centres. Much thought and planning was invested.

UTE's National Office issued a questionnaire and conducted a thorough analysis which included written submissions received from locals and members.



The following objectives were established:

- Identify and understand the issues facing members in Call Centres.
- Identify actions that can be taken at the Local and/or Regional and/or National level to address these issues.
- To develop and implement short term and long-term plans of action for the Local, Regional and National levels of UTE to address these issues.

Four major themes emerged:

Hours of operation;

Staffing;

Working conditions;

Pension benefits and pay;

Representative Workshops were created to address the themes. Though the issues identified and the questions noted were voluminous, each workshop was successful in its day long efforts, returning to the plenary with clear concise reports, and most importantly; recommendations to incorporate in action plans to be developed. UTE has established an Ad-hoc committee to continue this work on behalf of our Call Site Members.

A FEW WORDS ON CONVENTION

Convention will be held July 16 –19, 2008 in Vancouver, British Columbia. Here we will elect our National and Regional Officers, pass a budget, discuss and vote on Policy Papers and resolutions that set the direction of our union.



Resolutions have now been received and are being categorized and assigned to the four pre-convention committees who are meeting May 9-11. The resolutions will be debated and recommendations made for the convention floor. The Vancouver Host Committee has been busy preparing convention events for delegates and their families.

For further information please see our convention website at www.ute-sei.org/convention2008

**SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ AVOIR CE COMMUNIQUÉ EN FRANÇAIS, VEUILLEZ VOUS
ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE**

WHERE'S MY HEALTH CARD!!

That's the question that **YOU** and many members are asking after the recent announcement of yet "**ANOTHER**" delay. The implementation of the PSHCP Pay Direct Drug Card has been delayed despite promises from the government and our union. Most recently this was promised during the 2006 negotiations and has been on the table for many years. The Treasury Board committed to an implementation date of 2008 but now we're hearing they are only in the preliminary stages of going out for request for proposals with Sun Life and perhaps other carriers. We are now hearing that the card "**MAY**" be introduced in 2009 but there are no guarantees and we've had too many broken promises on this matter.

If you are frustrated with these ongoing delays, **you can do something about it.** The PSAC has voiced our displeasure to the Treasury Board but it will take the membership to get this matter resolved. It's time to get political and contact Members of Parliament starting with the Treasury Board President, Vic Toews. All union members should contact their own MP and ask that he/she contact Minister Toews expressing your anger at these unnecessary delays. Go to the PSAC web (www.psac.com) for details on how to contact your MP. You should also let our employer know our displeasure by putting this issue on your local UMCs, for the CRA is a part of this initiative and senior officials at the CRA should be letting the Treasury Board officials know that their employees are not happy.

You may have also heard that the Treasury Board AND the PSAC agreed to a \$1.00 (one dollar) "**convenience fee**" that **will be charged** per DIN (Drug Identification Number) which is nothing more than another way of "**TAXING**" plan holders, **this is not right.** If you disagree with the union agreeing on this you should contact either John Gordon or Patty Ducharme of the PSAC as they are our representatives in this matter.

It's your choice, sit back and do nothing and wait years for your well deserved health card or **get involved and let your voices be heard.**

UTE Political Action Committee

Nick Stein – Cosimo Crupi – Annette Melanson

UTE UPCOMING EVENTS

May 9 - 11, 2008

UTE Pre-Convention Committees
(Ottawa)

June 2 - 4, 2008

Executive Council
(Ottawa)

June 5, 2008

National Union Management
Committee
(Ottawa)

July 16 - 19, 2008

UTE Triennial Convention
(Vancouver)



CORRECTION

In the December 2007 Newsletter, we attributed a letter to the editor "Something that needs to be said regarding Membership Activism" to Christine McLennan and it should have been **Carmene Mattson.** We apologize for our error.

The Editor

CALL TO SOLIDARITY

Sisters and Brothers; The bargaining process improvements implemented by UTE since the Agency's creation have allowed us to conclude a favourable agreement before the expiry of our collective agreement. We have achieved most of the objectives set by the Bargaining Committee and approved at the 2005 Convention in the "Statement of Principles on Bargaining" (<http://www.ute-sei.org/English/committees/bargaining/2005/statement-principle-bargaining.cfm>). The agreement ratified on December 3 by a large percentage of our membership is not perfect, as there is room for improvement if we are to increase the rate of satisfaction versus your expectations.

However, we should count ourselves lucky to have completed this stage and persuaded the Agency to bargain in good faith without resorting to the usual pressure tactics. This is not the case for many of our Sisters and Brothers, who work for the Treasury Board or other agencies, who rely on support campaigns and pressure tactics to assist their bargaining teams. Many of them will undergo long and arduous bargaining periods before reaching agreements with their respective employers.

Therefore I call on you to show solidarity and good judgement by respecting their efforts, and lending moral support to all our Sisters and Brothers from other bargaining tables. As trade unionists, a **golden rule is; To honour any and all picket lines** – a rule all the more applicable if you share your workplace with other departments or agencies. Canada Revenue Agency is required to inform you of the actions to take in the event of a conflict situation in a shared (or any other) building.

Remember, a small word of encouragement, an e-mail or gesture of support (i.e. providing coffee, etc.) for your Sisters and Brothers in difficult negotiations, while a seemingly simple act, is an important show of solidarity that can boost the morale of those who do not yet have a collective agreement. All workers have a right to recognition and respect from their employer through the collective bargaining process.

In brotherhood and solidarity,

Denis Lalancette
2nd NVP, Bargaining

the president's corner

Convention is fast approaching.

It is both an exciting and an anxious time. National Officers are elected, the budget must be passed, and decisions that set our direction are concluded.

It is a time to reflect on the challenges and the successes of the past 3 years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Executive Council, the Local Presidents and their Executives, the UTE Staff and most of all, every member of the Union of Taxation Employee for their efforts, encouragement and support.

Vancouver 2008 will be a time to enjoy and remember. Open, honest and respectful debate will allow us to determine our new three year mandate. It is time for us all to focus on working together for the betterment of our membership and our union.

Our future rests in our hands and our hearts.

In Solidarity
Betty Bannon
National President



AWARDS PRESENTED DURING THE MARCH 2008 PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE



Betty Bannon with RVP Nick Stein presents the Godfroy Côté Award of Merit to **Mary Cordeiro**



Betty Bannon presents **Lina Ruel** with an Honorary Membership in UTE

HONOURS AND AWARDS DEADLINE REMINDERS

UTE SCHOLARSHIPS
INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AWARENESS
UTE HUMANITARIAN AWARD

JUNE 15, 2008
OCTOBER 15, 2008
DECEMBER 07, 2008

MG CLASSIFICATION STANDARD

The PSAC's human rights complaint concerning the MG classification standard at the Canada Revenue Agency has been settled.

The settlement removes a discriminatory element in the MG classification standard. The settlement provides for the removal of the MG Group classification requirement to supervise five or more employees effective January 1, 2007. It further provides for the identification of supervisory positions, not in the MG Group, and their re-evaluation in light of the revised MG Group inclusion requirements before the end of 2008.

Any supervisory position subsequently re-classified to the MG Group will be entitled to retroactive compensation effective January 1, 2007, as per the collective agreement, excluding performance incentives for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007.

Betty Bannon
National President

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done via e-mail to Sylvie Bastien (basties@ute-sei.org) or via the national web site. If you do not have access to an e-mail, please pass it on (with your PSAC ID) to a local representative or mail it directly to the National Office at
233 Gilmour Street, Suite 800, Ottawa ON K2P 0P2.



HEALTH CANADA ASSESSMENTS - FITNESS TO WORK EVALUATIONS

The employer may require an employee to attend a Fitness To Work Evaluation (FTWE) or more commonly called a Health Canada Assessment. The employer must have a valid reason for requesting the assessment, some of those reasons may include the following:

- an employee has been exposed to an unexpected occupational health hazard, such as a chemical spill;
- an employee appears to be having difficulty in performing the duties of the position or
- an employee's actions appear to be affected by health related factors;
- an employee is absent for a lengthy period and a return date has not been established or
- an employee is returning to work after a period of medical leave and there is concern about his/her fitness for duty.

The employer must obtain the consent of the employee for the assessment and must complete a Health Canada Job Analysis, which outlines the reason(s) for the assessment. It is important to note that the employee has a right to be provided with a copy of the reasons for the assessment. If there are any concerns with the content of the reasons, the employee is strongly advised to discuss this with the physicians.

The FTWE is carried out by occupational health physicians, with input from the employee's personal physician or specialist upon the employee's written consent. Following completion of the evaluation, both the employer and the employee are provided with a written report concerning the employee's health capacity to carry out the duties of the position and outlining specific limitations or physical restrictions. The assessing health professional discloses to the employer only information that enables the employer to take appropriate measures, e.g. information on limitations related to the health requirements of the position. Confidential medical information is not provided unless it is required to determine appropriate accommodation strategies or options and is provided with the written consent of the employee.

It is important to note that an employee may see a private physician. The Agency shall provide the approved Health Canada medical form or an Agency medical form and a description of the work, including the hazards, the extent of exposure and the use of protective equipment. The private physician completes the form and, with the written consent of the employee, forwards it along with any laboratory test results in confidence to the Health Canada health professional, who will determine if the form is complete and necessary tests carried out. The individual's written consent should also include an agreement for the assessing health professional to communicate with the employee's examining physician. Subsequently, an assessment is forwarded by Health Canada's occupational health professional to the Agency and the employee.

If you have any issue with a request from the employer for a Health Canada Assessment - Fitness to Work Evaluation, you should seek assistance and advice from your local union representatives.

Chris Aylward

Chairperson UTE National Health and Safety Committee

LET'S TALK ERGONOMICS

Ergonomics, a very sensitive word right now; so sensitive that we have a new regulation in the *Canadian Labour Code Part II*. In fact *Regulation XIX on the hazard prevention program* states, "that the employer in consultation with the policy committee or, if there is no policy committee, with the work place committee, develop and implement a program for the prevention of hazards, including those relating to ergonomics."

In the last round of bargaining, we even had a demand asking the CRA to set up a national internal ergonomic consultation and assessment program. I don't know whether that demand resulted in anything, but we can welcome Regulation XIX.

According to the regulation, the employer is to identify and assess any ergonomic-related factors such as the physical requirements of tasks, the work environment, work methods and the organization of work as well as the circumstances under which the tasks are performed. The employer is also to assess the characteristics of equipment, goods, items and work spaces.

Why tell you this? Well, for several years at the tax centre, we have had what we call an Internal Ergonomics Program. It is a committee of employees who have been trained to help members obtain the measures needed to make their work station comfortable and ergonomically compliant.

Several years ago, this committee was created after the observation was made that back pain and illnesses ending in "itis" were increasing dangerously among members. The decision was then made to train a group of people to ergonomically position all members requesting it. Since it was very successful, management has renewed this committee. Even today, the Ergonomics Committee is very active and takes action to help members prevent the various potential pains due to a poor position or non-ergonomic equipment.



"It is too expensive for business to follow ergonomic regulations."

In the new Regulation XIX, the employer must provide ergonomics education to each employee. Obviously, shutting everyone into a classroom is not very effective, but one way to meet this requirement is of course to form a committee and train the members of that committee, and they will be able to meet with all members of your office to observe them and alter their working environment so as to reduce the risks of chronic injury and thereby prevent it.

Therefore, I encourage you, if you have the slightest medical problem, tendonitis, back pain, etc; to put in a request with your manager to obtain the services of an Ergonomist to study your position and work tools.

You should also ask your employer to establish a standing committee, because we regularly have staff who move to a new environment and require adjustments to their position or work tools. It is a mechanism that costs only time and can save our members a great deal of pain.

Daniel Gagnon President
Local: 10004, Jonquière Taxation Centre



MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Importance of Equal Opportunities

In October of 2007 I participated in the Equal Opportunities Conference and had the wonderful experience of hearing from exceptionally engaging speakers, such as Senator Don Oliver and Dr. Neil Macdonald. It was during the session with Senator Don Oliver that I posed a question “How can we overcome issues of self-identification? In the context that people don’t want to self-identify.” The Senator was unable to identify a strategy and in turn asked me for a strategy or solutions.

In response to the Senators request, I began researching the Internet for information on self-identification. I felt that this was potentially one of the best tools available, however I found that the majority of information available concerned studies on racism in the United States.

Then the most natural thing happened, I had a conversation with another visible minority and it was then that I realized that usually the simplest approach is the best way in solving a problem. The person I spoke with shared his insights saying that he felt that there really wasn’t an issue for visible minorities and that in fact visible minorities were accorded the same ‘guarantees’ of non-visible minorities. This is where I find the problem lies that visible minorities themselves believe that there are no discrepancies between visible and non-visible employees, and perhaps it is a problem that through union movement we can resolve.

The solution lies in grassroots movements either by or in co-operation between the union and other visible minority groups at work and in the community at large. The Senator along with Elaine Courtney presented us with a lot of stats and facts, based on somewhat old census information, concerning visible minorities and their issues. The thing that stood out is that there is still a gap between the labour market availability and the percentage of visible minorities in the Executive Cadre and supervisors (nationally) and with the growing rate of immigration its anticipated that the labour market availability will be higher and therefore this gap will be greater. This is what people need to know. How to let people know? Here are some ideas that I came up with how to disseminate this information and let our union brothers and sisters know that there are still issues and that although some offices seem to face bigger problems then others that we stand together and in solidarity:

- Through VIS-MIN Committee newsletters
- A pamphlet that the union creates for work and for outside of work. It can be distributed at employment services, SDC, in Winnipeg the International Centre, registered communities (in Winnipeg the Chilean Association).
- Creating a workshop or brown bag lunch session explaining what self-identifying really means (we could work in partnership with the CANE committee) and identifying programs that the employer has created to address some of these issues
- Passing out information or giving a brief speech/presentation at local Vis-min Festivals (the union rep on the committee can do this) concerning the importance of self-identification and participating in employer programs.

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

On February 13th, Commissioner William V. Baker announced that the Canada Revenue Agency received an honourable mention in the 2008 Conference Board of Canada/Spencer Stuart National Awards in Governance. Brother Brunette writes the following in reply:

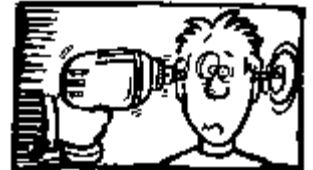
Hello M. Baker,

I am thrilled that the organization is receiving an award of this calibre.

The members of the selection committee probably did not receive their pay from our agency, because they very quickly would have changed their position on the exceptional governance practices of our agency.

In fact, when an organization such as ours is not even able to pay its employees on time, as required by the collective agreement, I feel there is no cause to rejoice and celebrate. For your benefit, Mr. Baker, there are still a number of employees in your agency facing many problems of various sorts, but all relating to their pay and that are not resolved. You simply have to go to the Pay Office in Ottawa and ask to see the many outstanding service tickets to understand the situation. These tickets take several weeks to be handled, which increases the problems in several situations. You will agree with me, Mr. Baker, that it is irregular for an employee not to be paid according to the pay scale for the classification indicated on his/her certificate of appointment.

I do not want to go into the details of many specific situations, all of which are just as important as the others, but what I do want to draw to your attention is the fact that an employee who is not paid what he/she is entitled to cannot perform to his/her full capacity or to the full extent of his/her talent. There is also a huge amount of time lost on the part of all stakeholders in attempting to find a solution to these financial difficulties.



There is still much ground to cover in compensation before receiving an award of excellence.

Thank-you for your understanding of the situation that our members, your employees, are experiencing.

Denis Brunette

Montérégie South Shore Local 10017

(Continued from page 1)

- On events such as Elimination of Racism Day, Black History Month, etc...sending out an email with some of this information.
- Making presentations at community centres (like the Winnipeg Chilean Association, etc...).

I don't know if at the end of the day this will completely solve our problem. I don't even know if it'll make a huge difference. But I do know that I should try to find a solution and disseminate information and I believe even if we make a small change, its better then no change.

In Solidarity,

Marcela Popowich
Secretary, Local 50032



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

JUST DON'T DO IT!

UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS

If the access you are about to make at work does not relate to the duties of your job:

JUST DON'T DO IT!

You may think you are providing service to the public, but it could cost you your job. We continue to have members disciplined for unauthorized accesses, up to and including termination.

- **Your computer screen reminds you**
- **The employer has reminded you**
- **The Union continues to remind you**

Yet it continues.

Please ask yourself one question before you access any account:
Does this access relate to the duties of my job?

If the answer is "no" then

JUST DON'T DO IT!

Betty Bannon
National President

TEMPERATURES IN OFFICE BUILDINGS

It is the time of year where some offices seem to experience problems with the environmental conditions.

The CRA Policy, "Use and Occupancy of Buildings", deals with office temperature (Appendix A).

To answer some of the questions as to when the operations shall be stopped and employees released, please refer to paragraph 1.2 (b) which states, **unsatisfactory condition** is deemed to exist when:

- the humidex reading exceeds 40 or when the air temperature (dry bulb) falls below 17° or •
- if instrumentation capable of accurately measuring humidex is not practically available within one hour of a complaint being made, a temperature of 29° or above shall be considered unsatisfactory **Uncomfortable** and **ideal** ranges of temperatures shown below are also explained in Appendix A.
- This policy is also available on the info zone (Employee corner / On the job / CRA Labour Relations / Management Policies (NJC replacements) / Use and Occupancy of Buildings.

Temp (°C)	Relative Humidity (%)																
	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20
35	58	57	56	54	52	51	49	48	47	45	43	42	41	38	37		
34	58	67	56	53	52	51	49	46	45	43	42	41	39	37	36		
33	55	54	52	51	50	48	47	46	44	43	42	40	38	37	36	34	
32	52	51	50	49	47	46	45	43	42	41	39	38	37	36	34	33	
31	50	49	48	48	45	44	43	41	40	39	38	36	35	34	33	31	
30	48	47	46	44	43	42	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	34	31	31	
29*	46	45	44	43	42	41	39	38	37	36	34	33	32	31	30		
28	43	42	41	41	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	29	28		
27	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	28		
26	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	31	29	28	28	27			
25	37	36	35	34	33	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26			
24	35	34	33	33	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26	26	25			
23	33	32	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	23				
22	31	29	29	28	28	27	26	26	24	24	23	23					
21	29	29	28	27	27	26	26	24	24	23	22						
20	27	27	26	25	25	24	24	23	22	22	21						
19	25	25	24	24	23	23	22	22	21	21	20						
18	23	23	22	22	21	21	20	20									
17	21	21	21	20	20	19	19										

Acceptable Temperature Range: 17°C to 26°C

Ideal Temperature Range: 20°C to 24°C

Humidex

- Relocate or Release Staff
- Corrective Measures
- Ideal Operational Range

* 29° C If instrumentation capable of accurately measuring humidex is not practically available within one hour of a complaint being made, a temperature of 29°C or above shall be considered unsatisfactory.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Clarification on requirements for members wishing to retain membership while on unpaid leave (disability, workers' comp, etc.)

For members on Workers' Compensation, Disability, or other leave without pay and who wish to retain their PSAC membership, there is an opportunity in the PSAC Constitution that allows for such members to remain in good standing.

Section 4 Sub-Section (2) of the PSAC Constitution states that members in good standing are defined as follows:

- (f) Non dues-paying PSAC members who do not have alternative employment and who are temporarily away on leave without pay for reasons including disability, maternity leave, paternity, adoption or care of family members. And who are not required to pay dues pursuant to Section 24 in any amount or percentage while on leave without pay;

Section 24 Sub-Section (23) states:

- (a) Members who do not have alternative employment and who are temporarily on leave without pay for reasons of illness or disability shall not be required to pay dues while on leave.
- (b) Members on other types of extended leave without pay **as determined by the AEC**, or on lay-off shall not be required to pay dues for the duration of leave without pay or lay-off.

However, **the onus is on the member to advise the PSAC of their situation.** If this is not done, the Membership Section has no way of knowing what is happening. In fact, the membership lists will indicate that the member is simply not paying dues, not the reason why. After a while, the membership listings will drop the name of the non-paying member.

Therefore, members should contact the office of the PSAC National President by email at gordonj@psac-afpc.com, letter using 233 Gilmour Street, 11th floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0P1 or by fax at 613-567-0385 and request to remain in good standing.

Betty Bannon
National President