



CONVENTION 2008

The 15th Triennial Convention of the Union of Taxation Employees was held in Vancouver, British Columbia from July 16-19, 2008. UTE activists from across the nation assembled (165 Delegates and 160 Observers) making this our largest convention to date.

Our convention theme was ***“WE CARE ENOUGH TO BE INVOLVED”***

And we did just that and far much more. Before, between and after the business of the day attendees donated to many and varied fundraisers to assist those in need.

There was four days of debate and discussion on the issues that affect the running of the union for the next three years. Below are listed highlights of the business topics covered:

- Elections of the National Officers (see insert for results)
- An operating budget for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011, was approved with a monthly dues increase of \$0.25 for each of the three years
- The National Health & Safety Conference was entrenched in our by laws, and three Regional Health and Safety Conferences will be held before the next Convention.
- There will be a National EAP Conference before our next triennial Convention in 2011.
- UTE Political Endorsement received a concurrence vote.

Recognition is a valuable and important aspect of our Union and an activity we hold dear to our hearts. In Vancouver the Honours and Awards Committee was pleased to make the following presentations:

- **Marcel Bertrand**, RVP Quebec Region, received the title of Life Member.
- **Jerry Dee**, RVP Greater Toronto Region received the title of Life Member.
- **Kent MacDonald**, LRO, received the title of Life Member.
- **Betty Bannon**, National President, and **Bryce Krochter**, North York, both received a 35 Year Service Pin. (This new award is a solid gold pin befitting an award of this significance.)

The Union would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Vancouver Host Committee and volunteers for all of their hard work and efforts which helped make this convention a success.



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

IT IS ALL ABOUT US

The viability and effectiveness of your local and our union rests squarely on all our shoulders. It's your efforts that will ultimately help your local maintain or regain vigour and vitality, but know that you are not alone and isolated. The knowledge, skills, and abilities of all in your Union of Taxation Employees are available to ensure a local will thrive and prosper.

When it comes to support, UTE's national infrastructure is designed and operates in a way second to none. Every member and every local representative can expect full support. Everyone is the top, of this top down organization. Answers are a phone call, or an email away. We suggest you check out our UTE website (www.ute-sei.org) or obtain the UTE Owner's Manual from a local representative. Both are truly KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES DIRECTORIES.

There is no specific or prescribed method for securing the VIABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS of a Local. It is important to recognize that strategies of development and encouragement are as varied as the wants and needs of each of us. We all must approach every issue, and every concern as an opportunity for personal growth, participation, collaboration, and ownership. While we all develop at different rates, approach and embrace issues in different ways, we are all driven by our own wants and needs and our own desires to satisfy those needs.

While it is nice to think, "Everything is all about ME", You have to remember, it's better to think: "It's all about US".

So remember this: The viability and effectiveness of Your local and our union rests squarely on All of US.

UTE Communications Committee

UTE UPCOMING EVENTS

December 1 –3,2008

Executive Council
(Ottawa)

December 4, 2008

National Union
Management
Committee
(Ottawa)

UTE MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE – JUST FOR YOU

At the July 2008 UTE Triennial Convention your delegate representatives recognized that a Union is a collective group of workers united for a common purpose:

To promote and pursue the collective interests of the members.

As such, they mandated the National Office to:

Develop, distribute to you the members, then review and collate the results of a National Questionnaire.

Your Union is currently developing the Questionnaire and will be mailing it directly to you in a few short months.

Upon receipt, **PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO COMPLETE AND RETURN IT.**

This is **ONE SMALL STEP** to your ownership in your Union,

And **ONE GIANT LEAP** toward **UNION SOLIDARITY.**

UTE Communications Committee



ELECTION CALLED – WHAT CAN UTE MEMBERS DO?

Prime Minister Harper called an election and one of the many questions arising from this is, what can we do as UTE members?

The simple answer to the question is, “There is a lot we can do, and we can elect the individuals who understand our concerns at the CRA”.

While we aren’t in negotiations like most of our Sisters and Brothers from PSAC, nor like our friends with PIPSC who are currently in negotiations with the CRA, we can seek improvements.

Are you happy with:

- How the CRA conducts their staffing processes?
- Our current pay system?
- The CRA taking resources away from compliance and enforcement, when the Auditor General just a short time ago criticized the CRA for the size of its receivables?

We all must take a direct interest in this election, not only for our workplace concerns but for our families and our communities. How many of us live in communities where the manufacturing and forestry industries have been decimated? This significantly impacts on the value of our homes and the economic well being of our communities.

While the services UTE members provide to the public are not popular for the most part, they are essential to all Canadians. If taxpayers don’t pay what they should, the government does not have the necessary resources for health care, education and other essential services.

- You should attend “All Candidates Meetings”.
- You should write letters to the editor.
- You have to ask questions of all candidates and ask the questions that are important to you.

If we don’t ask the questions or take the time to attend meetings, nothing will change and that’s just not right.

Exercise your democratic right and vote for the candidates or political party that gives the right answers. If we don’t, we will only have ourselves to blame.

The UTE National Political Action Committee (PAC) will soon be providing you, through your local, with detailed and relevant questions to ask of the candidates.

UTE Political Action Committee (PAC)

the president's corner

In my last President’s Corner (March 2008), I told you Convention was fast approaching and it would be both an exciting and anxious time. Well, Convention came and went and yes it was an anxious and exciting time. Our budget for the next 3 years was passed and many decisions concluded to set our direction.

National Officers were elected, and I am honoured, humbled, and excited to have been re elected to a 4th term as your National President.

I extend my praise to all candidates who put their names forward for consideration to the many offices; for their campaigns and efforts that only served to improve our Union.

While March was a time to reflect on the past successes and challenges, it is now time to focus on the mandate issued from Convention, as well as the challenges that will be presented almost daily. It is time for us all to focus on working together for the betterment of the membership and our union.

Our future rests in our hands and our hearts.

*Betty Bannon
National President*

UTE CALL CENTRE AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETS



Call Centre Committee

On September 9 and 10, 2008 the UTE Call Centre Ad Hoc Committee met. The committee was sanctioned by Executive Council to address the four major concerns identified by Call Site members across the country:

Hours of operation; Staffing;
Working conditions; Pension benefits and pay.

A mandate was established, objectives identified, and an action plan developed. A Network of Call Site Representatives will be established to facilitate communication and ensure prompt input and feedback. RVP's and locals with call sites will be contacted within the month to provide the committee with necessary information to present at an upcoming initial meeting with the Employer.

Debbie Ferguson for the committee

REMINDER

International Children's Awareness Canada

The Union of Taxation Employees each year sponsor a student to accompany Captain Smith of the International Children's Awareness (ICA) and his team to Africa to assist in the job of bringing fresh water to the villages of Africa. The funding for this has been estimated at \$5000.00. The trip is usually in February. We also subsidize a member in good standing of the Union of Taxation Employees with \$2500.00 to go to Africa and assist in this work.

Both the student and the member must be at least 18 years of age or older and have a current Passport. They must receive all of the required inoculations prior to leaving for Africa and will be required to sign a waiver with the Union of Taxation Employees, exempting the Union of any liability for accidents or injuries that may occur. There may also be certain paperwork that is required by ICA.

All applications must be sent to the Honours and Awards Committee **by October 15th 2008, along with an essay** on why you would like to be a part of Captain Smith's ICA team to Africa and the International Children's Awareness projects.

For 2008, the applications should be sent by e-mail to basties@ute-sei.org , by fax to 613-234-7290 or by mail to UTE National Office, Honours and Awards Committee, 233 Gilmour Street, Suite 800, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0P2.

For further information on what activities you would be involved with on the project, you can email Captain Smith at Smith.erc@forces.gc.ca.

Terry D. Dupuis Chairperson, Honours and Awards Committee

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.



DIVERSITY: OUR DIFFERENCES, OUR SIMILARITIES

The Canada Revenue Agency has developed a new online learning tool designed to provide all CRA employees with a better understanding of diversity. Diversity is a concept that promotes mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people who differ in work and cultural backgrounds, experience, education, age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion, physical abilities and all other ways in which we differ. Diversity is the individuality or uniqueness of people, distinguished by visible and non-visible characteristics.

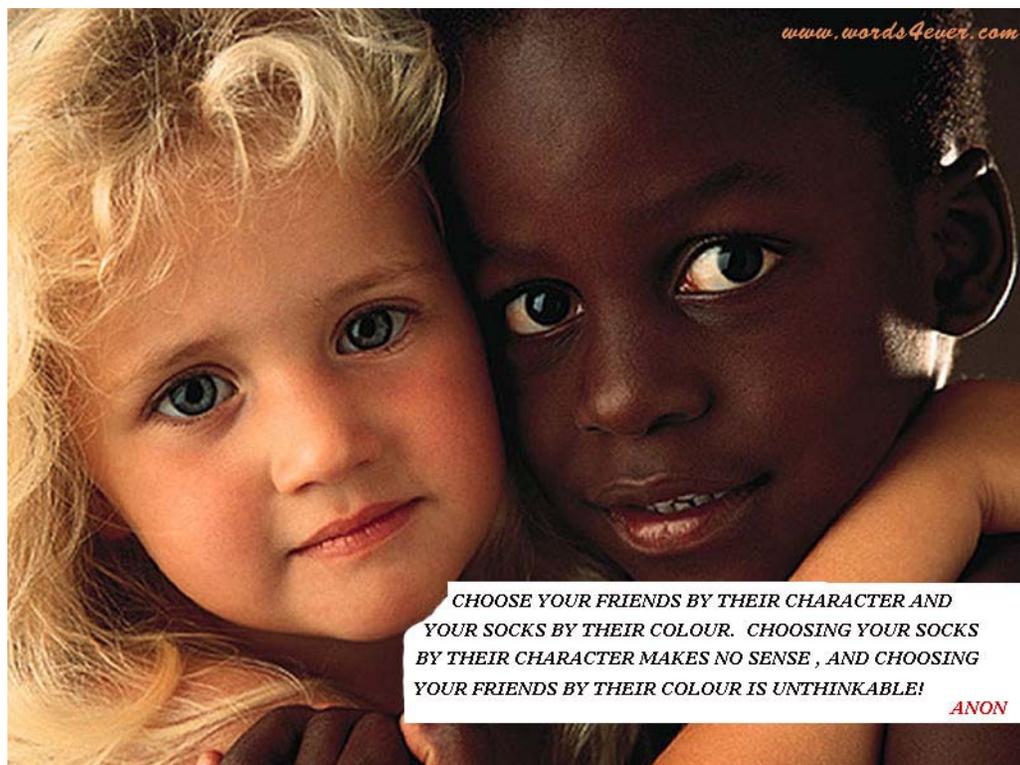
The Union of Taxation Employees Equal Opportunities Committee was given the opportunity to review the draft version of this course and to provide our comments for consideration. We are pleased to support the final version that is now available on the CRA's Infozone.

This course dispels some of the myths surrounding diversity. Many people believe that diversity is just another version of Employment Equity. In fact, Employment Equity is based on legislation and focuses on four designated groups. Managing diversity is a broader more inclusive concept that goes beyond employment equity's four designated groups in addressing the need to create a fair work environment and to better service a diverse clientele.

The course examines how legislation, policies and practices such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Employment Equity Act relate to diversity, and attempts to build an awareness and understanding of diversity for all employees.

Our employer has stated that they are committed to equipping employees with the necessary tools to work with an increasingly diverse public. We encourage all UTE members to take advantage of this opportunity, add this course to your individual learning plans and apply the lessons learned to both your work and union lives.

Cindy Little, UTE Equal Opportunities Committee



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

In recent years, the workplace has undergone significant changes. These changes have resulted in increased mental health problems, including inability to work, loss of productivity and a rising absenteeism rate. In fact, half of all Canadians (46%) think that people use the expression mental illness as excuses for poor behaviour!! As a union representative, I have had many opportunities to note that managers were part of this very large number. Managers had great difficulty identifying what was a performance problem and what was instead a mental illness. Unfortunately, this has a very negative impact on employees; they feel even more stigmatized and do not necessarily have the necessary recourses to address the situation. The lack of customized reintegration into the workplace and greater flexibility on the part of the employer are challenges that these employees must overcome, in addition to being victims of stigmatization and discrimination.

1. Prevention strategies

Offering information workshops and encouraging managers and employees to gain a better understanding of this situation.

2. Graduated return to work

In our workplaces, we are increasingly seeing employees and/or managers who are away from the office for a short or long period due to either depression, exhaustion "burn out", anxiety, panic attacks, etc.... During their time off work, they are often surrounded by professionals who help them overcome their challenge, but when the time comes to return to work, there are few resources and managers are not necessarily "equipped" to accommodate such a situation, which can potentially worsen the employee's lot. Therefore, I propose mandatory training on adaptation and graduated return to work for managers, team leaders or any other person responsible for employees.

3. Stigmatization and discrimination towards people with a mental health problem

Thinking that people with mental health problems are slack and lazy, or even that they are responsible for what is happening to them and that it is a lack of desire on their part to resolve the situation, are definitely prejudices that exist in our workplace. Our attitudes and judgments have an impact on how we perceive the people around us and how we conduct ourselves in their presence. It is important to know that a mental illness is a health problem, just like cancer, arthritis, diabetes and heart disease.

A few tips can help you deal better with these things in the workplace such as:

- Learn about mental problems, distinguish myths from facts
- Lend your support; treat people who have addiction and mental health problems with dignity and respect. Think about how you would want people to treat you if you were in that situation.
- Do not exclude anyone. In Canada, the law prohibits employers and people who provide services from discriminating against people with mental health and addiction problems.
- People with mental health problems have the right to be treated fairly by society. Let's ensure that this is indeed the case!!

*Kathy Sabourin
UTE/70000*



MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

SISTERS AND BROTHERS!!

Wow, I remember when I first heard that used.....

I thought the phrase was just another one of those “*goofy union terms or lines*”.

..... It was at a Union meeting, and new as I was then, I thought the phrase was just phony at best, or just another example of how those “*union political types*” enjoy alienating you from your own union. Anyway, I was mildly alienated, and removed from the “pomp and circumstance” as I saw it then.

Over the years as my union involvement, or help for others increased, (I won't say activism, because that too alienates people), I came to know the words oh so ever truly.

Its not a flippant phrase to those who have toiled to try and make things just a little bit better for everyone, while serving and protecting those in need of assistance. You really do have to earn the true term of “Sister” or “Brother”.

It is never glibly given out by a true union person. It is a title of respect.

It is a term of inclusion as “family”.

It is about trust and admiration earned by actions over a long period of time.

I have had the distinct honour to have worked with Sisters and Brothers and have been recognized as their Brother.

They wear their heart on their sleeve for everyone, every day.

Brothers and Sisters care. They care for each other. They care for the members they represent; who for the most part have no idea whatsoever, just how lucky they are to have been represented or been served by them. They make the Union and everyone they interact with better, for their caring. Their contributions have made me a better representative.

I want to thank them for that.

I guess that for many people, all those “*goofy union terms and lines*”, are just that.

But; when; YOU'VE.... "BEEN THERE; DONE THAT";

they mean the most, and show the most respect,

So to you Sister; to you Brother,

I sign off by one of the strongest terms I have come to understand, know, respect and cherish.....**In Solidarity**



OUT GOING UTE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
CONVENTION VANCOUVER 2008

VANCOUVER CONVENTION 2008 – ELECTION RESULTS:

The election results for UTE National President and Vice-Presidents are as follows:



Betty Bannon
National President

Bob Campbell
1st Vice-President

Denis Lalancette
2nd Vice-President



Pamela Abbott
RVP Pacific

Terry Dupuis
RVP Rocky Mountains

Shawn Bergeron
RVP Prairie

Robin Johnson
RVP Toronto



Nick Stein
RVP Southwestern
Ontario

Cosimo Crupi
RVP
Northern/Eastern

Chris Aylward
RVP N.C.R.

Sabri Khayat
RVP Montréal



Jean-Pierre Fraser
RVP Québec

Doug Gaetz
RVP Atlantic

The following were elected as Alternate Regional Vice-Presidents: Robert Hume, Lori Hall, Gary Esslinger, Esther Burt, Jamie vanSydenborgh, John Kosiba, Hugh McGoldrick, Louise Vallière, Jocelyn Bouchard, Madonna Gardiner

Delegates and alternates for the PSAC Convention were also elected.



PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM?

Article 58 of our Collective Agreement says:

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND EMPLOYEE FILES

58.01 For the purpose of this Article,

(a) a formal assessment and/or appraisal of an employee's performance means any written assessment and/or appraisal by any supervisor of how well the employee has performed the employee's assigned tasks during a specified period in the past;

(b) formal assessment and/or appraisals of employee performance shall be recorded on a form prescribed by the Employer for this purpose.

Your performance review is supposed to be an appraisal of how well you have done your assigned tasks, not how well you work with the team or how you always volunteer for committees or anything else beyond the tasks from your job description. It should not deal with those competencies that are not an assigned task.

For instance: as a collections officer, your assigned tasks should be to work the accounts in your inventory with the objective to reduce the outstanding amount of tax on each one in a timely manner following procedures. As an appeals officer, your tasks are to work the files that are assigned to you in a timely, fair, courteous manner. As a senior program officer, your assigned duties are to ensure the completion of guides, procedures and anything related to a particular program in a timely manner.

In addition, your performance appraisal should be an assessment of how you performed against the objective criteria of the assigned tasks and should not compare you to other employees. Also, numeric quotas are arbitrary measurements and not assigned tasks as contemplated by article 58.01.

Where these issues are prevalent in your performance appraisal we suggest that you contact your local steward or executive officer to discuss methods of dealing with these matters.

We also wish to draw your attention to clause 58.03 of your collective agreement.

58.03

(a) When a formal assessment of an employee's performance is made, the employee concerned must be given an opportunity to sign the assessment form in question upon its completion to indicate that its contents have been read. An employee's signature on the assessment form shall be considered to be an indication only that its contents have been read and shall not indicate the employee's concurrence with the statements contained on the form. The employee shall be provided with a copy of the assessment at the time that the assessment is signed by the employee.

Notwithstanding the wording of this clause, we suggest that should you encounter any difficulties with respect to your performance appraisal you should not sign it anyway. Management may decide to add a note that you have been provided with a copy and refused to sign it.

Complement's local 70010, Barb Stewart President

OBSERVE AND ATTEST

RECOURSE

Previously, the Agency had taken the position that recourse against the Observe and Attest initiative consists only of Individual Feedback, followed by Decision Review, they have subsequently changed the recourse to Attestation Feedback and Attestation Review.

In addition they maintain that employees wishing to challenge their assessment in terms of Observe and Attest are precluded from filing grievances due to the prohibition in the Public Service Labour Relations Act (PSLRA) where it states that a grievance cannot be filed where there is another form of redress established in or under an Act of Parliament.

The Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) is diametrically opposed to the Agency's position in this matter. In fact, we strongly hold that employees wishing to challenge their assessment pursuant to observe and attest should file grievances.

UTE firmly believes that the prohibition contained in the PSLRA does not apply in this instance as recourse against Observe and Attest is not contemplated in the PSLRA. Furthermore, the recourse provided by the Agency is not the same as redress, as contemplated by the legislators.

Finally, the Agency has insisted that Observe and Attest is not part of the Staffing Program and therefore, as it is not part of the Staffing Program, it is our belief that employees have the right to file grievances against their assessments.

This is further illustrated by the fact that the Annex L, Directive on Recourse for Assessment and Staffing issued January 31, 2008 does not include Attestation Feedback and Attestation Review as recourse mechanisms.

In closing, we suggest that employees, in addition to filing grievances, should also avail themselves of the Attestation Feedback and Attestation Review processes provided by the Agency as both systems of recourse/redress may stand independently.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact any member of the Staffing Committee.

Sabri Khayat, Chairperson /Staffing Committee

**To contact a member of the staffing committee,
please go to the UTE website, (www.ute-sei.org)
click on **committee's**
and then the **Staffing Committee**.**