



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

Associations representing “civil servants” have existed since the early 20th century. The Union of Taxation Employees can trace its direct roots back to 1943 when employees of the then Taxation Department organized themselves into the Dominion Income Tax Staff Association. However, true federal public service unions were formed barely a generation ago, with the legislating in the mid-1960s of limited free collective bargaining. Until that time, federal workers were entirely dependent on the goodwill of the employer and the politicians for their well being.

There was no grievance system, appeal process, right to negotiate and no protection from discrimination, favouritism or harassment. Three major pieces of legislation moved the federal public service into the modern age. These changes still left the UTE/PSAC and its members with the proverbial “half-filled glass”. Whereas private sector unions routinely bargained classification, staffing and pension matters, federal government unions were specifically barred from negotiating these major issues. Our members were also denied protection in such areas as workplace health and safety.

When the UTE was founded as a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada in 1966, it faced the daunting challenge of making the new laws, regulations and procedures work to the best advantage of the membership. It also faced a problem unique to federal and provincial government workers, the employer was both opponent and referee.

On paper, federal government unions historically negotiated with Treasury Board. In reality, our employer was the President of the Treasury Board, a Cabinet Minister. The bureaucrats may sit at the bargaining table, but the politicians set the rules and call the shots. They have no hesitation in changing the rules of the game any time they see the unions gaining the advantage. When we became an agency, the bargaining process changed. The UTE through the PSAC, now bargain directly with the Agency. Despite this uneven playing field, the UTE and its members have made remarkable progress over the years.

As we reach our 40th anniversary, we can look back on all of our achievements and see how far we have come. Over the years we, have taken pride in always working for the membership and we look forward to ***continuing that service***.



UTE WELCOMES ALL OF OUR NEW MEMBERS.

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

OPEN LETTER TO ALL AFFECTED EMPLOYEES – April 2006

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am contacting you on behalf of the UTE National Workforce Adjustment Committee. Two of the duties of this committee are to monitor Workforce Adjustment in the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and to ensure that your rights under the Collective Agreement are maintained. The employer has indicated there are over 1,000 affected members/employees in the CRA.

The issue before us is the use of Permanent Lateral Moves (PLM) versus placement via Reasonable Job Offers (RJO). The committee has been made aware of the employer's practice, in some cases, of using PLM's instead of RJO's. Permanent Lateral Moves are not part of your Collective Agreement, thus, for your appointment you will not benefit from any rights or protections afforded to you in Appendix C of your contract.

For example, you are entitled to two years retraining and you, as an affected employee, must be in agreement with the training plan. Your Reasonable Job Offer appointment is not subject to challenge as per the employer's Staffing Policy, however a Permanent Lateral Move may be challenged.

It is the opinion of the UTE WFA Committee, that all affected UTE members should only accept a Reasonable Job Offer and not a Permanent Lateral Move.

If you have any questions, please contact your local UTE representative or a WFA committee member. (as listed on the UTE web site.)

In solidarity,

Nick Stein Chair, UTE WFA Committee



We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office

Aesop's fables

9					3	6	8	
6	7	8					5	
			8					
					2	9	3	
4	5	9		6		2	7	8
	3	2	9					
					4			
	8					7	9	1
	9	3	1					6

SUDOKU

To solve this number placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid and with some given numbers, each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9 — but with the same number used only once in each box and row.

Solution on the UTE web site.

**UTE
UPCOMING
EVENTS**

April 21-23
Local Development
Activism Course
Edmonton

May 26-28
Regional EO
Conference
Victoria

June 2-4
Local
Development
Activism Course
Toronto

June 4 - 9
Executive Council

June 23-25
Regional EO
Conference
Calgary

Sept. 18-20
Staffing Course
Ottawa

Sept. 18-24
Executive Council &
Presidents'
Conference



WE HAVE MOVED

The Union of Taxation Employees is proud to announce we have moved to new and modern facilities in order to serve you better now and in the future.

Our new home is:

**Suite 800 - 233 Gilmour Street
Ottawa Ontario
K2P 0P2**



the president's corner

At most of the Annual General Meetings I was able to talk about the many things that are happening at the National level and answer questions from the membership in attendance. I thought that maybe in this publication we could have a little fun and look at some history of the UTE.

What Year is This?

Component dues are \$1.00 per member per month and there are 5,500 members. The Component Management Committee includes the President, Vice President, 3 National Directors and the Past President. The Executive Council of the Component includes the members of the Management Committee and 6 Regional Directors. There are 57 delegates at the Component Convention and 8 delegates are elected to attend the PSAC Convention.

Our name is "Department of National Revenue, Taxation Division, Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada" which could be abbreviated to the "Taxation Division Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada". There are 7 speakers on whether the terminology of "local" should be used in our By-laws. Our rent is ~\$2500 a year and our travel budget is ~\$2200. The allocation for Regional Conferences is ~\$4000 and Bulletins and News Letters are budgeted at ~\$200.

If you know what year this is, submit the answer to Susan Duncan at duncans@ute-sei.org by the deadline of May 15, 2006 for a chance to win a UTE Portfolio/Pen/Calculator (\$50 value). The winner will be drawn from all correct answers on May 16th. The winner will be contacted by the National Office to verify your mailing address and your name will be published in the next Newsletter.

Note: this contest is not open to the UTE Executive Council, Local Executives or Stewards.

Betty Bannon
National President

AGM-Annual General Meeting-Food for Thought

Annual General Meeting-How important is this meeting, really? It comes around once a year.

Financial Statements are presented to show how the “executive” is spending your money; Reports are given on the various committees that the Union sits on; New business is discussed, anything from a donation for a special interest, to a dues increase. Some years, there are even elections to determine who will lead the Local for the next couple of years.

It is sounding more important now!! Especially when you deal with money and leadership!!

So, why do so few attend?

Is it because they don't care about the Union?

Is it because they don't have time?

Is it because they forgot?

Is it because they cannot get a sitter for kids?

Is it because they trust the executive they elected before or maybe it is any number of other reasons...

ALL these reasons are good ones, **but** it is one night out of your life! I think most members care about the Union and what it represents as each time the Union is forced out onto a picket line by the employer, the membership is strong.

UTE locals across this country have tried various ways to get members to an AGM. (1) Some have full catered meals; (2) Friday night and have a party after; (3) right after work so members don't have to go home first; (4) later so members can put their children to bed; (5) Lots of notice is given in hopes that the membership can rearrange their schedule. (6) Some Locals pay childcare if a member needs it. I think everything has been tried but there doesn't seem to be a successful mix that works.

Sometimes shocking things happen at an AGM

Bylaws dictate quorum. Once quorum is reached, that handful of members can make decisions that affect everyone in the Local. **Imagine that!!** A mere 20 or so people making decisions that can affect the other 100, 200, 300, 400+ members. These 20 can pass resolutions to increase your dues and guess what, they usually pass. Members that are at the meeting are frustrated that so few people took time to show up, sometimes they pass even higher amounts than what was asked by the executive.

Oh, here is another shocker

You don't expect a vote as your candidate is running unopposed. Otherwise you would have cleared your schedule to attend because this is important to you. Most bylaws allow a member to run off the floor for a position. (Unannounced) **There is an election, and because you were not there to cast your vote...your candidate is defeated.** In both of these cases you find out the next day and exclaim but that is not fair!!! Guess what? No it's not but the changes and elections are duly passed by the membership!!!!

As a Union member for going on 17 years and an activist for over 12 years, I would have to say this is one of my biggest frustrations. Your executive works hard. They volunteer their time. In some cases their involvement in the Union has put an end to their career advances, or has definitely stalled it until a later date. These executives try to make your workplace a good place to come to each day. So, the next time you see a poster for the Annual General Meeting...Plan to go, Make the necessary arrangements,

GIVE YOURSELF A VOICE AND VOTE

Darlene Bembridge

Local 60005

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done via e-mail to Sylvie Bastien (basties@ute-sei.org) at the National Office. 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.



POLITICAL ACTION

Now that the Federal Election is over, UTE members, as well as all Canadians, are waiting to see what Stephen Harper's new Conservative minority government will do. PSAC members in general are concerned with issues such as:

- The Conservatives position on child care and the cancelled child care program with the provinces;
- Human and worker's rights and issues, such as Pay Equity and Same Sex Marriage Legislation;
- Whistleblower Legislation and the Federal Accountability Act; and
- The Service Canada initiative; to name a few.

The UTE members have additional concerns specific to the work that they do on behalf of all Canadians:

- the Liberal Government's budget cuts from February of 2005 that include reduction in, or the elimination of, enquiries counter services at TSO's;
- the loss over 1600 Tax Centre positions with the introduction of bar coding technology.

The UTE President, Betty Bannon has already requested a meeting with the new Minister of National Revenue, Carol Skelton, to discuss the issues and concerns of our membership. The UTE's Political Action Committee has also requested meetings with the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Labour, Finance and Treasury Board, as well as with the other party leaders and their shadow cabinet. Activists will be asked to educate the public and lobby their elected politicians, so that we keep driving home the message that cuts to programs and services will quickly lead to: poor service to Canadians; instability; uncertainty and low morale among public service workers; and weakened communities.

Please do your part when asked by your Union. You may be saving jobs and services. Our concerted effort last spring prevented the closure of the cash counters.

Your efforts do have an affect.

The Conservatives campaigned on promises of change for the benefit of all Canadians, and on improved ethics and accountability of government. We must keep a close watch and continue to take action when their initiatives and their agendas clash with what is best for workers, families, and their communities. **United we stand, divided we fall.**

Annette Melanson,
Presidents' Representative, UTE Political Action Committee

A DAY IS A DAY

In the June 2003 KING DECISION, the Public Service Staff [now Labour] Relations Board defined the workday for the purposes of leave for family-related responsibilities. The adjudicator ruled that a day was defined on the basis of the number of hours an employee worked that is in accordance with his or her work schedule.

This decision opened the door to a new interpretation of certain articles of the collective agreement, such as article 54.02 – Personal Leave. The filing of hundreds of grievances by the UTE members forced the employer to negotiate an agreement on the definition of the workday.

Employees subject to the collective agreement between the CCRA and the PSAC who had to supplement their Personal Leave Day with other authorized leave to match their actual workday will have their leave records corrected. The corrections will apply to:

- Leave With Pay For Family-Related Responsibilities (article 43)
- Marriage Leave With Pay (article 45)
- Other Leave With or Without Pay – Personal Leave (article 54.02)

The changes will be retroactive to April 1, 2002 and effective until December 9, 2004, the date of signature of the most recent Collective Agreement, in which the definition of the length of a workday was clarified as being 7.5 hours.

The employer has given us confirmation that the terms of the agreement will extend to ALL members. We won this battle as a result of the participation of our members in the grievance campaign.

Lyson Paquette, B.B.A.
Labour Relations Officer

CHILD CARE PETITION

Less than six months ago, federal and provincial governments signed historic agreements that signaled the beginning of a program aimed at meeting the needs of Canadian children and families.

The new Conservative government has cancelled these agreements, slashing \$4 billion in federal funds for child care. Without federal funding, many provincial plans to improve and expand child care will barely, if ever, get off the ground. The dream of a community-based early learning and care program for all children, regardless of whether their parents are at home or in the workforce, has been 30 years in the making. Now, it could all evaporate. Canadians are in desperate need of quality child care programs. The Conservative promise of a \$1,200 a year family allowance is not enough.

Families need income support, and they need quality early learning and child care services too. The Government of Canada can and should do both. As a society, we cannot afford not to.

Please add your name to the long list of Canadians who support public investment in child care by signing the open letter on child care at www.buildchildcare.ca. Do it today, for the future that Canadian families deserve.



MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Koats for Kids

UTE Local 50031 of the Winnipeg Tax Centre (WTC) donated thirty-seven new winter coats through the Koats for Kids Program to the Anicinabe Community School of Sagkeeng First Nations in Pine Falls, Manitoba. The school is located approximately one hundred and fifty kilometers north east of Winnipeg along the shores of the beautiful Winnipeg River. The community operates three schools; Sagkeeng/ Anicinabe High School, Sagkeeng Junior High, and Anicinabe Community school. The current enrolment for the three schools is seven hundred and eighty students starting at Nursery to Senior twelve. The unemployment rate is very high in the community and many families struggle to make ends meet. The local donated the coats in hope of assisting some of the children in need. The local's Vice-President, Richard Mueller; Area Representative, Elaine Montour; and Secretary, Tracy Theriault (photographer); along with WTC Team Leader, Debbie Tichborne; who arranged the meeting; presented the coats to the principal of Anicinabe Community School, Rick Fewchuk at the WTC. Mr. Fewchuk handed out the coats to the children with a great need and provided us pictures of them. The smile on the children's faces was thanks enough. Well worth it!



Tracy Theriault

The Weekend to End Breast Cancer

The Weekend to End Breast Cancer is a journey you will never forget; believe me. The B.C. Cancer Foundation is simply this - an awesome life changing adventure. During one amazing weekend, August 18-20th, 2006, thousands of women and men will unite in Vancouver to walk 60 kilometres in a bold display of courage and commitment. It's a weekend of hope, as we honour lives lost, celebrate survivors, and help bring breast cancer care to those who so desperately need it. This extraordinary weekend is about finding the hero in yourself and discovering strength you never knew you had. One in every nine Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Maybe someone in your life has been affected. It could be your mother, sister, wife, daughter, son, or a friend. The Weekend to End Breast Cancer is your chance to go the distance in the fight against this disease. It's your chance to be a hero for someone you love or someone you may never even meet. This is my 3rd year of participation in this event on an all PSAC union team from Vancouver. The name of the team is the PSAC Breast Stokers and BC REVP Patty Ducharme is team captain. Patty and I have participated every year with additions and deletions to the team but we keep on walking. Each walker is expected to raise \$2,000.00. Walking through the streets of Vancouver and being cheered on by strangers thanking us for doing this makes the few aches and pains worth it. People come from all parts of BC and some from the US. It truly is an amazing experience and I encourage you to join us, come out and cheer us on or perhaps you could make a donation. You can contact me at marafona@bcute.org or visit the web site at www.endcancer.ca.



Angela Marafon Local 20029



AFTER HOURS

(Notes about our members after work)

TED JALETA is a UTE member in Regina TSO Collections.

Ted holds several Masters Running Records and has just been inducted into the SASKATCHEWAN SPORTS HALL OF FAME. Ted is also an author.

Read his book of inspiration; that takes him from the destitution of an African refugee camp to All Star Track events in Canada and the U.S.A. **DON'T LOOK BACK** is a story of hope, determination and wisdom.

Pre Order your specially priced autographed copy now, and your name will be placed in a draw for the Original Cover Artwork. www.driverworks.ca

London TSO's **ART CONNOLLY** was invited to an international conference on the harmful effects of the military use of toxic chemical defoliants. The invitation is in part recognition of work on a global story on the use of **AGENT ORANGE**, its impacts on veterans, civilians and the environment and his work in founding the Agent Orange Association of Canada, a non-profit organization.

The VIET NAM ASSOCIATION OF VICTIMS OF AGENT ORANGE, based in New York City, invited Brother Connolly to the Conference in Hanoi, Viet Nam; where he represented the Agent Orange Association of Canada.

Art wants to thank the Union of Taxation Employees for their kind and generous donation to the cause.

In the last Newsletter we told you about **BILL McCALLUM** the licensed funeral director/embalmer from the London TSO who spent 5 weeks in New Orleans assisting in the recovery of victims of Hurricane Katrina. He is alive and well. He has received many enquiries about his experiences in New Orleans, and in fact has developed a one-hour presentation, complete with a PowerPoint pictorial, documenting his experiences.

Bill has made a number of presentations to date to various organizations, all of which have been on his days off or after work. London Management has approached Bill to make presentations to fellow employees at the TSO. Of course there were a number of conditions: He would have to somehow divide his presentation in half, present the first portion one week, the second the following week. It was planned he would do two complete presentations this way over lunch to employees. He asked, "What about my lunch?" And just like when he went to New Orleans, he was told this would be on his own time.

Bill declined the invitation.

CLAYTON SAUNDERS, a member of Saint John Local 60005 is a true Community Volunteer. Clayton is known by all who attended the 2005 UTE Convention in Saint John as he was a volunteer member of the Host Committee. Clayton is also a volunteer in his community. He has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion for over 30 years and has held every position at the branch level.

Here is what Clayton has said about his volunteer work with the Legion,

"I have volunteered for many functions and fundraisers over the years. The volunteer work never ends, but it is something I truly enjoy and have no intention of stopping anytime soon."

Clayton was recently elected 2nd Vice President at the New Brunswick Provincial Legion Convention. His love of community and service just never ends. Congratulations Clayton.



MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Observe and Attest

This is management's new baby, designed to make their staffing work easier, and make everyone's job harder in the workplace with your supervisor observing and attesting your skills. The fact is that management realized that the staffing system it had set up when the Agency was established was too slow and cost too much to manage. With the requirement to train agents to assess all skills in competitions, the agency elected to place the responsibility on the shoulders of your supervisors.

As you know, in a competition at the Agency, you have to produce a skills portfolio, which has to be assessed by an assessor. The portfolio can in theory contain up to 16 skills (although that is very rare), which you should develop to enable you to continue the process and possibly qualify for a position. To simplify this process, management decided to reduce the number of skills by allowing your supervisors to certify some of them. Among the skills to be certified are three that most MG positions have: conflict management, development of others and leadership of a team, and three non-MG skills: client service orientation, effective interactive communication, and teamwork and cooperation.

According to the Agency, it is expected that the great majority of employees will reach the threshold level, which prompts the question: why go through this whole costly process if it boils down to telling the great majority that they are qualified to occupy their positions? Why not make life easier by granting it to everyone in the Agency, and certifying only the new employees? This new task to be downloaded onto the coordinators will give them extra work, in the end to achieve what?—certifying 99.9% of the employees and telling them that everything is fine, while telling 0.01% of them (whose names they already know) that they lack one or more of the skills they need to do their job. Moreover, in the beginning it was absolutely essential that a specialist review our portfolios for us to be successful in a competition, whereas now it will be sufficient for someone with minimal training, provided by a second-tier manager, who got it from his or her boss, to be the specialist who assesses your skills—what a joke!

What will happen next? Well, what I think is that since it will have worked well with the initial skills, they will get other skills certified. Why? To reduce the time and cost even more—why not? In the end, what will be left of the original product? A very thin gruel with precious little flavour left. Perhaps we can draw the conclusion that management like to offer us: that the staffing system is a work in progress, and the changes they want us to swallow now should have been there from the beginning? At any rate, that is what they are surely going to try to have us believe, because they cannot have made a mistake when they set it up—that's for sure.

Daniel Gagnon
President Local 10004 Jonquière

WHY IS OUR UNION STILL NECESSARY?

There are those who would have us believe that Unions are dinosaurs, a thing from the past and unnecessary in today's workplace. I have seen a number of news articles that state unions are no longer relevant in modern society and the new global economy. Over the years unions have collectively achieved benefits such as: a standardized work week, overtime pay, and various types of leave; all of which, many of us take for granted. So, why is our union still necessary?

Things have changed. Management styles are now normally far less autocratic and the more enlightened employers will take care of us, won't they? After all, with the many forms of conflict management why do we need a union? Too many people buy into this notion, without looking beyond the surface. Our employer keeps us off balance in the ever changing work environment. Change can be good, but constant change leads to an unstable situation that eats away at your confidence. Issues such as: outsourcing, centralization of services, call centres, and contracting out, slowly erode the job security of our members and allow stress and fear to be the norm. We are all asked to do more with less. Duties are assigned which clearly are not contained in your job description. You are pushed to work harder and faster with the veiled threats and innuendo's regarding work being transferred to other offices, if you do not comply. We have members who have been expected to work unpaid overtime, or are routinely denied various types of leave, all under the guise of remaining competitive.

Pitting the various offices and regions in competition with one another as means to distribute or assign work loads, is an insidious employer tactic which has, and will continue to erode the rights and benefits that we have achieved.

Inch by inch, little by little almost unseen we fall deeper into the trap. Wage freezes of prior years and inadequate salary increases put a financial hardship on many of our members. Harassment still exists in our workplaces, and equity issues remain unresolved. What more can we achieve as a union? What would the work place be like with out a union? These are the appropriate questions, rather than why is our union still necessary? Have we achieved everything possible?

There is no doubt that many challenges lie ahead. One of the greatest challenges I believe that we will face is maintaining or protecting the benefits that we have already achieved. Without the union, it is merely matter of time before many of the things we take for granted will disappear. It is our collective strength that stands between us and an employer that cares more about program mandates than you or I. I want a better work place for all of us, our children and our grandchildren. Without the union, I fear this will never be possible.

Why is our union still necessary? With out it we would truly be defenseless in the workplace where the employer acts like the bully in the school yard. Many times we do not miss something until it is gone. Not having a union is no solution or option if we desire to improve our working lives. One only has to look at the many unorganized workplaces in our communities, like Wal-Mart, to realize the value of our union. Despite any shortcomings or faults that our union might have, it is the union that is best equipped to deal with and respond to our employer and the ever changing work environment. If we are dissatisfied with our union then it is our responsibility to become involved. Utilize the democratic process to affect positive change within the organization to insure the union is best able to serves our needs. I am not the union, you are not the union but rather we are the union. It will only be what we make it or allow it to become. It is our collective spirit that will keep our union relevant. The participation and determination that we demonstrate remains as necessary today as they were yesterday.

John Kosiba,
President Local 00042