



## OBSERVE AND ATTEST RECOURSE

The Agency has taken the position that recourse against the Observe and Attest initiative consists only of Individual Feedback, followed by Decision Review. In fact, 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.

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

Shane O'Brien ,  
Executive Assistant to the National President

## BARGAINING AGAIN

Good day Sisters and Brothers; By the time you read this, most of us will have already taken our vacations. The weeks are passing quickly, and it's time to put our shoulders to the wheel again for our next round of bargaining. This is a quick look at possible dates for the preparations of the next round of bargaining.

The legislation states that bargaining must begin four months before the end of the collective agreement, which puts us at July 1, 2007 for the Notice to Bargain and the Exchange of Demands between the employer and the PSAC/UTE. If we go by previous bargaining processes, we will give formal Notice of Bargaining Demand Collection around February 24, 2007, so that the Demands reach the National Office by about April 3, 2007.



Denis Lalancette

The members of the National Bargaining Committee should meet around April 18, 2007 to sort, study, select and prioritize the Bargaining Demands. Remember that you can prepare Bargaining Demands at any time. (The details are on our site: [www.ute-sei.org](http://www.ute-sei.org))

Unlike previous processes, there will be no National Bargaining Conference involving the UTE and CEUDA because only the UTE represents all PSAC members working at the CRA. It will be necessary to hold discussions with the employer in the months before the bargaining notice to set up a schedule of bargaining sessions.

The PSAC and the UTE will also have to schedule the first official meeting of the National Strategy Coordination Committee.

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

## Union Management Initiative

It is imperative that the Union strives to optimize its working relationship with Management. An honest open respectful Union/Management relationship is critical for us to make the workplace better for our members.

What is the Union Management Initiative (UMI)? It is the practical application of informal conflict resolution in the union-management context. It is the application of a philosophy that acknowledges the importance of harmonious and transparent union-management relations.

The philosophy was signed on October 13, 2005 by Michel Dorais, Commissioner; Lysanne Gauvin, Assistant Commissioner of H.R.; Claude Tremblay, Director-General of Staff Relations and Compensation; Betty Bannon, National President, Union of Taxation Employees and Eldon Pratt, AFS Group Chair, Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada.

The UMI is a joint initiative based on an agreed upon philosophy incorporating the following principles:

- equality of the parties within the consultative process,
- mutual trust and respect,
- a commitment to be constructive, fair, sensitive and courteous in our dealings with others, facilitating constructive decision making and problem solving at the lowest possible level, and,
- knowledge and mutual respect of legislation and national union-management policies and understanding of the functions and objectives of each party.

Management has the continued authority to make decisions after having been meaningfully consulted. The UMI reinforces the commitment to train employees having supervisory responsibilities, with union representatives.

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## UTE UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept. 18-24**  
Executive Council &  
Presidents'  
Conference  
Ottawa

**Sept. 24-26**  
Staffing Course  
Ottawa

**Oct. 13-15**  
Regional EO  
Conference  
Halifax

**Oct. 20-22**  
Local Development  
Activism Course  
Toronto

**Nov. 24-26**  
National EAP  
Conference  
Ottawa

**Dec. 3-8**  
Executive Council  
and NUMC  
Ottawa

## Atlantic Canada Responds to *Atlantica*-A New Horizon of Struggle in the East

On June 8-10, in Saint John, N.B. there was a clear representation of labour's struggle for respect, democracy, and justice. While a few hundred of the region's most wealthy and politically recognized persons came together to discuss issues of unhindered trade and private economic growth; roughly six hundred Atlantic Canadians, from all sectors of organized labour, united in various events that opposed the anti-democratic activities associated with "*Atlantica*"; an organized market-based attack on the livelihoods and social policies that surround workers in Eastern Canada.

"*Atlantica*" comes out of the ideas and objectives of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS), a right-wing think-tank that has diligently sought to fracture labour standards, decrease the size of the public sector, and diminish social services within the Atlantic Provinces. They target areas that are seen to restrict profit maximization within the private sphere. The **Atlantica Model** is a political and economic design that promotes the restriction of organized labour, along with the weakening of Federal spending on Public Services and Social Programs.

Atlantica has aimed its anti-labour anti-Canada sights on a series of issues that it refers to as "**public policy distress factors**" (areas that inhibit economic profits for a minority of private parties within Eastern Canada). A few of these distress factors include:

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The UMI formalizes the commitment management and the Union will make to optimize their relations at all levels, and to jointly support the resolution of conflicts at the lowest possible level.

The formal grievance process remains in place, and informal dispute resolution is still available to employees who are excluded or unrepresented.

As a result of this initiative you can expect to see union-management relationship optimized at all levels.

Bob Campbell & Sabri Khayat

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

### 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.

(Continued from page 1)

Keep in mind that the dates mentioned here are tentative and can change without notice.

In the coming weeks, bulletins will be sent out informing you of the Bargaining Model and Dispute Resolution Method that the UTE advocates and recommends to the PSAC.

Remember to put your shoulder to the wheel because the more of us that are there pushing, the greater the chances of a resolution that meets our expectations, within a reasonable time frame.

Bargaining is everyone's business, and we must stay informed.

Denis Lalancette, NVP Responsible for Bargaining

## the president's corner

Well I hate to say it, but the summer is coming to a fast close and it never seems to slow down anymore. The past few months have been very busy here at the National Office.

We continue to work on projects such as the Client Services, Counter and other WFA situations, recourse and staffing, job classification grievances (going to mediation before the Public Service Labour Relations Board with the MG Work Description Grievances), the Ontario T2 transfers, T2 2D bar coding, ACS, pay delivery and compensation, harmonization of audit ranges, the new online forms to support the observe and attest initiative and the Remote Quality Listening initiative. Your union receives information and attends meetings on these topics and others in order to assess the impact of various new initiatives and ongoing restructuring.

We have held two Regional EO Conferences, various committee meetings (EO, EAP, Staffing, Honours & Awards, and Communications), a Local Development Activism course and ITPR training.

We are also looking ahead to our next round of bargaining. In as little as six months, the National Bargaining Team will start looking at all the submitted demands. We will be sending out more information in the coming months.

Betty Bannon

The winner of the "What Year is this?" contest was **Marjorie Ursacki** from Local 00016 St. Catharines with the correct answer of **1966**. She won a UTE portfolio, pen and calculator, congratulations Marjorie.

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**“Government employment as a percentage of total state/provincial employment  
(a measure of public sector efficiency)”**

Atlantica; in addition to planned government reductions, a comparative relation of state employment is needed only to fulfill the immediate needs of the regional population.

Result; regional government is to be based around, and not exceed, the most immediate and limited of social needs (health, education, welfare, etc.) that cannot already be provided through the private sector, resulting in the elimination of public employees.

**“Minimum Wage Legislation (a measure of labour market flexibility)”**

Atlantica; institutionalize a fixed/frozen regional based wage.

Result; the implementation of not only a minimum wage for workers is realized but a model where wage-levels in all sectors (industrial, technology, trades, public, etc.) are to be rallied and weighed against the lowest wage, resulting in a reduced (and frozen) regionalized wage.

**“Union density (a measure of labour market flexibility)”**

Atlantica; A disallowance of increased union membership upon retirement and/or layoffs, coupled with an increased ease of de-certifying existing organized labour groups.

Result; a reduction in organized labour, creates a fluctuation in strength of future regional organized labour, and its connection to larger domestic and international links toward labour solidarity

Outraged by both the content of the proposals and the systematic elitist exclusivity, organized labour and civil society came together to offset the elitist events taking place in Saint John by constructing a counter-conference entitled;

**‘Resisting Atlantica – Reclaiming Democracy’.**

The purpose of the conference was to:

- build a public counteraction to the Atlantica Conference and hold a public demonstration against Atlantica’s exclusionary posturing.

The June 8<sup>th</sup>, kick off was a well attended plenary of roughly six hundred workers from Atlantic Canada, coming together to share ideas as to what Atlantica is and how a public coalition can provide an effective alternative to the model.

A series of workshops began June 9<sup>th</sup> after a labour-based press conference, which included all the Federations of Labour in Atlantic Canada speaking out against the Atlantica Model and its segregated antics to keep labour at arms-length, so as to ensure increased elite-based decision-making at the expense of the working majority.

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, after a well-attended ‘teach-in’, the streets of Saint John filled with one of the largest Labour Rallies seen in almost two-decades, with activists from the public and private sectors walking arm-in-arm in a statement of opposition to the Atlantica Model.

The events that took place in Saint John depict a revitalized struggle unseen in the East in years. It was a collective of unified protest, speaking out against elite interests, and working to coordinate a socially just alternative to profit centralization.

***Let us continue to join in solidarity with this movement and support the struggle.***

James J. Brittain, University of New Brunswick & Jim Sacouman, Acadia University, Nova Scotia.

**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.



# MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

*Sister Debbie Ferguson wrote a very in-depth letter to the Agency's Commissioner, speaking out on behalf of the members following the notification that 46 determinate staff, working in the Client Services Call Centre in Saint John N.B., would have their hours reduced to 30 hours and their full time status cut to part time. The following are excerpts from that letter.*

Historical call statistics are not always reliable in determining the amount of hours necessary to respond to caller demand. It is understandable that flexibility has to be built into the system; however, HQ's recommended ratio of 70/30 part-time to full-time employees is totally unrealistic. This may be the norm in CRA Call Centres, with some even hiring their part-time staff for only 25 hours per week and we may be one of the last Centres to experience mandatory part-time. Regardless, change should be supported and based on sound rationale, not by following others blindly.

I have reviewed the call centre management documentation on the Infozone and can find no reference to a 70/30 ratio. Perhaps you could enlighten me on its determination? What analysis was done; was a study conducted or is it based on industry standard? If so were modifications considered for CRA's unique circumstances, such as:

- complex subject material requiring significant training not normally required in this type of industry,
- a unionized working environment, therefore, not lending itself to perks very often employed by other non union call centre,
- educational and linguistic requirements,
- hours of operation,
- pension and other benefit implications.

When comparing cost factors for full-time vs. part-time, was only the bottom line savings of salary and proportionate pension and benefits considered or did you compare this to the additional costs incurred when hiring more employees to process work that could be performed by fewer full-time employees, including;

- training,
- larger premises,
- furniture, computers with IT support, phones, etc.,
- HR ramifications for both hiring and processing separate cheques for additional hours worked and error correction when it occurs,
- extra demands on team leaders, etc?

Did you consider the effects on service to the public, particularly in light of the counter moving to appointment based? It will be more difficult to recruit and retain part-time employees and a high turnover impacts both efficiency and accuracy.

Has the effectiveness of this undertaking at other Centres been analyzed? Did the cost per call improve? **An employee who feels appreciated and valued is a more productive employee.** Was employee morale ever factored into the equation?

*(Continued on page 2)*

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**What are the problems with part-time employment?** Part-time employment was envisioned as a voluntary measure to allow for a reduction in hours, enabling interested employees to balance work and family, to further their education or pursue other activities of a personal nature. I don't believe that it was intended to be mandatory unless the duties of the position absolutely necessitated and I am certain no one ever contemplated it being imposed on 70% of the employees of what was once one of CRA's largest divisions!

Other than the obvious concern of employees earning less income, one of the worst problems is the affect on an employee's pension.

**Pensionable time only relates to normal hours of work.**

You could potentially have part-time employees with a 30-hour normal workweek actually working a full 37.5 hours every week (7.5 additional hours). Contributions by them and the employer would continue to be based on a 30-hour workweek, with no ability to purchase the additional hours.

**THIS IS REPREHENSIBLE**

If you insist on utilizing part-time, either have the legislation changed to allow all hours worked (up to 37.5) qualify as pensionable or consider amending employees normal hours of work each time you deem an increase necessary. This would create an administrative nightmare, but if the employer insists on treating employees' retirement with such blatant disregard, the cost should be borne by the employer; not the employees forced into the situation.

Another major concern is the erosion of benefits provided for in the collective agreement. Many leave entitlements are prorated based on the normal workweek, not including additional hours, eg., if someone's normal workweek is 25 hours, but constantly works 37.5, they would only be entitled annually to take and be paid for 30 hours of family related leave instead of the 45 hours available to a full-time employee, even though both employees would work the same number of hours.

How long do employees have to work full-time hours before their status is changed from part-time? Is it a weeks, months, years or potentially never? The agency has not adopted a part-time employee policy, providing direction to the field on matters involving use, allocation of additional hours or changing status, leaving the whole area ripe for abuse.

**This is not just a determinate call centre employee issue, since vacant indeterminate positions are often being staffed on a part-time basis. All divisions of CRA experience workload peaks and valleys, so how long before this practice spills over into other divisions?**

During the last round of collective bargaining, call centre employees were called upon more frequently than other Agency employees to withdraw their services. Has this had any impact on the decision to make 70% of them part-time?

Has an Employment Equity analysis of Call Centre staff ever been performed; women, visible minorities, etc., to ensure there is no question of discrimination?

Please review the application of mandatory part-time employment in call centres and the ratio being utilized. It doesn't make sense mathematically or morally.

Carefully consider the affects this action has on employees, their benefits and the valuable service they provide to the Canadian public and take appropriate action to correct the injustice this questionable hiring practice creates.

Debbie Ferguson, Saint John Local 60005



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

### Union Activist or Politician

As a newer activist (do not confuse that with “youthful”) to this organization called UTE, I have been somewhat confused by the actions of some of my Sisters and Brothers. I write this in the hopes of getting a better understanding of the roles of our local elected officers from Steward to President.

I have observed many (sisters and brothers?) at different union events: including Annual General Meetings, education courses, conferences, and conventions. While they have professed involvement “*for the benefit and betterment*” of the membership, the ever emerging political antics have made me question the reasons for Union involvement by some.

My questions:

What, if any, are the differences between a Union Activist and/or a Politician?

What are the duties and responsibilities of all local executives?

I am sad to say I have witnessed on a number of occasions **backstabbing**.

I am hesitant to use the word but there is no better way to describe as effectively what is going on, by executives and members alike.

There is no concern for the needs of a united membership, or even the betterment of a local, but rather the “promotion” of ones own political agenda. Do they realize that by doing a disservice to their brothers and sisters they are no better than the Employer? They undermine a positive work environment, destroy trust, and alienate active involvement of our members.

Do people not realize that by participating in the infighting, let alone instigating it at times, destroys the fabric of the core values UTE stands for? Would we not be better off each and every day leading by example?

Lead with respect. Lead with tolerance. Lead with vision.

Actions speak louder than words.

It is all about advocacy and activism.

It is not about political infighting and backstabbing

I understand that the reasons any one of us participates in a Local Executive are as varied as the excuses that have been used to miss a day of work. Brothers and Sisters it is my hope that if we all re-examine our individual motivations for our involvement, we can again become a united force with but one common goal,

**SERVING OUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITIES.**

**A NEWER ACTIVIST.**

Gesine Fuchs  
Ottawa, Local 70010



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

### Open Letter to Members Affected by Technology Change

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Some of the duties of this committee are to investigate and report on matters related to Technological Change that have been referred to committee by Convention or the National President. Another task of this committee is to ensure that meaningful consultation takes place between CRA and the UTE as provided for in the Collective Agreement. Also the committee has to provide support and education to the UTE members with regard to Technological Change.

There are several updates under Technological Change available on ([www.ute-sei.org](http://www.ute-sei.org).) Each of the initiatives can affect our members in the performance of their duties. The Committee has asked that these initiatives be linked to each other resulting in less confusion.

Recent initiatives that I feel are very important for those who work in Taxation Centers are found in "MY ACCOUNT" on the CRA web site:

- 1) Change my address
- 2) Authorize a representative
- 3) Arrange pre-authorized payments
- 4) Apply for Family and Child benefits
- 5) Change my return

The employer continues to add more features to this function.

These features will result in less duties being performed by our members.

In the TSO another technological change that can affect your job is in the Integrated Revenue Collections system. The employer has software that can perform "*data mining*" to get the right work to the right worker, both for better service to the client, and data recovery. This data mining tool will produce reports for the employer which will allow for future decisions to be made dealing with clients and resources. When the initiatives are introduced in your TSO, you should request training, and monitor the situation. If you have any questions or there are changes in the work place, or to your job, please advise your local UTE Representative or a UTE Technological Change Committee Member. (contact information is available on the UTE web site.)

In Solidarity

Brian Oldford

President's Representative



# Complete this Questionnaire for a chance to win a 40th Anniversary UTE Jacket

The UTE's Communication Committee is considering changing the newsletter and is seeking your input so that our new format best meets your needs. Please complete this questionnaire:

1. on line at [www.ute-sei.org](http://www.ute-sei.org) or
2. complete this copy and
  - fax it to the UTE National Office at 613 234 7290 or
  - give it to your local representative or
  - mail it to Union of Taxation Employees, 233 Gilmour St. Suite 800, Ottawa Ontario, K2P 0P2

Those who complete the questionnaire and submit their contact information will be entered into a draw for a 40th anniversary UTE jacket. (one entry per person)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



## 1. FREQUENCY

*(The Newsletter is currently published 3 times a year. April, September and December)*

**How many times a year should we publish the newsletter?**

- Twice a year (June, December )
- Three times a year (April, September, December )
- Four times a year (March, June, September, December)
- Three times a year (plus a Special Edition if needed)

## 2. FORMAT

*(The Newsletter is currently 4 pages of general Articles and 2 inserts usually of a technical nature.)*

**How many pages should it be?**

- Fine as it is (4 general – 2 inserts)
- 6 general 2 technical
- 4 general 4 technical
- 8 pages based on the content available
- 10 pages based on the content available

**What format should it be in?**

- Printed on regular paper with spot colour (as it is now)
- Printed on newsprint with spot colour
- Printed on glossy paper, like magazines, with full colour

**3. TOPICS**

**What topics are you most interested in reading about? (circle your answer)**

A - Most interested    B - interested    C - not really interested    D - probably won't read

**Lead article (current / time sensitive)**    A)    B)    C)    D)

**President's Corner**    A)    B)    C)    D)

**Technical Inserts**    A)    B)    C)    D)

**Letters to the Editor**    A)    B)    C)    D)

**Specific Topics**

Collective Bargaining    A)    B)    C)    D)

Employment Security    A)    B)    C)    D)

Staffing / Recourse    A)    B)    C)    D)

Monitoring / Defending Collective Agreements    A)    B)    C)    D)

Health and Safety    A)    B)    C)    D)

Employment Equity    A)    B)    C)    D)

Employee Assistance Program    A)    B)    C)    D)

Technological Change    A)    B)    C)    D)

Honours and Awards    A)    B)    C)    D)

Harassment    A)    B)    C)    D)

General Interest (*Members volunteering, after hours*)    A)    B)    C)    D)

Photos    A)    B)    C)    D)

Games    A)    B)    C)    D)

Contests    A)    B)    C)    D)

**All questionnaires must be received by October 15th, 2006.**

We appreciate your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.