



## UTE was founded as a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada in 1966.

As we reach our 50th anniversary in 2016, we can look back on all of our achievements and appreciate *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*.

Look forward to National, Regional, and Local celebratory events next year.



## HOPE



As we look back over the last year, we feel how difficult and frustrating it has been for the members of UTE. We have not seen true negotiations on our contract while many changes within the CRA policies have been hard on our members. i.e. new staffing, fewer permanent appointments, fewer people to do an increasing work load.

As the year came to an end, we had some signs of hope, with the new Liberal Government that was elected on October 19<sup>th</sup>, and some statements made by Prime Minister Trudeau, such as

*“Many of those conversations were with members of Canada’s proud and dedicated public service. My team and I know that each and every time a government employee comes to work, they do so in service to Canada, with a shared mutual goal of improving our country and the lives of all Canadians. Canadians sent a clear message in this election that it is time for real change, and we will get to work immediately to implement our plan for a strong and growing middle class. Canadians expect us to fulfill our commitments, and I am confident that with your support we will accomplish great things for all Canadians. My ministerial colleagues and I also look forward to building a strong, respectful, and productive relationship with the Public Service of Canada so that together we can address the needs and expectations of Canadians in communities across the country.”*

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**SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ RECEVOIR CETTE PUBLICATION EN FRANÇAIS,  
VEUILLEZ VOUS ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE**

## NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

UTE held their National Health and Safety Conference November 6-8, 2015. The theme of the conference was, "**HEALTH AND SAFETY – MOVING FORWARD**".

Over 140 members of Local Health and Safety Committees, local activists and national officers from across the country travelled to Ottawa to learn, network, and share their experience and experiences.

The conference opened with speeches from Claude P Tremblay, Director General Workplace Relations, CRA; Robyn Benson, National President PSAC; and Hassan Yussuff, President Canadian Labour Congress. All three speakers spoke on the importance of safe and healthy workplaces and for the need of unions and employers to work together to ensure all Canadians are safe at work. Both Robyn and Hassan took the opportunity to comment on the results of the recent national election. They expressed optimism that based upon comments and communications from both the newly elected Prime Minister and the new President of Treasury Board that there would be more open and positive relationships between both the Public Service and the government as well as with labour in general.

While there were many subjects discussed, key topics presented included:

- Panel discussion on Role of Safety Officers, environmental sensitivities and indoor air quality
- Violence in the Workplace (Bullying / Harassment),
- Changes to CRA Health and Safety Policies and Operational Procedures,
- Mental Health at Work.
- Keynote Address



### **Panel Discussion**

**Safety Officers** – Their role is to investigate complaints or concerns regarding workplace health and safety. Under the previous government the number of safety officers has been reduced by approximately 50% and their roles and authority have been eroded.

**Environmental Sensitivities** – The panel stated that indoor air quality is approximately five times more polluted than outdoors. There are many factors that affect indoor air quality: which include ventilation, humidity, chemicals found in the workplace, furniture and building materials and biological agents such as mould. The panel mentioned that while there are limits in place with respect to exposure of hazardous substances, research is showing that long term exposure to concentrations below the established limits may over time result in environmental illnesses for certain individuals.

**Indoor Air Quality** Information provided that suggests that approximately 50% of problems with respect to indoor air quality relate to mechanical (HVAC) systems. This would include proper maintenance and proper testing and calibration. A concern was raised that there are actually no industry standards relating to the qualification of individuals servicing this equipment. While many employers tend to focus on cost savings with respect to construction, design, equipment and maintenance, studies have shown that the actual costs related to employees and illness in "sick buildings" far exceeds the cost of being proactive and having an environmentally healthy workplace.

**Violence in the Workplace** as found under the Canada Labour Code, Regulation 20, focussed on: **What constitutes violence** – "**any action conduct, threat or gesture of a person towards an employee that can reasonably be expected harm, injury or illness to that employee.**"

**The factors contributing to Workplace Violence** – "**which may include bullying, teasing, and**

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**abusive and aggressive behaviour.”**

A review of CRA’s Workplace Violence Prevention Policy - outlining the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the current roles and responsibilities of the employer, the union, the complainants and the respondents. Consultations between the National Health & Safety Committee and the employer are ongoing in an attempt to address concerns and other matters surrounding this critically important topic.

**Changes to CRA Health and Safety Policies and Operational Procedures,**

Jaime Robinson, CRA’s Manager of Occupational Health and Safety provided a concise overview on the improvements to many policies as well as updates surrounding ongoing changes to the

**T4009 Process** (both the Hazardous Occurrence and Potential Hazard Investigation Reports of the Accident and Injury Reporting Procedures)

**Mental Health at Work**

The Reality

- 1 in 5 will experience a mental health problem each year
- 1 in 3 in their lifetime
- 500,000 Canadians miss work every day
- 30% of all disability claims relate to mental illness
- 70% of costs relate to mental illness
- \$51 billion annually



All delegates took part in day long interactive workshop that introduced many varied topics and concerns. Depression, Stress, and Anxiety were examined with a focus on awareness and responding which included collaborative interaction among the employer, the union, and fellow employees. Attendees learned about the difficulties surrounding identification of issues, the difficulty on how to respond effectively due to lack of training, and how to collaboratively build a psychological safe work environment. They learned how to engage people in solutions, how to allow people to feel heard and respected, and how to increase feelings of trust, security and value.

Education, Awareness, Action, Support and Caring are key components of a solid foundation when building a successful infrastructure to address Mental Wellness in the work environment.

**Keynote Address**

The highlight of Sunday morning was the keynote address by comedian Big Daddy Tazz. Big Daddy, spent 30 years denying that he had the mental illnesses and that it was controlling his life, Tazz realized that being manic-depressive, attention deficit, and dyslexic could either destroy or enhance his life, it was his choice.

Today he tours the country speaking on Depression/Suicide as well as bullying. An incredibly dynamic speaker, Tazz engaged the participants in the many challenges he faced suffering from mental illness. He used humor as a way to break down the taboos related to mental illness and left the participants with a more personal understanding individuals face.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The presentations delivered at the conference may be found on the UTE Website <https://www.ute-sei.org/en/resources/7513>



*The Communications Committee*

## CHANGES TO OUR WEBSITE

Early this summer, we launched a redesign of our website. This was the first major redesign in 10 years and it was a major undertaking. Under the hood, the content is now stored in a content management system instead of static pages. Don't worry if this sounds Greek to you, it means that there have been improvements in how the information is stored and searched. This is important as we have a lot of information.



As part of the redesign, we wanted to make content easier to find, and to create areas for our locals/activists as well as an area for our members. We now have a section for:

- About UTE – This section has information about what we do as well as the names of the Union leadership and their contact information, how the union is structured, a list of all of the locals along with the names of the executive and their contact information. We also have our by-laws and regulations which govern how we operate.
- Campaigns – Whether it's a UTE campaign, a PSAC campaign or a CLC campaign, you will find updates on our bigger issues here such as: Bill C-10, Sick Leave, and Retirement Security.
- News and Events – See what we will be doing and what we have done including minutes of Presidents' Conference and Executive Council meetings. The latter two will give you an overview of the issues being brought forward by local presidents, and reports our committees make to Council outlining what they have been working on.
- Committees – Each committee is listed along with who is on the committee, what the committee is responsible for, as well as minutes and reports.
- Bargaining – As the title implies, all the bargaining information is listed here including updates on the latest round of bargaining, our demands, the employer's proposals and our current collective agreement.
- Resources for members – We have gathered together various links and resources we think you will find useful including:
  - What to do if you have problems at work
  - Pension resources
  - Benefits and Insurance
  - Leave and Disability
  - UTE scholarships
  - Steps to follow if a member passes away
  - Change of address form
  - How to subscribe to our email list.
- For Locals – We have gather information here that is primarily of interest to locals and local activists. They include how to run a meeting, rules of order, grievance forms and other UTE forms. There is also a password protected resource centre for local executives.

If you cannot find what you are looking for, we have a search option at the top right hand corner of any page, as well as a 'contact us' option which will display the National Office contacts as well as give you the option to search our directory.

We hope that you find the new site helpful and welcome your comments and suggestions.

**Susan Duncan**  
**Web/Communications Officer**

We also we have a new Minister of National Revenue, Diane Lebouthillier, who stated

*“I am well aware of the important role that the Canada Revenue Agency serves – providing guidance and support to Canadians, both as individuals and businesses, in understanding and meeting their tax obligations, while also taking steps to ensure that those obligations are respected and Canada’s revenue base is protected. In fulfilling these roles, you are in a unique position to touch the lives of every Canadian and to give meaning to the service principle that is so important to our new government.*

*Over the coming months, I look forward to working with you to strengthen and expand our service to Canadians. I know there are many exciting opportunities to do so, whether by increasing our outreach activities to support lower-income and fixed-income Canadians, by encouraging the use of an ever-expanding list of e-services as a faster, easier way for Canadians to manage their tax affairs and communicate with the Agency, or by simplifying our correspondence so that it is easier to understand. I am also committed to ensuring the Agency has the resources required to effectively pursue tax evaders and protect the integrity of Canada’s tax system. Throughout, our goal must always be respect for citizens by delivering the quality of service that they expect and deserve.”*

These messages give us hope that next year will bring respect back to the employees of CRA and we will be able to negotiate a fair contract that will not include concessions, and will properly reflect the value of the work performed.

We must continue to support the Bargaining Team and show our support in the work place to achieve a fair contract.

I thank all members of UTE, and the Local and National Executive members, for all of the hard work that they have done over the last year. We continue to stand up and work for the betterment of all, with an eye for the future as well.

Happy Holidays and may the New Year bring us all joy, happiness and peace.

**Robert Campbell**  
**National President**



**SEASONS GREETINGS FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND  
STAFF OF THE UNION OF TAXATION EMPLOYEES**

## CAMEROON, INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AWARENESS (ICA)

Jean-Pierre Fraser – Cameroon experience – February 2015

Every year, the Union of Taxation Employees sponsors a student and subsidizes a member in good standing to go to Africa with International Children's Awareness (ICA). The ICA focuses on overall development in Cameroon, which includes projects like the one for bringing fresh water to the villages and building schools and clinics. The trip usually happens in February. ... Nice announcement, isn't it??

October 2014 I decided to apply for this exciting project. A month later, nervousness took hold of me when I received word that my application was selected.

After I shared the news, I didn't receive much encouragement. Aren't you afraid of Ebola? Aren't you afraid of Boko Haram, who increased the attacks at the borders of Cameroon and Nigeria, killing civilians and soldiers? Aren't you afraid ... Aren't you afraid ... So I decided to stop talking to people about this trip. I told myself: you can't live your life in fear!

After becoming adequately informed, I knew that there was no Ebola in Cameroon and that Boko Haram was active in the northern part of the country. My own fears focused more on the dangers of malaria than being devoured by hyenas during a full moon (by the way, there aren't any in that part of the country).

So, I went for the multitude of vaccinations (I can now go to Mars) and got ready for this trip. I said to myself: "THIS IS GOING TO BE QUITE THE TRIP": stressful. ... tiring. ... frightening. ... yet interesting ... motivating... and rewarding....!!

Last February, I therefore had my first trip to Africa, and what a trip! After endless flights through the United States and Europe, there I am in Douala two days later, with 60 degree and higher temperatures! Major Smith, whom I had already met in Newmark and who is a remarkable ambassador for all these projects, was arriving from Toronto, and Judy who was arriving from Vancouver joined us in Brussels for the final flight. The other four members of the adventure (Lynn, Brad, Judith and Carol) were arriving from Switzerland via Paris. We all met up at the airport to take a bus to Buea before starting our tour. As it turns out, they don't drive as bad as that in Quebec ... .I had my first fears while seated on the bus!

After an initial night of jetlag, the next morning we prepared for the following 10 days. Lynn, Brad and I took the opportunity to climb part of Mount Cameroon in the afternoon. The whole group seemed to get along really well, which was good because we had to spend our days together for the whole trip.

The next day, we headed to Laywah. That was to be our base camp during the trip, a nicely located residence where you wake up at dawn to songs from the choir at the nearby church. Although I don't take part in observances here, I often started my days by going to listen to the songs and meet the people at this religious site before having my breakfast.

In the days to follow, we visited *about a dozen schools travelling in "a convertible"* (in other words standing up in the back of a pick-up truck). The roads are rough, and when they were impassable or non-existent, we walked, which was very enjoyable because I love



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walking.

At each of the schools we visited, there was euphoria in seeing us arrive. The children came from everywhere with the most beautiful smiles on Earth. We took the opportunity to distribute school supplies, provide soccer balls

(Chevrolet sent 1,000 balls to distribute) and consider the teachers' needs.

The schools built by the ICA are often the nicest buildings in the villages. The education received will potentially enable them to aspire to something else and leave the poverty behind.

A large part of the work carried out by the ICA in Cameroon was done in a place called La Vallée, a region considered one of the poorest regions in Cameroon. There, too, a warm welcome. The children had prepared songs for us and, believe me, they sing wonderfully. They are a proud, happy people.

It was truly rewarding to speak with them. Unfortunately, a quick look at the surroundings made me understand the poverty there. They live in housing that consists of fairly rudimentary clay houses without electricity and water. I was also able to see the under-nourishment of some of them. The supposed austerity in Quebec took on a completely different dimension in my eyes.

I would like to thank Major Smith, who enabled me to have this experience, which is one of the most interesting ones I've had in my life so far. I was able to see first hand the amazing work that this organization does and the difference it makes in the lives of a great many people. Thank you to the UTE and the PSAC for their assistance.

I encourage all the members to support this highly valued work.

In solidarity,



*Jean-Pierre Fraser  
Local 10005, Shawinigan South*

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE HOLDS REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

The Equal Opportunities Committee presented three regional conferences this fall.

The conferences were held in Toronto, August 28-29, Montreal, October 16-17, and Vancouver, November 20-21.

Attendees were generally people who had little or no exposure to union activism and were interested in learning more about equity in the workplace and their communities.

The theme of this year's conferences was "Awakening Your Activism", where participants were engaged to find their current level of equity activism and then challenged to bring



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a greater presence back to their locals and communities.

Presentations were given on Employment Equity Staffing and amendments to the “*Public Service Labour Relations Act*”.

Three guest speakers touched on different but relevant topics during the conference. Judy Rebick, a



journalist and activist, spoke on human rights. Stevie Cameron, an author and investigative journalist, spoke about missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Rukhsana Syed, a diversity and compliance leader with IBM Canada, spoke about the Muslim community.

A workshop was also held in order to help attendees identify their current levels of activism and where they would like to be in the future.

**Bob Carpenter**  
*Chair of the EO Committee*

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## SABRI KHAYAT, LIFE MEMBER

The Honours and Awards Committee in conjunction with Executive Council is pleased to announce that Brother Sabri Khayat has been conferred the Life Member Award, the highest UTE award.

Sabri has been active in our union for the past 24 years. He began his union career as a steward of Local 10008 in 1991, and held various other local offices until he was elected Local President in 1998. In 1999 he was elected Regional Vice President of the Montreal Region and has been re-elected by acclamation at each subsequent UTE Convention. These endorsements reflect perfectly all the respect, gratitude and recognition the Montreal region have had for him over the years.



Sabri is a true institution within UTE. Dean of RVPs, he's been involved in almost all the important portfolios of the organization. He has mentored a multitude of union activists not only in his region but across the country. His outstanding contribution to multiple UTE-CRA joint working groups further emphasizes his knowledge, skills, and abilities.

On behalf of the Communications Committee, of which Sabri has been an integral part, we wish to offer our congratulations.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done via e-mail to Louise Dorion ([dorionl@ute-sei.org](mailto:dorionl@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.