



Island Views

Vancouver Island District Council
<http://www.vidc.cupe.ca>

Special points of interest:

- *President's Message*
- *50th CUPE BC Convention*
- *Women at work*
- *Idle No More*

President's message



I want to let everyone know how proud I am of all the Powell River & Island delegates who took part in this year's CUPE BC 50th Convention, whether it be the invaluable committee work that helped our convention run smoothly, delegates on the floor speaking up at the microphones

or those working diligently behind the scenes. I want to say THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart. You had a big part in the success of the Convention.

Congratulations to Local 3479 for winning the Communications Awards for newsletters 100-500 members and also to the VIDC O H & S Committee for 500+ members for their newsletter. CUPE 50 has outdone themselves with a fantastic book, *History of CUPE Local 50 – More than a Story*. I urge you to get a copy and share it with your local. Well done, CUPE 50.

On behalf of VIDC, I extend a huge Thank You to Barry O'Neil for all your years of tireless dedication and service to CUPE BC and the working people of Canada. Barry, we appreciate your passion and thank you and your family for all that you have done for us.

The 2013-2014 Action Plan was set at Convention and directions for the new

Executive have been outlined. We will be utilizing this document in our own Strategic planning session coming up later this year.

CUPE National has sent out a discussion paper and speaking notes on Bill C-377. Please take some time to review and have these discussions with your local executive and coworkers. I will have copies of the information available if you would like them.

Finally, we are in full swing with the Provincial Elections. I urge you to not only get out and vote but to bring as many people with you as possible to the polls. We need change in this province to bring us to a more secure and stable future. I thank all of you who are volunteering in phone banks, constituency offices and or along the campaign trail. It is the just one of the many ways the labour movement continues to move this province forward as we work towards a more inclusive and caring future.

In Solidarity,
Amber Leonard
Vice President VIDC

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CONGRATULATIONS Mr. President!



Brother Mark Hancock, newly-elected President of CUPE BC.

Congratulations to Brother Mark Hancock, CUPE BC's newly-elected president. The 50th anniversary convention of the Canadian Union of Public Employees proved to be a memory-making event. With campaigning, networking and good conversation, the entire body of CUPE did so with pride and passion. Passing of the leader's torch will be a moment not soon forgotten. We wish Barry O'Neil many hours on the golf course, and an agenda full of good times. We give thanks to Barry for his many years of service.

We congratulate the newly elected Executive. Brother Paul Farao - elected as Secretary/Treasurer; Trevor Davies - re-elected as GVP; Ian Norton - GVP, Susan Blair - GVP; Dal Benning - GVP.

Congratulations to all the Regional Vice-President elected and to the VIDC's RVP's Doug Sprenger, Michelle Waite and Alternate Alison Pringle.



Brother Paul Farao, newly-elected Secretary/Treasurer of CUPE BC



First time speaker, Laura Johnston & the launch of the JACK IT UP! Campaign at CUPE BC 50th Convention



Executive past & present



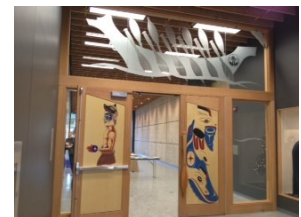
Past, present & our Future!



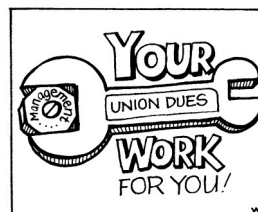
VIDC member-at-large Glen Campbell with CUPE BC past president Barry O'Neil



Brother Dale Whitford



PORT ALBERNI— ADSS Grand Opening





CELEBRATING A SISTER



Sister Nicki Kolich, Local 2045 is the first woman to obtain her Inter-Provincial Red Seal as a painter and decorator Journeyman in School District 85. Suffering from dyslexia, going back to school was less than appealing to her, but her natural abilities helped her to achieve an 89% overall mark.

As part of the Framework Letter of Understanding in 2006, the Apprenticeship Opportunities Fund was established. The SSEAC was provided with a \$3 million fund to facilitate and support apprenticeship opportunities in British Columbia school districts.

The fund provided financial support for apprentices to cover costs associated with travel, education, tools and educational materials. It also provided a wage subsidy to employers to encourage school districts to create new apprenticeship opportunities. The fund allowed the parties to introduce 46 new trades apprentices to the K-12 public education system. One of those apprentices was Nicki Kolich. She started her apprenticeship in January 2010, and in April 2013 she completed. CUPE Local 2045 congratulates Nicki on her dedication and her hard work in achieving her Inter-Provincial Red Seal as a Painter and Decorator.

Submitted by Colleen Martin

Why should the labour movement support Idle No More?

What is Idle No More?

Idle No More has emerged as a civil rights movement where Indigenous people, regardless of region or nationhood, have united to tell Stephen Harper "Enough is Enough." It was sparked by opposition to the Federal budget bill, C-45. After video footage of dozens of chiefs surfaced being denied access to the House of Commons, people took to social media and called for protests across Canada under

the banner of Idle No More. Since then, hundreds of protests, blockades, traditional round-dances, drumming, and other events have taken place in towns and cities across Canada.

Who is behind "Idle No More"?

Idle No More does not have official "leadership." Instead, it was founded by four women from Saskatoon and has spread into a national movement. Canada is a large country and there exist hundreds of First Nations communities. Combined with Indigenous activists and allies within towns and cities, the movement has grown to be too large for a single leader. Spokespeople have emerged who articulate the demands that are being expressed by the grassroots.

But what about the chiefs? Aren't they the leaders?

In some communities, the leadership has been quick to join the chorus of voices demanding change. Chief Theresa Spence, for example, helped to raise awareness of the conditions of many First Nations communities through her high-profile hunger strike. But in other communities, the leadership is slower to join the campaign.

In some ways, this is just like in the labour movement where it can sometimes be hard to gain the consensus among different unions, sectors and even within a local workplace. Imagine adding the presidents of the Canadian Labour Congress and the provincial labour federations into the mix; arriving at a consensus can be extremely difficult. And, just like in the labour movement, the side with power always tries to divide people to weaken the bargaining position of a movement. With Idle No More, there exists a broad consensus that something has to be done, but there are still large debates over how to fix what. It makes arriving at a consensus difficult, though certainly not impossible.

Why should workers support Idle No More?

Many Indigenous people are union members. Supporting our brothers and sisters in the workplace is as important as supporting the struggles in which their communities are engaged. The labour movement has proudly played supportive roles in civil rights movements and Idle No More should be no exception. Fighting racism within the workplace and in our communities must be at the core of our collective work.

Because of the relationship that Indigenous people have with "the Crown" (a.k.a. the federal government), all Canadian citizens have the responsibility to ensure



that this relationship is functioning. When Stephen Harper breaks his promises or breaches his responsibility towards Indigenous people, Canadians must unite and demand that he honour the Treaties, or the agreements that formed the basis on which Canada was established.

What do you mean?

Part of the problems identified by activists in the Idle No More movement is that "Indians" as defined by the Indian Act are treated very differently from Canadians. They are subject to different rules for buying land or owning property, for example. The Act defines their nationality and excludes some Indigenous people because their parents and grandparents married non-Indigenous people. The Indian Act prevented First Nations people from voting until the 1960s, and also established the Residential School System.



There have been numerous abuses allowed by the Act, which was originally intended to eliminate Indian identity entirely. The federal government has used it and other policies to try to subjugate Indigenous people; this has led to familial breakdown, poverty, unemployment and other problems. Idle No More is the result of activism that has been building across Canada for decades and is helping to awaken a new generation of activists to the possibilities of resisting these negative realities and to continue building a united movement.

This seems overwhelming. Are there even any solutions?

Idle No More activists have been offering ideas and solutions throughout the campaign, but the issues are complex. The most pronounced one is that the relationship between the federal government and First Nations communities has to be rebuilt. Stephen Harper cannot simply ignore the Treaties and pass laws that will impact First Nations people.

For Canadians, Idle No More creates a space where everyone can demand that democracy start to work again. Canadians have benefitted greatly from the Treaties: industries, homes and communities would not exist had they not been signed. Idle No More, it's time for Canadians to uphold their side of the bargain, support Indigenous brothers and sisters, and force our government to do the right thing.



<http://www.tenpercentshift.ca/>

Why can't they just become like the rest of us Canadians?

Assimilation is a difficult subject. Because so many of us have been assimilated into Canada, the idea of protecting our own cultures or traditions can be hard to grasp. But while many immigrants made the choice to move to Canada (where their descendents still live), Indigenous communities had their ways of life forcibly taken from them. Many of Canada's policies towards Indigenous people doesn't resemble assimilation; they actually resemble genocide.

After centuries of these policies, Indigenous people are standing up to say that they reject the attempts to take away their languages, cultures and identities. They are fighting for the protection of their people and future generations. Assimilation is not an option because it would erase the rich histories, cultures, languages and traditions that have existed here for time immemorial.

What's the real story here?

Most of the policy decisions being made by the Harper government try to move, remove, or justify the transfer of people from their traditional territories. When Indigenous peoples were first forced onto reserves, it was often in remote, difficult places to farm, or far from urban centres. Many of these lands happen to be on top of diamond, gold, uranium or other precious metals and are now highly profitable and coveted by corporations. Many of these lands are in the way of oil and gas companies' access to oil and gas. Many of these First Nations communities are living with the environmental disasters that have been left behind by profit-hungry companies.

The most recent attack on First Nations communities is the same attack that workers face when company management wants to cut health and safety regulations, or cut wages to boost profits. The only difference is that First Nations communities have to contend with health problems from environmental disasters caused by corporations all the time.

Standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities is important because these struggles are connected. A victory in a single plant or a single community is not enough. We need to stand up against corporate powers and their control over government decisions and bring democratic power back into communities.

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