

# Island Views

## CONTENTS

### PAGE 1

VP's Holiday Message

Mark Hancock becomes CUPE National President

New VIDC Hoodie

### PAGE 2

Global Justice Forum at National Convention

### PAGE 3

What's the matter with kids today??

### PAGE 4

VIDC at Leap Rally



## VP's Message

So excited that it is almost Christmas! Where has this year gone? The Executive loves this final meeting of each year as it provides some great social time with delegates where we can just hang out, enjoy each other's company and get to know one another as people, not just busy activists!

I would like to take this opportunity to say how proud we are of our VIDC delegates and committees. We are one of the most active councils in the country, and the work we do together is empowering and inspiring!

Each year, we seem to grow more in togetherness, inclusiveness and inspiration and we thank you and all the hard work you do for making this happen. We are truly a community!

We wish each and every one of you and your families a wonderful holiday season. Please take some time to relax, kick back and enjoy the lives you have created and the fruits of all your labour!

Next up....on to 2016 and more fabulous work by our District Council. We have some new and highly motivated activists, and many seasoned 'veterans' whose work continues to make a difference in the lives of others. We welcome and encourage all council members to reach out to any of us at any time. It is our honour to mentor you and help in what you want to accomplish!

*Merry Christmas from Your Executive!*

In Solidarity,  
Sarah Fairbrass, Vice President



Mark Hancock, CUPE BC's own becomes National President. Congratulations, Mark!



The new VIDC hoodie! Make sure you contact Amber to get your name in on the next order.

words) are invited for the forthcoming editions.

Send submissions to: Michèle Favarger – Editor  
[mfavarger@gmail.com](mailto:mfavarger@gmail.com)  
250 746-8765

## Solidarity and Strength

### The Global Justice Forum at 2015 National Convention

Speakers from Greece and Colombia spoke on global issues of privatization, fairness and justice.

George (Yiorgos) Archontopoulos, President, Greece's EYATH's Workers' Union, spoke about a government plan to sell off a majority share in public water, turning it over to the Thessalonika Water Supply & Sewerage Co. Before 2009, public water was accessible and inexpensive; the most affordable of all utility bill costs for residents. However since then mounting debt and unemployment (36% across Greece) have forced the government to sell off assets and bring in austerity measures. In May 2014, George helped found the SOS water campaign that led a successful referendum opposing water privatization in Thessaloniki. When Greece voted to reject the Euro, and the conditions attached to any financial aid, it created a situation where wages stayed the same, but the costs of goods and services continued to rise. The Union was successful in convincing the company to forgive the debts of those who are unable to pay, most often as a result of rising unemployment.

Following a musical tribute to Che Guevara, we heard from Berenice Celieita, current director of NOMADESC, the human right group working with CoDev in Columbia. CoDev partners with CUPE, providing assistance, education and solidarity to working people in countries around the world. Berenice reminded us of the on-going violence against those who resist the multinational private companies. The drug cartels have taken over a third of the prime grazing land, and 6 million people have been displaced by governments, drug lords and guerillas. Those who resist are often silenced, and even Berenicia has been targeted with surveillance and death threats in a state-wide

government campaign she calls "blood and fire". Berenice also explained that the 50-year war in Colombia has left more than 350,000 dead – over 3,000 of them trade unionists.

Columbia has wealth, from both agriculture (palm oil), and natural resources (gold/oil). This has led to the signing of 17 international free-trade agreements with countries, including Canada, that have seen an erosion of individual land rights, local autonomy and sovereignty. To counter this, Bernicia co-founded the Intercultural School of Knowledge, a research and education centre that put the focus on human rights and strategies to resist privatization. The 750 activist graduates are taught how multinational companies gain control of local economies, how grassroots solidarity movements can be created, and how partnerships (coDev) can have a significant affect in pressuring governments and raising awareness. In a very real way the school (now a university) is creating and mobilizing community leaders similar as to how CUPE organizes campaigns against privatization and injustice.

Solidarity is our strength. CUPE is seen as a leader on issues of equality, fairness and justice on a global scale.

Submitted by Dale Whitford  
International Solidarity





## What's the matter with kids today??

**Well, let me tell you.....**At the CUPE National convention in Quebec City a few years back, a young woman came to the floor to speak about how she didn't see our great National Union doing enough to be inclusive of the young people in the union. She came to the floor more than once. The goal of many of the young people attending this convention was to have the constitution changed to allow specific young worker seats on the National Executive. They wanted to see themselves represented. They wanted to see themselves participating in that representation. This caused quite a stir among delegates who have opposed specific seats based on differences in the past, be it gender or disability.

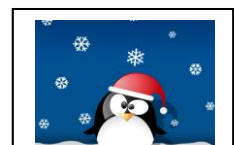
Things finally came to a head, and CUPE National President Paul Moist very patiently explained, that an election was being held for his position and they could always run for the position. Now, although it is possible according to our constitution, it is virtually unheard of for anyone to run from the floor at a National Convention. To the surprise of delegates attending, when nominations were called for, the young worker sister in question was nominated from the floor and accepted the nomination. She didn't win, but the young worker voices were clearly heard!

Fast forward to 2016 National Convention in Vancouver and the Leap Rally for Climate Justice. Approximately 1500 people stood and listened to Ta'kaiya Blaney speak. At only 14 years old, through word and song, Ta'Kaiya was beyond inspiring and brought many to tears as she spoke. This young woman is a formidable force for climate justice and the unity of all Canadians to protect our environment. Her message about the growing power of the climate justice movement and the need for action clearly galvanized others to want to act to make a difference and create a more just society.

On the convention floor, young workers again rose to the mics to say they wanted more. They even challenged the chair on a couple of occasions! Once again, Paul Moist patiently explained to them, how and why they were out of order. Many long-time convention delegates neither liked nor agreed with everything they had to say, but these young people were there and I applaud them for that! They were engaged, they stood up for what they believed was right, they questioned, they challenged and they learned. Kudos to all of them for being the dynamic young trade union activists they are!

So, **what's the matter with kids today?** Apparently not a lot if we focus on those who are out doing and trying to change their world. Let's make certain as Union Activists, we continue to not just listen, but **hear** what the youth have to say. We were once them and they are our future!

Submitted by;  
Sarah Fairbrass  
November 2016



## VIDC at Leap Rally



*In the know about  
VIDC*

### **Agenda Items /Issues/Guest Speakers**

Please submit agenda items or other pressing matters, and suggestions for guest speakers, in advance to the President, Amber Leonard. [chiefshopsteward459@gmail.com](mailto:chiefshopsteward459@gmail.com) or 250-642-1227.

### **Keep Our Meetings Scent Free**

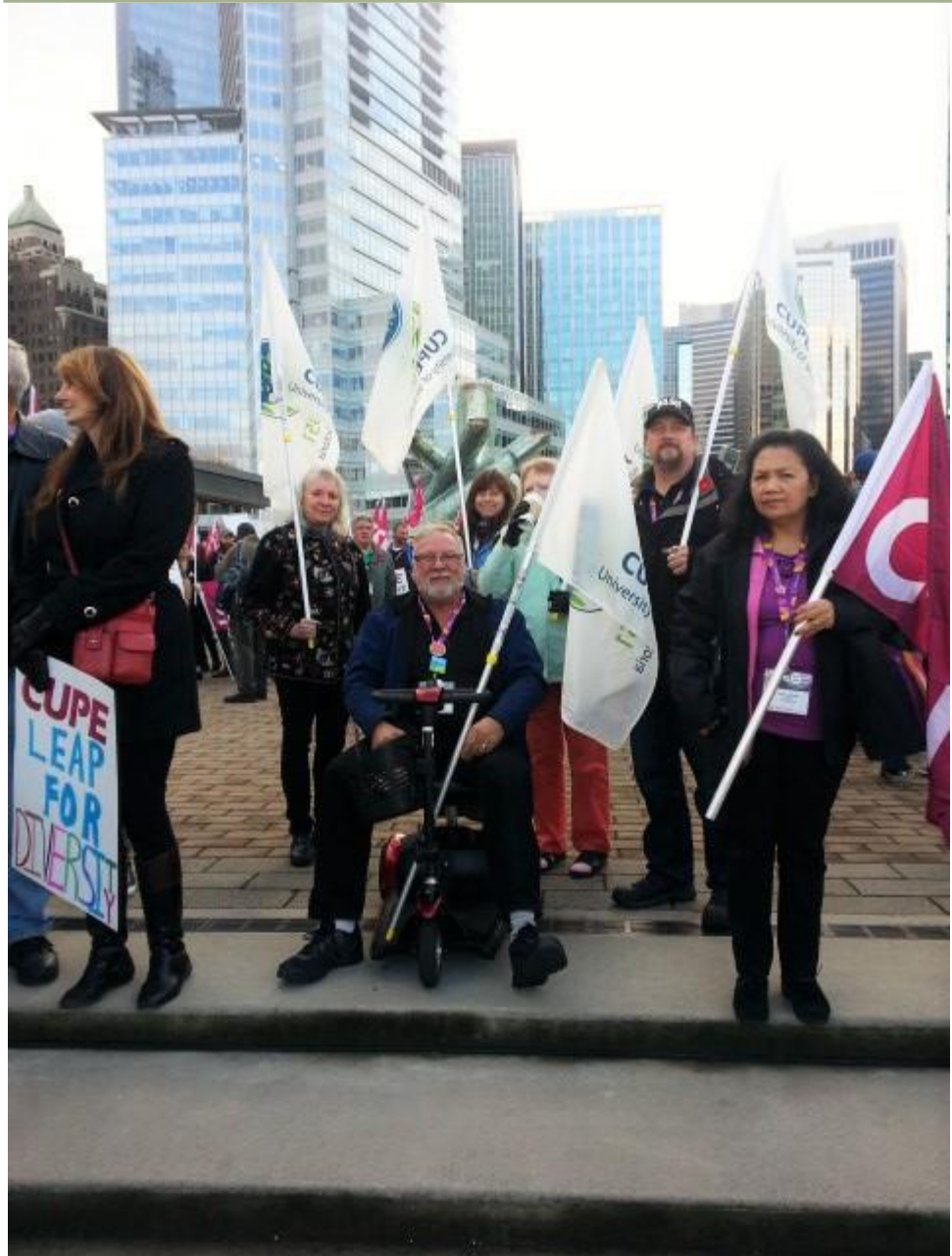
For the comfort of your fellow delegates who may be sensitive to chemicals found in scents, perfumes and aftershaves, please refrain from wearing heavy scents at the Council meeting. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

### **Delegates Lunch**

An informal lunch will be served in the meeting room, at the meeting at 12:15pm, on the day of the General Meeting. Cost is \$10.00 per person payable to the Sgt.-at-Arms at the meeting. Lunch for 30 will be arranged and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please let Craig or Ali know of any dietary allergies.

### **Island Views**

Submissions (maximum 500



Pat Shade, Laurie Whyte, Kara White, and Kirk Mercer of CUPE 951 and a sister from 917 at the Leap Rally in Vancouver.