

In this Issue - College Agreement Ratified, Bargaining Team Meetings, ESB Appointment, Labour Law Site, President's Message

Strike avoided

Yukon College Deal Ratified

Members of Yukon College Local Y011 voted in favour of the collective agreement package recommended by their negotiators.

A ratification meeting was held on February 18th at Yukon College. A solid turnout of voting members supported the tentative agreement between the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Yukon College Board of Governors. The deal is retroactive to July 1, 2003, and extends to June 30, 2007.

Local President Maureen Stephens indicated after the vote that neither the union nor management got what it wanted. In fact, according to Stephens, negotiators were not fighting for additional gains, but to maintain the status quo while achieving appropriate wage increases.

The employer attempted to claw-back gains established in previous agreements by attaching strings to

the monetary package. These would have seen union workers pay management's share of pension increases. Job security was at risk, because the college hoped to remove full-time/part-time ratio requirements, thereby reducing the number of full-time employees and opening the door to more

part-time positions. The college also attempted to remove consultation rights from the agreement.

While not perfect, the new agreement matches wage increases achieved by other Yukon unions, and eliminates the regressive provisions the employer attempted to impose.

Bargaining Team Holds Community Meetings

Four groups of YEU/PSAC representatives toured the Yukon the week of February 16-20, to provide information to Union members employed by the Yukon government about the new collective agreement. They answered questions about the process and the arbitrator's ruling. The meetings also served as a forum for discussion of other union issues.

In general, members expressed satisfaction with the terms of the agreement. New provisions dealing with Special Leave, in particular, receiving favourable input. Previously, leave provisions for education and medical appointments for rural members were viewed as too restrictive in light of travel requirements. Other leave-related improvements related to parental leave were also welcomed.

The new grievance process was the source of considerable interest in several communities, underlining the need for additional shop stewards (*see President's Message*).

The Bargaining Team members thank all those who attended.

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YEU worthy of note

ESB Appointments No Longer Represent Labour

The Yukon government's decision not to reappoint Kathy Hanifan to the Employment Standards Board has cost Yukon labour a valuable voice at the table. The ESB deals with complaints lodged by both employees and employers in the Yukon. In the past, Yukon governments consulted with the Yukon Federation of Labour before such appointments.

YFL President Alex Furlong said Minister Glenn Hart did not ask the federation for input on the appointment, which was given instead to Wayne Hrynuik. YFL Executive Director Doug Rody concurs. "Hrynuik does not have the support of the YFL to serve as

labour's representative", he said. Hanifan, in turn, had served as Vice Chair for three years, and had the full support of labour.

In his letter advising Hanifan that she would not be reappointed, Hart wrote, "The integrity and commitment you brought to this board, as a member, have contributed greatly to the board's success." It's a pity that this well deserved praise did not translate into a reappointment.

Labour Law Made Easier

Simon Fraser University now operates a website designed to help workers better understand their rights. **WorkRights.ca** provides workers across Canada accessible information about laws and regulations on topics ranging

from work hours and vacation entitlement to unsafe working conditions and complaint procedures.

Executive Producer John Kay, quoted recently in *Workplace News*, said "It's a place where they [workers] can go to get answers without having to wade through multiple layers of navigation on government websites laden with legal jargon."

While the site is based in British Columbia, the material is presented bilingually, subdivided by federal, provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

Most of the content was provided by the Canadian Labour Congress, which represents 2.5 million workers.



YEU you asked

"Here are some answers to questions that might affect you or your co-workers."

Q. I received a **Letter of Expectation** from my supervisor. Is such a letter a form of discipline? Should I have been able to have a union representative present when it was given to me?

A. There is a difference between a true Letter of Expectation and one that is actually disguised discipline. The difference is whether or not the letter refers to unacceptable or inappropriate

behaviour, or is intended to correct such behavior. Any employee can be given a Letter of Expectation, even if there are no performance problems. A true Letter of Expectation is really no different than the goals that might appear on your Performance Evaluation.

The problem is, employers often use Letters of Expectation to correct behaviour that they consider unacceptable.

By denying that they are disciplinary, they are also denying the right of representation guaranteed under many collective agreements.

If you receive a Letter of Expectation that appears to be disciplinary in nature, you should contact a union representative. Your Shop Steward or Service Officer will help ensure you are not being denied rights under your collective agreement.

YEU from the President



Congratulations to the negotiating team for Yukon

College Local Y011 on the ratification of a new Collective Agreement.

Faced with an employer intent on withdrawing the hard-won security and benefit provisions established in the last collective agreement, they succeeded in achieving a tentative agreement that maintains those provisions, while achieving a wage increase acceptable to the membership.

The agreement ratified on February 18th provides for wage increases over a four-year term similar to those accepted by Yukon teachers and employees of the Yukon government. It also forced the employer to back away from changes that, in effect, demanded that employees pay management's share of pension increases.

The atmosphere of confrontation and the regressive nature of the employer's proposals were characteristic of employee-management relations under the current government's watch. The ninety-two percent favourable strike vote taken prior to ratification was a fair indicator of the discontent that currently exists between union workers and the institutions that employ them.

Rebuilding Trust

It is regrettable that, over the past year, this government chose to institute a regime of confrontation and mistrust. Such an atmosphere is inconsistent with the current demands of the workplace. *Trust* is, after all, an integral part of new procedures established by collective agreements, such as those now required for grievance resolution between management and government employees. I sincerely hope that a positive, constructive relationship can be rebuilt over the next year.

Grievance Procedure

Union and management representatives are meeting to jointly develop the training materials needed to guide the implementation of grievance procedures established by the YTG Collective Agreement. The new procedures carry the expectation of Union-management cooperation in a spirit of constructive issue resolution.

Following the preparation of these supporting materials, joint training sessions will be held for Union and management representatives in all Yukon communities.

Members employed by the territorial government should keep in mind that, until the preparatory work has been completed and training delivered, procedures established in the previous Collective Agreement remain in force.

Pension Repatriation and Joint Consultation

In spite of recent communication challenges, YEU will be re-entering discussions with the government about Pension Plan repatriation, and once again undertaking labour-management meetings (Joint Consultation). The latter were suspended during collective agreement negotiations and arbitration hearings.

In terms of pension repatriation, I must state at the outset that *no* commitment will be made on your behalf to opt out of the Superannuation Act. When the committee consultation process is complete, an information package on the framework, principles, roles and responsibilities of the pension plan will be distributed. Then, information meetings will be scheduled in every Yukon community, including a number of meetings in Whitehorse.

Only when these consultations are complete and all questions have been answered, will a membership vote be held to determine if we actually proceed with repatriation. It is also important to note that the Union executive had no choice but to proceed with this exploratory action. Direction to undertake the process came from the YEU Triennial Convention.

Mike Travill will represent YEU, in addition to myself. Other members include the YTA, confidential exclusions, management and the employer.

YEU across the nation

National President Meets with PM

PSAC National President Nycole Turmel met with the Prime Minister, members of his Cabinet and the Clerk of the Privy Council on January 19, 2004. This was the *first* face-to-face meeting between a PSAC president and a prime minister in more than 20 years.

The meeting took place following a series of letters sent by Turmel to Martin over the last six weeks. Preparatory meetings were held earlier with the presidents of the Treasury Board and Privy Council.

The Prime Minister conceded during the hour-long session that his government had erred by failing to

consult with PSAC prior to the December public service reorganization announcements.

While the government offered no commitments on major outstanding issues, at least the door is open to continued dialogue.

Information regarding the Martin government's announcement that they will conduct an expenditure review, freeze classifications, and reorganize various departments and agencies is available on the PSAC website at www.psac.com.



YEU calendar

April 28th - May 1st, 2004

Advanced Representation Training

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Yukon Inn, Whitehorse, Yukon

2nd Thursday 6:30 p.m.

Monthly YEU Executive Meeting

YEU Hall. Members are welcome to attend.

2nd Wednesday 5:00 p.m.

Y010 Monthly Meeting

YEU Hall, Whitehorse.

Fall

Yukon Alliance Facilitators' Refresher and Retreat

Whitehorse, Yukon

Talking Union Basics Course

Whitehorse, Yukon

Add your meeting or event to the YEU Calendar! Contact Bob Nardi, bnardi@yeu.ca

Workshops:

PSAC National Health & Safety Conference March 25th - 28th, 2004

Six YEU members will be attending to:

- * establish a link between globalization and its direct relationship to decreased health and safety protection in our workplaces;
- * ensure that health and safety issues are mainstream issues for the Union and for the membership;
- * build the activism of the members and activists in respect to the issue of health and safety in the workplace;
- * develop and implement Union based strategies to ensure that workplace health and safety issues are being addressed by employers and by government;
- * establish collective bargaining strategies.

Advanced Representation Training

April 28th - May 1st, 2004

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Yukon Inn, Whitehorse, Yukon

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YEU News is published 12 times a year by the Yukon Employees' Union of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

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Members are reminded to notify the YEU office of any change of address or name changes. Call Linda Bidrman - Membership Services, email lbidrman@yeu.ca or fax the number above.