

YEU NEWS

All About YEU – Your Union Oct/Nov 2004



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In this Issue - Members vote, PSAC North Convention, CLC winter school, Yukon Area Council, survey results, across Canada, and more ...

PSAC Members Vote

PSAC members across Canada will soon vote on tentative agreements, and in two cases, on whether or not to accept the employer's last offer.

Following weeks of rotating strikes and other job actions, members will begin voting in mid-November. Parks Canada members will vote between November 19th and December 15th. Details of voting periods for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Canada Revenue Agency, and Treasury Board Tables 1, 2, 3 and 5 are available on the PSAC website at www.psic.com.

The PSAC negotiating team has recommended acceptance of the tentative agreements in 5 of seven cases. However, negotiators recommended rejection of the employer's final offer for Treasury Board Tables 1 and 3.

Treasury Board's proposed economic increases do not compensate for the concessions that the employer demanded. These concessions include freezing the salary rates of some former

CCRA employees and converting all leave entitlements from days to hours. Furthermore, the employer refused to seriously discuss work related risks faced by members performing enforcement duties.

PSAC is preparing ratification kits to ensure members are fully informed of the details of the tentative agreement or the employer's final offer.

Pacific Region Winter School 2005

The course schedule and application forms for this year's Canadian Labour Congress Winter School are now available at the Yukon Employees' Union office. Courses are held between January 16th and February 11th at the beautiful Harrison Hotel at Harrison Hot Springs.

The deadline for application is **November 30th**. For more information contact YEU at 667-2331, or check the union website at www.yeu.ca.

PSAC North Convention Event significant

Although PSAC North's triennial convention does not begin until May, 2005, preparations are well under way. The event will be held in Whitehorse in conjunction with the Regional Health and Safety Committee Conference.

The theme of this convention is "Charting Our Future" - an idea underlined by significant changes. For the first time since PSAC embraced a regionalized political structure, the Regional Executive Vice President will be elected at a *regional* convention, rather than at the National Triennial Convention of PSAC.

Members will be coming from Nunavut, NWT and the Yukon. This convention only takes place every three years, rotating to the other two territories each time. Therefore, it will be another 9 years before it returns to the Yukon.

Please call the Regional Executive Vice President's office for more information: 1-800-661-0870.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY OPEN HOUSE - YEU HALL, DECEMBER 10th, 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.

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Yukon Area Council

Area Councils are one of the political and social voices of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. They serve as a resource for political action, and education and training opportunities.

The Yukon Area Council is one of three councils that belong to PSAC North. Current membership includes Y010, Y011, Y017, Y023, Y030 and Y0102. Other locals may affiliate with the Area Council by simply passing a resolution to join at a general membership meeting.

As a representative body from different locals, the council helps share the burden imposed on locals by the larger issues of the day. It serves as a network for union members to help coordinate campaigns and activities, to take full advantage of collective knowledge and abilities.

Most importantly, the Yukon Area Council forges links to other citizen groups with similar goals, ideas and messages through active, ongoing communication with the community at large.



Members of the Yukon Area Council met at the YEU Hall on September 28th for the first affiliate president's networking meeting.

On September 28th, the YAC hosted an affiliate presidents networking meeting. This was the first time that the Area Council met with representatives from local executives. The council's purpose

in calling the meeting was to inform the locals about the its mandate, provide an update on the recent activities, and find out how the council can best help the locals.

The attendees also discussed participation in events such as Human Rights Day, International Women's Day and Aboriginal Day, and the need for a communication strategy to ensure all affiliated locals are kept up-to-date on important issues.

The Yukon Area Council will hold its Annual General Meeting on November 20th, between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00

p.m. at the YEU Hall. Representatives from all locals are encouraged to attend.

For more information contact Diney Williams: dwilliam@yukoncollege.yk.ca.

YEU you asked

Q. I work for the Yukon government in front of a computer terminal for most of the day. I heard from another employee in my office that PSC paid for her eye examination. I didn't know about this policy, but my supervisor said I can't get reimbursed for an examination I just had, because prior approval was required. Is this true?

A. No. Policy 3.49 of the General Administration Manual

provides for payment by PSC for yearly eye examinations for employees whose regular job activities require 60 percent or more operation of a Video Display Terminal or Video Display Unit.

In fact, the policy actually requires eye examinations. It stipulates that all VDT and VDU operators "shall undergo initial optometric examination upon appointment or assignment and *shall undergo examination thereafter on an annual basis*". It further states that

"costs of such examinations only shall be borne by the Public Service Commission".

While an individual department may ask an employee for prior approval for administrative convenience, failure to gain such advance approval does not mean the employee can be denied reimbursement.

Contact your Shop Steward if the department continues to refuse to cover the cost of your examination.

YEU from the President

Pension Patriation

The Yukon Employees' Union has requested clarification from the Public Service Commissioner about the status of pension plan patriation discussions.

Brother Mike Travill advised the commissioner in September of the union's position that all parties should either return to the discussion table, or consider dissolving and abandoning the initiative entirely.

Talks were suspended in September 2002 as a result of the territorial election. They were again interrupted at the direction of YEU's membership during the computer use investigation.

The key issue impeding progress is a new demand from the government that YEU's membership commit to pension change through a referendum of all members, *before* further discussion takes place.

This demand ignores the significant work completed prior to the October 2002 election, devoted to the creation of 14 principles to guide the plan's delivery. The Yukon Party Government has refused to recognize, or even review these principles.

Key among them is the requirement that plan governance and funding management be independent of government. These principles were intended to ensure that there would be no political interference in any future private plan. They were developed by YEU, the

Yukon Teachers' Association, representatives for both confidential and managerial exclusions, and the employer/government itself.

We have consistently taken the position that the government must commit to the principles before any votes are taken. To do otherwise would be to accept the proverbial "pig in a poke"—something we are not prepared to ask the membership to do.

Substitute Teachers

The Yukon Employees' Union, with the support of the Yukon Teachers Association, has made application to the Yukon Public Service Staff Relations Board to include on-call and substitute teachers employed by YTG in the PSAC bargaining unit. PSAC was certified as the bargaining agency for auxiliary employees in 1988.

This action was taken in light of the employer's persistent refusal to recognize the right of association for on-call/substitute teachers.

Violence Where You Work

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health & Safety Board is offering one-day workshops on workplace violence November 17th and December 8th. To register, call 667-5450.

If you are a supervisor, manager, worker or member of a safety committee, this course is designed to help you to understand workplace violence and to develop a violence prevention program.

Survey Results Tabulated

YEU members who responded to the *2004 North Region Union Education Survey* included with the August newsletter ranked disrespect and harassment in the workplace as the most troubling issues. Learning opportunities about protecting workplace health and dealing with stress were most in demand.

The survey was developed by PSAC North, although the responses by Yukon union members were tabulated separately. The top Yukon workplace issues listed as most troubling were:

1. Disrespectful atmosphere
2. Harassment
3. Abuse of power/authority
4. Lack of opportunity
5. Fear of reprisals/discipline.

Most members wanted to learn more about:

1. Protecting health and safety at the workplace
2. Dealing with workplace stress
3. How union dues are spent
4. Rights at the workplace
5. Dealing effectively with management
6. Understanding the Collective Agreement.

More detailed information is available from the YEU office. We will publish the results from across the North as soon as they have been tabulated.

YEU across Canada

Tricky nurses Gotcha!

Earlier in the year, the Newfoundland and Labrador government of Premier Danny Williams forced 20,000 public service workers back to work, cut 4,000 jobs, imposed a four-year collective agreement with a wage freeze during the first two years of the agreement, and made cuts to the sick-leave plan.

Faced with the prospect of confronting a government willing to

take such draconian action, the Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses' Union pulled a fast one on the Premier.

Although their contract was set to expire on June 30, 2004, NLNU President Debbie Forward announced that her union would *not* serve notice to renegotiate the contract.

"Our interpretation" of Article 50.01 "is that if notice is not given between 120 and 30 days prior to the expiration date, then the contract continues for another year," said Forward. "By strategically not

serving notice, the NLNU has extended our agreement to June 30, 2005."

When the NLNU polled their members, the number one bargaining priority was no concessions.

credit: Sunspots/Sun/CALM

Hockey Player Selected

Congratulations to **Joe Martin** (Local Y017) for winning the draw to represent YEU/PSAC on the ice at the November 16th **Oldtimers' Hockey Challenge**. Good luck, Joe. We know the NHL scouts will be impressed.

YEU calendar

Tuesday, November 16th

Legendary Hockey Heroes vs. Yukon Select Hockey Team

7:00 p.m., Takhini Arena, Whitehorse

Saturday, November 20th

Yukon Area Council AGM

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., YEU Hall.

Tuesday, November 30th

Winter School Application Deadline

Call YEU office for details and forms

Friday, December 10th

Human Rights Day Open House

2:00 - 7:00 p.m., YEU Hall

January 20th - 23rd, 2005

2004 PSAC National Access

Conference: Our Rights - Moving On Up

Queen Elizabeth Motel, Montreal, Quebec.

2nd Thursday

Monthly YEU Executive Meeting

6:30 p.m. YEU Hall. Members welcome.

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Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Fridays 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

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.