

# The Transmitter



## February is Black History Month

Oscar Peterson, Jazz Musician

Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General  
of Canada

Jay C. Hope, Police  
Chief Superintendent



Cover image and design courtesy of Liam Joseph.

**TWU Celebrates Black  
History Month**

**Cable Technician's Quick  
Action Likely Saved a Life**

**Presenteeism in  
the Workplace**

## Message from the President



Dear Members,

As a new year begins, so do new challenges. The unemployment numbers released by Statistics Canada for the past several months reflect a job market that is suffering. The last three months of 2011 alone saw the loss of 63,000 full-time jobs. Clearly, corporations are not reinvesting the money they

make through corporate tax breaks into creating new jobs in Canada. It is time that the federal government shift its focus from job cuts to assisting in job creation and reinvesting in our communities

for review to members via the TWU website by the Committee in early January 2012 to gather members' opinions and comments. This was a challenging task and we thank the Committee members for their hard work and dedication.

This February, let us all take the time to reflect on the important sacrifices and contributions to the labour movement made by black activists, past and present, during Black History Month. It is with great appreciation and pride that we can

**“The frustrations born of social and economic inequality continue to be echoed around the globe.”**

and public services. Canadians need to be aware of the facts and demand change on this front which is why the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) created the Keep Jobs in Canada public awareness campaign and continues to educate members.

It is no surprise that the Occupy Wall Street movement resonated with so many people. The frustrations born of social and economic inequality continue to be echoed around the globe. We recognize and wish to thank the protesters, volunteers and supporters, many from within the TWU, who exemplify what it means to be a committed social activist.

The TWU is busily preparing for the 2012 Policy Convention scheduled to take place between April 30 and May 4 in Richmond, B.C. The Constitution Committee has worked diligently since the 2011 Policy Convention where they were mandated to make constitutional structural change proposals regarding separating Business Agents from Executive Council and proposals for membership representation on Executive Council. The initial proposals were made available

look back on the colourful history of the labour movement and remember those who helped to create improved work conditions and benefits that workers in Canada enjoy today.

We encourage everyone to keep abreast of Union news by visiting [www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca) and attending local meetings in your area. Please contact your local Shop Steward or Union representative should you have any questions.

In Solidarity,  
George Doubt

### Recorded Telephone Hotlines Discontinued

The TWU is currently improving its email distribution list to better serve members. This includes looking at ways to reach more members. Due to a decreasing number of members who access the telephone Hotline service, the TWU discontinued the recorded news messages as of Wednesday, November 23, 2011. News Hotlines will continue to be sent to members by email or can be found on the home page of the TWU website. If you have not already done so and would like to receive Hotlines by email, please go to the TWU website at [www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca), click on “e-News” and sign up to be added to the Hotline distribution list.

# TWU Celebrates Black History Month

What began as an annual week of recognition in 1926 by Harvard-educated black historian Carter G. Woodson – then known as Negro History Week – the month of February is now celebrated as Black History Month in Canada where it was nationally recognized in 1995 to the credit of Dr. Jean Augustine, the first black woman elected to the Parliament of Canada.

The TWU celebrates the historical importance of Black people and people of African heritage to the advancement and development of Canada. Please take this time to reflect on the sacrifices, contributions, skills, and experience from members of the black community that help to make us all stronger and enrich our cultural diversity. Across the country, unions are made stronger by stewards, occupational health and safety representatives, collective bargaining negotiators, facilitators, staff and leaders who are also members of the black community.

Marie Clarke Walker, executive Vice President, Canadian Labour Congress, and an executive member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), sees unions as playing a pivotal role in the advancement of racialized people within the workplace and society at large. “Unions have a responsibility to promote human rights. Contrary to popular belief, they are not just about picket lines.” She explained further, “Healthy work environments create healthy people. Unions have a duty to promote healthy and safe work environments which means adopting and applying anti-racist, non-discriminatory, anti-oppressive, anti-homophobic, and anti-sexist policies within the workplace. The fact remains that when an individual’s workplace is unhealthy, he or she is likely

to bring this experience home and into the community.”

The TWU is immensely proud of the contributions made by activists within the Union who work diligently to promote members’ rights. We encourage Union representatives to participate in workshops and remain abreast of current issues. Hans Woosly Balan, Alternate TWU Business Agent in Montreal, recently completed the training course Cultural Diversity in a Unionized Workplace, offered through the Québec Federation of Workers. He explained, “The training course allowed me to enhance my knowledge about cultural diversity in the workplace and learn strategies, as a trade unionist, to manage challenging situations.” Brother Balan continued, “We worked on understanding the positive and negative effects of cultural diversity issues that may arise and to work towards cultivating an atmosphere of respect, all the while learning the necessary steps to provide reasonable and fair accommodations for everyone in the workplace.”

To find out more about Black History Month events taking place in your community, please go to [www.blackhistorymonthcanada.ca](http://www.blackhistorymonthcanada.ca).



Part of the Underground Railroad network, Harriet Tubman (1820-1913) made over 20 trips into the U.S. from her base in St. Catharines, Ontario, to help slaves escape to the north and into Canada.

## Historical facts...

- 1833 The British Imperial Act abolished slavery in the British Empire (which included Canada) August 1, 1834.
- 1850 The second Fugitive Slave Act was passed in the United States, placing all people of African descent at risk. The “Underground Railroad” stepped up its operations -- freeing enslaved blacks by transporting them into Canada.
- 1914 During the First World War, black Canadians joined combat units, despite opposition, and in 1916, a segregated unit, the Nova Scotia Number 2 Construction Battalion, was formed.
- 1859 Abraham Shadd was the first black Canadian elected to public office.
- 1969 The first Black History Week was celebrated. Maurice Alexander Charles becomes the first black provincial judge of Ontario.
- 1995 Black History Month was nationally recognized in Canada to the credit of Dr. Jean Augustine, the first black woman elected to the Parliament of Canada (1993).

## TWU BA Receives CBTU Award



From L to R: Marie Clarke Walker, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress and CBTU membership Secretary, Isabelle Miller, TWU BA-Montreal and CBTU Communications Secretary, and Joan-Ann Gravesande, Regional Representative for PSAC and CBTU member.

The TWU is proud to announce that Business Agent, Isabelle Miller, is one of three recipients to have received an award of recognition during the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) 15th Annual Awards Dinner Dance and Fundraiser. The two other recipients were Paulette Hazen from the Ontario Federation of Labour/COPE, and NDP MP, Olivia Chow, widow of the late Jack Layton, who accepted the award and spoke on his behalf.

Following her award, sister Miller expressed, “To be surrounded by prominent members and supporters of the labour movement for an evening of fun is already great, but to receive an award and be congratulated by them was just overwhelming. A special thanks to those who showed me real and honest support. I have already begun to put the scholarship money to good use.”

In a poignant and inspiring speech delivered by one of two keynote speakers that evening, Sharon DeSousa, Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President, Public Service Alliance of Canada and member of the CBTU, shared, “All of us are here because we are part of a movement, a movement that started long before us and has paved the way through the tearing down of walls. The work that has been done by past generations, including many of you here today, along with our allies, has shifted the status quo.” She continued, “As we chip away at those barriers we are building a stronger society. We may not always agree on the course of action, but we need to respect and work together: Our strength is our solidarity!”

Currently, more than 50 different international and national unions are represented in CBTU. With 50 chapters in the United States and one chapter in Ontario, Canada, CBTU is maximizing the strength and influence of black workers in unions and empowering their communities.



Isabelle Miller, TWU BA-Montreal with Sid Ryan, President, Ontario Federation of Labour.



Hans Woosly Balan, TWU Alternate BA-Montreal, with NDP MP, Olivia Chow.

# Cable Technician's Quick Action Likely Saved a Life

By: Miranda Gathercole, Langley Times / A division of Black Press Ltd. This article was originally published in the Langley Times on January 02, 2012.

What could have been a tragic Christmas for a Langley family, remained a time of celebration and gratitude, thanks to the quick actions of a stranger.

Shaw Cable technician Paul Schulli had come to David and Marianna Sibley's home to set up a new high definition television box. But when David suddenly had a heart attack and collapsed, Schulli rushed to the 79-year-old man's side and performed life-saving CPR. Had it not been for Schulli's swift actions, David would likely not be alive today. And for that, his family is calling Schulli a hero.

"It seems like everyone is being called a hero today, but there are heroes, and then there are real heroes. Paul is a real hero," said David's daughter Linda Sibley.

"He didn't panic, he just did what he needed to do."

Linda was at her work in her office in New Zealand when she heard that her dad had suffered a stroke and was in a coma. She hopped on a flight that night and was by her father's side the next day. "Paul has given me faith in humanity again. It made me feel very grateful," she said.

As Schulli arrived at the Langley residence on the morning of Dec. 20, David was telling his wife that he wasn't feeling well.

"I feel really tired, like I want to go back to bed," Marianna recalls him saying to her as they watched Schulli set up.

Minutes later, Marianna was in the kitchen when she heard someone exclaim, 'Oh.' She turned to see Schulli supporting her collapsed husband and lowering him to the floor. She immediately called 911 and shouted instructions to Schulli, who performed CPR for more than 10 minutes until a fire truck arrived. This was the first time Schulli, a Surrey resident, had ever performed CPR in a real-life emergency.

"As soon as he stopped breathing, I knew I had to do CPR," Schulli said. "It was a scary situation. I was scared that this guy was going to die."



Photo submitted by Paul Schulli.

Shaw Cable technician, Paul Schulli, with his son Tyson. Schulli performed life-saving CPR while on a house call when his customer, David Sibley, suffered a heart attack.

David was taken to Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminister where he remained in a coma for two days and on life support for three. He is still in hospital, regaining strength and on the road to recovery.

"He saved my husband's life, he is just wonderful," Marianna said.

Linda is in awe of Schulli's actions.

"So many people could have gone, 'Holy sh\*\*, I'm out of here,' but Paul didn't," she said. "My mother was screaming the instructions at him yelling 'faster,' 'harder,' 'one, two, three' and Paul just kept going."

"He never stopped, not for one minute."

It's just part of Schulli's character to react the way he did, said Randy Harder, Shaw operations manager for East Valley.

"Paul is just that type of guy – he is a family guy, good natured, jovial, conscientious, and hard working," he said.

"I was shocked when I heard what happened. I wondered to myself if I would have done the same. He made the best decision possible."

Greg Schollon, Shaw's regional manager for Vancouver says everyone at Shaw is very proud of Schulli.

"We were just so impressed that he took on a customer

*"Cable technician's quick action likely saved a life" continued on page 6*

*“Cable technician’s quick action likely saved a life” continued from page 5*

in distress,” he said.

Schulli is also being commended by members of the Langley community. Kathleen Johnson, manager at Nature’s Fair Markets, heard of the incident from a customer and hand delivered a gift basket to Schulli’s work.

“It’s an amazing story,” she said. “It’s incredible – that’s going the extra mile.”

But Schulli admitted he is “a little embarrassed,” when he hears all the praise.

In the heat of the moment, all he was concerned about was whether or not David would survive.

“I don’t think of myself as a hero, paramedics and firefighters do this everyday, they are the real heroes,” he said. “I wasn’t about to just let someone else’s husband, dad, brother die in front of me. I just did the best I could.”

## Grievance Settlements

### **Direction to Log in to Company Systems**

The TWU is pleased to announce that the grievance (#2010.100) regarding the direction to log in to company systems has been settled.

As of November 15, 2011, Telus has formally agreed to the following:

- Individual examples of managers directing call-centre employees to commence work prior to the start of their shift are not representative of Telus company practice.
- Call centre employees will not be required to log in and perform work prior to their scheduled start time.
- Call centre employees who do not begin the login process prior to the start of their scheduled shift will not be disciplined specifically for this reason.

In light of this agreement, employees no longer have to worry about the few minutes that it takes to log in at the start of their shift since this time will be taken into account and will not affect employees’ performance bonus.

### **Management Doing Bargaining Unit Work**

A Policy grievance regarding management doing Bargaining Unit work has been settled.

As of December 21, 2011, Telus formally agreed to the following:

- Individual examples of managers assisting with Telus TV installs is not normal operating practice
- Individual examples of managers completing ADSL modem repairs in customer residences is not normal operating practice
- Telus has agreed to compensate the TWU for the equivalent dollar amount in wages and overtime for these examples that were grieved

Employees are encouraged to continue filing grievances when they witness this type of activity by management.

Please contact your Shop Steward or Union Representative should you have any further questions.

# Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter



Photo submitted by Sabrina Daniells, local 51.

From L to R: Jennifer Bucholtz, local 51, Lee Riggs, TWU BA-Kelowna, Sabrina Daniells, local 51, Ciara Kelly, local 51, and Steve McWhirter, local 51.

McWhirter, accompanied by TWU Business Agent, Lee Riggs, participated in the first annual Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter's Bowl-A-Thon fundraiser. The team's fundraising goal of \$500 was far surpassed, reaching over \$1,700. A great fundraising spirit was shown by all of the bowlers who participated, danced along to the music and showed up in zany costumes at the glow bowling event.

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter is a non-profit organization that provides shelter, food, safety and support to battered women and children. It operates a transition house and a 24-hour rape crisis centre, and offers advocacy and accompaniment to hospitals, courts, police and government ministries. The funds raised will go towards helping to finance crisis centre phone lines as well as groceries and repairs for the transition house.

When a local member was sexually assaulted, a group of TWU members wanted to do something to help. On November 18, 2011, four members from Local 51, Jennifer Bucholtz, Sabrina Daniells, Ciara Kelly and Steve

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to this successful fundraising effort.

## BC Federation of Retired Union Members



BC Federation of Retired Union Members (FORUM) is a registered non-profit society for retired union members and active members age 50 and over, supported and endorsed by the BC Federation of Labour (BCFL).

As part of the BCFL, the BC FORUM represents thousands of retired union members, giving them the political bargaining power needed to spotlight issues important to retirees, demand the attention of legislators, and negotiate the best deals for members. The BC FORUM is dedicated to representing the interests and well-being of members, their families and spouses, continuing into retirement the relationship they have enjoyed with the trade union movement.

The BC FORUM offers great membership benefits at the

lowest possible cost such as:

- Access to union products and services, helping to build solidarity across generations.
- The annual membership fee (\$20/year or \$49/3 years) automatically entitles members to B.C. FORUM's \$2,500 Group Accident Insurance policy at no additional cost.
- Special negotiated group rates on many products and services.
- A free subscription to the BC FORUM newsletter The Advocate.

Read more about the BC Forum at [www.bcforum.ca](http://www.bcforum.ca) and download a registration form, or call 604-688-4565 (toll free at 1-800-896-5678).

## Presenteeism in the Workplace

*Submitted by: TWU National Health and Safety Committee*

Everyone knows what absenteeism is. It is when employees do not show up for work, which is directly and easily measured by employers. Workers commit presenteeism when they choose to show up for work despite physical or



mental illness or other personal reasons. A study conducted by Desjardins Financial Security found that 42 per cent of Canadian workers went to work sick or exhausted at least once in 2007.

Presenteeism is not always as apparent as absenteeism. Health and wellness programs tend to focus on absenteeism giving an inaccurate picture of the relationship between health, work-life quality and productivity. A focus on absenteeism assumes that because people are at work they are being productive. In fact, when employees come to work when they are sick, they can cause negative impacts on performance and productivity.

There could be a number of reasons for presenteeism which may include:

- Workers want to be seen as hard working and committed to their job.
- Unpaid sick days force people who cannot afford an unpaid day off to come to work.
- A company's culture and policies can discourage or penalize workers when they are absent due to sickness, encouraging presenteeism.
- Workload issues can make workers feel stressed about taking time off before completing individual tasks or adding a burden to co-workers.
- Overestimating one's own competence when not feeling well.

Presenteeism does not just adversely affect a worker's well-being; it can have negative effects on a company's output and present hidden long-term costs. The impacts of presenteeism include increased work-related accidents and injury, equipment breakage, errors in judgment, decreased work quality, employee conflicts and interpersonal issues.

There is currently little data regarding presenteeism in Canada. However, according to Statistics Canada, on average each employee per year uses 7.5 days or 3 per cent of salary committing absenteeism. Studies of some chronic conditions and health risk factors found that lost productivity from presenteeism was 7.5 times greater than productivity loss from absenteeism. For some stress-related health problems such as heart disease, hypertension, migraines, and neck or back pain, the ratio increased to 15 times greater.

Given the impact and variety of effects of presenteeism, a comprehensive solution must be considered by employers. Options include; evaluating policies to ensure they do not encourage employees to come to work sick, creating an accommodating workplace culture that doesn't place undue stress on employees and encouraging real work-life balance.

*Adapted from information provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association.*





# TWBP - Did You Know?

If you are a Member of the Telecommunication Workers Benefit Plan (TWBP) and collecting Workers Compensation Benefits (WCB) due to an injury at work, you may be entitled to benefits from the TWBP.

Benefit entitlement is based on a member's inability to work due to sickness or injury and the monthly income they are receiving while disabled. The TWBP provides a top-up to a member's income from other sources up to approximately 100% net pay. Due to an amendment in the Plan effective October 1, 2011, the top-up now applies to WCB.

If you are receiving less than 100% net pay while in receipt of WCB benefits, please contact the TW Benefit Plan administration office and advise them of this. You will be required to provide proof of your income from WCB and the administration office will review your claim to confirm whether or not you have a benefit entitlement.

Please contact the administration office by telephone at 604-430-1317, toll free at 1-877-430-3302 or access the TWBP website at [www.twplans.com](http://www.twplans.com) for further information.

## WCB wage-loss percentages by province:

	<b>BC</b>	<b>Alberta</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Quebec</b>
Benefit %	90% of net average earnings	90% of net average earnings	85% of net average earnings	90% of net average earnings

## Life Insurance – Seek Advice Before You Convert

If your membership under the Telecommunication Workers Benefit Plan (TWBP) ends due to termination of your employment or Plan termination, you will continue to be covered for Group Life Insurance and Survivor Income Benefits for a further 31 days.

During this period, you can apply to the Plan's insurance company for an individual policy of insurance without proof of insurability. This is referred to as a conversion of your group coverage to an individual policy and is very advantageous if you would otherwise not qualify for coverage and continue to need life insurance. However, you may find that you are able to obtain coverage at premium rates lower

than those you will pay under a converted policy. And, if you're in good health, the rates might be substantially less.

Further, there is a cost to the Plan for each individual who converts to an individual policy. Before your option to convert expires, it makes good sense to consult with a financial advisor to determine if you can obtain life insurance coverage at a lower rate than under a converted policy.

For more information or to contact the TWBP, please phone 604-430-1317, toll free at 1-877-430-3302 or visit [www.twplans.com](http://www.twplans.com).

# CPP Protects Workers from Market Meltdown

*By: Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour Congress*

Just when you thought the 2008 global financial crisis was an ugly memory, the stock market roller-coaster is back with a vengeance, and we're along for the wild ride. Across the world, investor fears over sovereign debt and sluggish growth have ignited a loss of confidence and a flight from risk.

Workers trying to save for retirement are watching in frustration and disbelief. In the space of one week last summer, Canadians with equity mutual funds watched 10 per cent of their retirement savings evaporate. Defined benefit pension plans also lost money during the summer's carnage in equity markets, but only about four per cent of total assets.

The latest gyrations come less than three short years after the last gut-wrenching plunge in equity markets. In between, indexes like the Toronto Stock exchange did not even manage to return to their previous highs – which is why many RRSP portfolios have failed to recover from devastating market losses three years ago.

Mutual fund investors in Canada have, in the meantime, been charged management fees that are among the highest in the world. Whether you win or lose at the blackjack table, it seems, the dealer takes a cut.

To be sure, all of this turbulence is good for hedge funds and speculators, who rely on market volatility for outsized returns. But is this any kind of sane way to ensure that retired workers have decent incomes in old age?

The current market swings are a reminder of just how costly and irrational the shift from defined benefit to individual savings plans really is. Think about two individuals retiring this week from a lifetime of work – Steve and Ted.

Steve is a member of a large defined-benefit pension plan and knows what his retirement benefit will be. That's because pension plans, which pool risk across generations and spread it over many years, can roll with the market punches and recover from temporary losses far better than individual portfolios.

The Canada Pension Plan is a perfect example. Canadians retiring this week with a CPP pension will get the full amount to which they are entitled, as will those retiring next year and beyond. Large funds like the CPP have professional investment managers who typically secure higher returns than small fry investors, who lack the knowledge and access that institutional investors enjoy.

As a member of a defined-benefit pension plan, Steve can proceed with his retirement plans despite the market turbulence, confident in the knowledge that his retirement benefit is secure, protected against inflation, and provided for life.

Imagine Ted, on the other hand, with a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). Unlike many of his friends, Ted has been lucky to have an employer who chose to offer a group RRSP at work, even if Ted's boss opted not to pay into his RRSP. Ted has dutifully contributed a portion of every pay cheque for years, in anticipation of his retirement date. But for Ted, as with other individuals with retirement savings in private individual accounts, everything depends on market conditions. The drop in the value of Ted's retirement portfolio on the eve of his retirement means that he will either have to put up with a permanent loss of retirement income, or postpone retirement until he can recoup his losses – with no guarantee that markets will rebound even three years from now.

Make no mistake, defined-benefit pension plans lost money in equity markets during the summer, but only about four per cent of total assets – far less than the haircut small investors received. But most importantly, time is on the side of pension plan members. This is not so for retail investors with individual retirement savings accounts.

Three years ago, the prime minister reassured us that a tumbling stock market signalled new buying opportunities. Great advice for high rollers, but not so good for Canadians trying to plan for retirement. Amidst persistent market turmoil, it's clear that we need the stability and protection of Canada's secure and enduring national pension plan more than ever. It's time to expand the Canada Pension Plan.

# TWU Officers meet with Vancouver-Kensington MLA Mable Elmore

TWU Officers Tamara Marshall and Colin Brehaut attended a fundraiser for MLA Mable Elmore, held on Saturday, October 22, 2011, at the Kentzen Fusion Lounge in Vancouver, B.C. Mable is currently the opposition critic for Multiculturalism and the deputy critic for Children and Family Development and Child Care. She is also the first Filipina woman elected to the B.C. Legislature. The guest speaker was labour activist Velma Veloria, who advocated for affordable housing, workers' rights and racial justice. Veloria co-authored legislation to combat human trafficking while a member of the Washington State Legislature.



From L to R: Colin Brehaut, BA-Burnaby, Vancouver-Kensington MLA, Mable Elmore, and Tamara Marshall, BA-Burnaby.



Sister Candace Knoll, local 51 and Sister Nancy McCurrach, local 51.

New Westminster & District Labour Council delegates volunteer their time to help brother Barry Lynch, a CUPE member (B.C. ambulance paramedic), who was running for mayor, by participating in a telephone campaign during the City of Coquitlam's 2011 municipal election.



Ivana Niblett, TWU BA-Calgary, accepting a plaque and gift (she is a big fan of Disney's Goofy) from local 213 in recognition of her years of service to the local.

## Unions Launch Campaign for Common Good

The Council of Global Unions launched world-wide Quality Public Services' Action Now!, a campaign to advance quality public services for all people through unprecedented coordinated solidarity action across borders.

From the Canadian West to the Middle East, Asia to Africa, Europe to South America – private and public sector unions are uniting to defend and advance the quality public services that keep communities strong. Unions are working with a wide range of allies including municipal governments and civil society groups to build sustainable economies that benefit all people – not just a select few.

In South Africa, local unions are working with the Durban eThekweni municipality and community partners to advance affordable housing and reliable public water, electricity, sanitation and

transport services through a campaign initiated by Public Services International. In Cape Town, this includes providing books to build public libraries in a partnership of Education International affiliates and the civil society organization Equal Education.

In Bangkok, Thailand, railway workers who are members of the International Transport Workers' Federation are marching with public sector unions to reinforce their message of protest against government privatization plans.

In Spain, where youth unemployment is shooting past 40 per cent under austerity measures imposed by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, leading public and private sector unions are joining forces under the Quality Public Services' Action Now! banner to

"Unions Launch Campaign for Common Good" continued on page 12

# A Cold Winter's Night

*"A day in the life of..." is a continuing series of articles submitted by TWU members about life at work, unique experiences, related subjects or creative stories. This story was submitted by a TWU member and published writer who requested to remain anonymous.*

## Part One

The only light came from the street lights, the blowing snow refracting it, making it hazy. He could barely put one foot in front of the other, his pace slow and plodding. All he could

think about was the warmth of the shelter. He held a dingy quilt by the corners, strung around his neck. His quilt, his street bed, was frozen so solid that it didn't lie against his back as he walked. The other end floated, rigidly supporting its own weight two feet behind his steadily pumping knees.

*"A Cold Winter's Night" continued on page 13*

*"Unions Launch Campaign for Common Good" continued from page 11*

promote a new social and economic vision.

Solidarity exchanges between unions are taking place. In Egypt, leaders of the American Federation of Teachers, whose members in Wisconsin have been stripped of their bargaining rights, will meet with the independent Egyptian unions whose call for a general strike proved to be the decisive moment in toppling their country's corrupt regime earlier this year. However, Egypt's transitional military council has just banned strikes and sit-ins.

Italian trade union leaders, who are celebrating a national referendum victory that halts moves to privatize water, expand nuclear power, or allow politicians impunity – will visit unions in Wisconsin and across the U.S.

Government and trade union leaders from Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela are meeting in a bipartisan effort to promote social dialogue and innovative proposals for quality public services across the Andean region.

Ukrainian unions are implementing new strategies to convince central and local governments to provide quality, affordable public services as the basis for decent work, quality of life, democracy and social justice.

In Fiji, where the government just passed a law denying public sector workers the right to collective bargaining, sick leave, anti-discrimination or dispute resolution measures, and in India, Japan, Lebanon, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Morocco, Mauritius, Russia, Uganda, the Netherlands and elsewhere, union and community members are standing together to defend the right to decent work and to reclaim public services for the common good.

"When we look around the world today, we find peace and improved equality and opportunity only in countries where strong public services provide equitable redistribution of

wealth, protect democracy and deliver security, justice and decent work," Council of Global Unions chair Peter Waldorff emphasizes.

"We need priority investment in quality public services to create jobs and stimulate sustainable economic growth and development. Spending on clean energy, water, health care, education infrastructure and transport is an investment in our collective future."

The Quality Public Services' Action Now! campaign is guided by principles outlined in the Geneva Charter on Quality Public Services. Of key importance, public funding must be supported by fair taxes based on ability to pay, an end to shifting taxes from corporations and the super-rich to ordinary people, and a crackdown on tax dodgers who hide their profits in foreign tax havens.

Trade unions, political and civil society partners are invited to associate their related campaigns or to start new initiatives under the Quality Public Services' Action Now! campaign banner, and are encouraged to sign on to the Geneva Charter on Quality Public Services today. More campaign information, posters and talking points are available at [www.qpsactionnow.org](http://www.qpsactionnow.org).

Global Unions are international private and public sector trade union organizations working together with a shared commitment to the ideals and principles of the trade union movement. They share a common determination to organize, to defend human rights and labour standards everywhere, and to promote the growth of trade unions for the benefit of all working women and men and their families. Together, they represent more than 175 million members worldwide.

[www.qpsactionnow.org/page/who-we-are](http://www.qpsactionnow.org/page/who-we-are)

Source: [www.qpsactionnow.org/CALM](http://www.qpsactionnow.org/CALM)



He knew that he had a long way yet to go to get to the shelter. And there was his next major hurdle. He could see the traffic lights of the city's arterial highway between the squat buildings around him, swapping red for green in the distance.

He knew he couldn't speed up; he'd play himself out before he got to safety. He couldn't slow down; he would simply sit down and freeze to death. He didn't have the energy for thought or to feel sorry for himself. He'd gone to that quiet place in his mind that we all have, whether we've experienced it or not.

He had been hopeful for a while, had held faith in his trusty bed to keep him separated from the abruptly frozen ground. This was nothing his prized possession hadn't seen him through before, right? Hope quickly turned into concern and then to fear as he realized it was already too late. He'd stopped to wipe clinging snow off of one of the only newspaper vending machines left in town to read the front page. The big bold print of the headline deflated what was left of his hope. He'd shaken his head and, at the time, he wasn't really sure why. He now realized those few words had also taken the bite out of his fear, had left him as numb inside as he was outside. Had brought on the completely unthinking plod that would get him safely to the shelter. He believed it. He had to, or he would never make it.

He abruptly realized that he did have some energy for thought left.

Enough to let him get distracted, to break his focus.

He slowly looked up at the quickly oncoming headlights. As he noted the angry buzz of spinning tires, the angry thumping anti-lock brakes fought to gain traction, he also realized that he couldn't do anything about it. Nothing

other than keep walking. Stopping was obviously out of the question, and there was nothing left to get out of the way. He'd walked right out into the middle of the intersection of the six lane highway without noticing.

The headlights were too high for a car, probably a pick-up. Maybe a van? He thought he could see ladders floating above the headlights.

The brakes seemed to be winning, it was slowing down, he might get by.

He could see that it was a van now, the rear end was sliding.

## Part Two

I was sulking. Not really choked anymore, just sulking. It wasn't management's fault that I had icicles in my shorts while they were all getting hammered at the Christmas party. It wasn't their fault that I slipped and fell into the snow bank, dumping my tool pouch in the process. I really, really wanted it to be their fault, but it wasn't.

It was too cold out there for anything to melt, and now my snow bank adventure was once again wetly taunting me. But now it was done and my hot shower beckoned.

With a few minutes to slump behind the wheel and relax, my hand bumped my empty coffee mug on the center console. I immediately thought that might be a hell of a fine idea. Abruptly forgetting about the van's radio right above my cup, I immediately began checking my mental city map, looking for a convenient drive through somewhere on my long route home.

It didn't take long to scrounge some change out of my pocket and wrap my greedy hand around that piping hot one and one. The smell of the coffee immediately filled the cab of my van; such a decadence to skip the decaf so late at night. I'd be up all night. I didn't care. I enjoyed the caffeine. I still had to get all the way across a couple of municipalities to get home. The city was growing so fast.

What the hell is that guy doing? What an idiot, he's crossing the highway on my green! The moron's going to get himself killed. He's not...

He's not stopping. He sees us. There's a whole line of traffic behind me. Surely he sees us. He must see us. Only somebody completely out of it wouldn't. He's staring at the ground. What's with that quilty blanket thingy?

## Brother Tony Zacharias Retires

Submitted by Dave DiMaria, BA-Burnaby and Colin Brehaut, BA-Burnaby



Tony Zacharias, enthusiastic labour and political activist, has decided to retire after 30 years of service with B.C. Tel/Telus. Tony was an ardent supporter of the TWU, promoting the Union in the workplace and in various TWU locals that he belonged to. His friendly and outgoing manner made him popular in the workplace

after moving to a new job in Ladner, B.C. Tony was also a member of the TWU's Work Jurisdiction Committee for a number of years. Business Agents who serviced Tony's locals are particularly appreciative of his preparation work in putting together a grievance file. His research and organization of a case certainly made his Business Agent's job easier and allowed the Union to better advocate on behalf of members.

On the political front, Tony is active as an elected executive in the Delta South NDP Provincial Constituency Association. Respected Earth scientist and leader in B.C.'s post-secondary system, Dileep Athaide, was the B.C. NDP candidate for Delta South in the 2009 Provincial election. Tony worked hard on Dileep's behalf, and we are confident that he'll work hard for the Delta South NDP candidate in the planned 2013 B.C. election.

and in his locals. This was certainly evidenced by the large contingency of friends and past and present co-workers from a wide area of the company who attended his retirement party.

Playing guitar is another of Tony's passions. He enjoyed entertaining delegates with his music after hours during TWU conventions. We understand part of his retirement plan includes playing lots of rock 'n roll music.

Tony has held a number of elected positions over the years, including President and Councillor of locals 38 and 10 in Vancouver, and was most recently on the Local 1 executive

The TWU thanks Tony for all his hard work and enthusiasm for helping working people.

*"A Cold Winter's Night" continued from page 13*

It's sticking...It's frozen. It's so cold, it's frozen. He has to be...He's probably freezing. I'm cold, but my feet are warm in my work boots and I'm wearing five layers of cold weather gear. He's wearing...A frozen quilt.

He won't see me. He can't see me. All he can do is walk.

I jam the brakes, and even through the lid, the hot coffee splashes with the jerk, landing on my hand, burning. Cursing and swearing, I pump the brakes to help the anti-locks, drop my hand on the shifter on the tree and manage to drop the automatic transmission down a couple of gears. I don't know which one. I'm too busy trying to judge distances, trying to find a mirror to see how close the next guy behind me is.

Come on baby, slow down for papa. No, don't slip!

Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop. What else can I do? Nothing. Move! Get out of the way!

I know that he can't. I can see the numb look in his eyes now. All he has left is his plod.

Control. Traction, thank god, traction.

I watch him continue, understanding that he's not giving up just yet. I hope you make it buddy.

# Union Brothers Dave Nicholls and Fred Blewett Retire



From L to R: Brothers Dave Nicholls and Fred Blewett.

Local 37 members in the Cariboo will have big boots to fill with the retirement of two long-serving executive members, Fred Blewett and Dave Nicholls. Fred was a long-serving member of the local Health and Safety Committee and instrumental in bringing about positive change to workers' safety across the country. For many years, Dave and Fred both tirelessly served the membership whose appreciation was evident by the large turnout to a retirement dinner recently held in their honour at one of the local restaurants in Williams Lake, B.C. Several members travelled a long way with some coming from as far as Quesnel and 100 Mile House.

Business Agent, Lee Riggs, who was in attendance for the celebration said, "The contribution of Fred and Dave is one that exemplifies what being a union activist truly means. The contribution that they made was one that has a knock-on effect for all members across the country, particularly regarding the issues of working alone in remote areas of the province and the introduction of satellite phones for members' safety in areas not covered by cell service." Riggs presented Dave and Fred with an honorary lifetime membership and a retirement gift for their many years of service

## Remembrance Day 2011



*I was honored and privileged to have laid this wreath at the Cenotaph in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. Port Coquitlam's Remembrance Day services are sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #133. The Royal Canadian Legion is the largest veteran-based community service organization in Canada and is dedicated to the perpetuation of remembrance of those who served and died in the service of our country and in the care of those who have survived.*

*It was a special ceremony as it marked a unique year; the 11th hour of the 11th day the 11th month in the 2011th year. The wreath was on behalf of the New Westminter and District Labour Council where I have served as a delegate for Local 51 for several years. The labour council is a vital connection to the overall labour movement at the municipal level. Someone said to me, "I thought labour promoted peace". They could not understand how labour would be involved. The answer is this: The men and women that are military personnel are workers. We embrace and honour these very special workers not just on Remembrance Day but everyday. These workers need to come home from wars and receive good workers' benefits, in both life and death, for their families. These brave men and women risk their lives so that we can live in freedom today.*

*- Nancy McCurrach, local 51*

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

Burnaby Head Office  
5261 Lane Street  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4A6  
PHONE: 604-437-8601  
FAX: 604-435-7760

## Kelowna

#102-1456 St. Paul St.  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 2E6  
PHONE: 250-860-5025  
FAX: 250-860-6737

## Prince George

#102-3645 18th Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2N 1A8  
PHONE: 250-960-2220  
FAX: 250-563-2379  
TOLL-FREE FAX: 1-888-700-9318

## ALBERTA

### Calgary

#602 - 5940 MacLeod Trail SW  
Calgary, AB T2H 2G4  
PHONE: 403-237-6990  
FAX: 403-802-2381

### Edmonton

#1280 - 5555 Calgary Trail NW  
Edmonton, AB T6H 5P9  
PHONE: 780-444-6945  
FAX: 780-488-6911

## ONTARIO

### Scarborough

#901-10 Milner Business Court  
Scarborough, ON M1B 3C6  
PHONE: 416-506-9723  
FAX: 416-506-9722

## QUÉBEC

### Westmount

#540-4060 Ste. Catherine St. W.  
Westmount, QC H3Z 2Z3  
PHONE: 514-788-8811  
FAX: 514-788-8813

## TW PENSION/BENEFITS

#303-4603 Kingsway  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M4  
PENSION: 604-430-1317  
BENEFITS: 604-430-3300  
FAX: 604-430-5395  
WEBSITE: [www.twplans.com](http://www.twplans.com)



## Letters of Appreciation

### Retirement Thanks

I would like to thank the TWU for this nice retirement benefit package and also for the money we received while we were out walking during the labour dispute of 2005. Very much appreciated. Also, Teena at the Edmonton Office for all your help over the years. Thanks.

Cheers,  
Gregg Gerdes  
Formerly from Local 208

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the TWU for its generous retirement gift and all the efforts made on behalf of the membership. I will miss the company of many talented and dedicated employees. Best wishes going forward.

Kind regards  
Brian Hansen  
Formerly from Local 16

Thank you for the retirement gift of \$1,000 you sent me. I really appreciate it. After working for BC Tel/Telus for 30 years you realize how important a strong Pension is. Thanks to everyone who made this Plan what it is.

Greg Butler  
Formerly Local 5

I would like to thank the TWU for the \$1,000 gift on my retirement. It was a pleasure to have served in the capacity of President and Vice President of local 7. I would like to wish everyone in the TWU the best in the years to come.

Robert Watchman  
Formerly Local 7

Dear TWU Sisters and Brothers,

A heart felt thank you for the \$1,000 retirement gift. I will put it toward a fun and musical use. I would also like to thank you for your friendship and

support over my 30 years of service with BC Tel and Telus. I couldn't have made it without you. A final thank you to our COPE staff in our Union and Pension offices for their hard work and support. Although you work for it every day, when retirement finally reaches you, it is like a big Wow! Here it is!

Tony Zacharias  
Formerly TWU Locals 1, 10, 38 and 5

Hello TWU,

Just a note to say thank you so very much for the retirement cheque from the TWU Benevolent Society. It is very much appreciated and I will use it to 'pay it forward'.

Warmest regards,  
Nancy Shinde  
Formerly Local 10

### Scholarship Thanks

Thank you for choosing me to be a recipient of the TWU Scholarship. My first semester at university went very well and I am looking forward to starting my second semester.

Sincerely,  
Kristin Rudlang

## THE TRANSMITTER

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TWU President: GEORGE DOUBT  
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Communications Specialist: DIANE PÉPIN

[www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca)  
[editor@twu-stt.ca](mailto:editor@twu-stt.ca)

PN: 40022297

Return undeliverables to:  
TWU Circulation, 5261 Lane Street  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4A6