



*Wishing all of our members  
and your families  
a very happy Christmas  
and God's blessing  
in the coming year*



The Official Publication of  
the Telecommunications  
Workers Union

# The Transmitter

December 2003  
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No. 4



BROADWAY PRINTERS

## Union seeks strike mandate in TELUS talks

The TWU bargaining committee is seeking a strike mandate from our members working at TELUS.

Special meetings at which a strike vote will be held at locations throughout British

Columbia and Alberta over a three-week period beginning January 5, 2004.

The list of strike meetings set, with dates, times and locations, is printed on page three of this Transmitter.

The strike vote is taking place at a time that the parties are into their fourth year of bargaining.

The Union announced the strike vote on December 15 at the conclusion of a 30-day blackout period proposed by federal conciliators and agreed to by negotiators for TELUS and the TWU.

The blackout period had begun on November 14, the date on which the parties had agreed to the exchange of comprehensive proposals. That was also the first day of a formal 60-day conciliation period.

On November 14, the TWU bargaining committee provided the federal conciliators and TELUS a revised collective agreement which addressed many of the proposals discussed and put forward by both parties over the past three years.

However, the TELUS bargaining team came to the table continuing to demand a brand new collective agreement with much of the same language that was already tabled and distributed to members in the fall of 2002 at strike vote meetings.

At a time when the parties should be narrowing rather

than expanding their demands to try to come to an agreement, TELUS continues to demand the right to add new proposals – contrary to the Letter of Agreement the parties signed in July 2003 under the direction of the federal conciliators.

TELUS continues to demand concessions in all areas of the collective agreement. They have proposed multi-tiered wage schedules with no general wage increases. Moreover, they are seeking reductions in benefits, reductions in paid time off, and the removal of major job security clauses.

The company's position on TELUS Mobility is another major stumbling block to progress at the bargaining table.

On December 1, 2003, two weeks after the agreed-upon November 14 exchange, managers from TELUS Mobility showed up at conciliation and presented the TWU bargaining committee with additional proposals, which they stipulated were without prejudice and could be rescinded at their discretion.

This flies in the face of a clear ruling relating to Mobility by the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB).

In short, TELUS continues to refuse to accept that they are bargaining for TELUS Mobility, in spite of the fact that CIRB Decision 244 says that TELUS Mobility

employees are part of the TELUS bargaining Unit. (Decision 244 states: "It is incorrect to state that these employees are no longer part of the TELUS bargaining unit.")

The plain fact is this. The TWU bargaining committee has been bargaining for employees at TELUS Mobility under one collective agreement since the beginning of negotiations and continues to bargain for them.

Between September 2003 and November 14, 2003, a number of issues were heard at the CIRB, including a TWU complaint under Section 94.1 of the Canada Labour Code against the CEO and executive of TELUS alleging interference with the operation of a trade union. While no final agreement has been reached, TELUS management did agree that they would cease discussing labour relations or bargaining issues with members. A second complaint was filed by the Union over the company's recruitment of ex-managers to do bargaining unit work during a labour dispute. Eight days of hearings were held into these complaints, and we are currently awaiting a CIRB decision.

The bargaining committee will be mailing out, in the near future, detailed information to all bargaining

unit employees, including dates and times of strike vote meetings.

Given the company's continuing refusal to bargain seriously with the Union, it is particularly critical that members give the Union a strong strike mandate. Now more than ever, we need an overwhelming show of support and solidarity.

One other issue that needs to be addressed is the conciliators proposal of December 11 for an extension of the blackout. Your bargaining committee decided that a continuation of the communications blackout would not be in the interest of our members. The Union feels strongly that members need to know what the company is seeking.

There are numerous rumours circulating in the workplace, which we believe have originated with management, regarding the company's offer. We urge you to pay no attention to those rumours. You should recognize them for what they are – part of the company's ongoing bargaining strategy.

The Union needs the solidarity of the membership. The Union seeks your support in the upcoming strike vote, and your strong and ongoing support in whatever follows from that strike vote.

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**Strike vote special meeting schedule, page three**

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Scholarship thanks

Dear TWU:

I would like to thank the Telecommunications Workers Union for the \$750 Scholarship awarded to me. This support is greatly appreciated, for financial reasons as well as for the faith it displays in my ability to successfully continue with post-secondary education.

I am currently attempting a double degree at the University of British Columbia. If all goes as planned I will obtain Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Science Degrees. I consider my first year a trial period as opposed to a definite decision that is what I will do, but so far I am enjoying both aspects of my education and the prospects look good.

Thank you again for your scholarship, which enables me to continue my education and focus entirely on my studies during my first year.

Yours truly,  
Jessica Piper

## Retirement thanks

Dear TWU:

Thank you for the retirement pin, the Honourary life membership and the \$1000 cheque that I received upon retiring. It was very much appreciated. Also thank you to the TWU and to the Pension Office for their hard work

that provided me with great benefits while I was working and the pension that I receive now.

Sincerely,  
Diana Morgan  
Nanaimo

Dear TWU:

Thank you very much for the \$1000, the honorary lifetime membership, and the retirement pin; I wear it proudly.

Thank you, also, for the great pension so that I could retire early at 55. A special thanks to Tim Williams for answering the many questions that I had for him over the years.

After almost 30 years working for CTNS, BC Tel/TELUS, I have many fond memories of the wonderful co-workers I met along the way. I have made friendships that will last a lifetime.

To the "Gang" at Brooksbank thank you for the retirement party and gifts.

WAR to the "Brooksbank Bombers" Softball teams.

WAR to the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual spring golf tournament.

WAR to the TWU.

I'm Out!

Solidarity forever,  
Garry Blanchard  
Local 30

Dear TWU:

I want to thank you for the retirement pin, cheque and Honourary Life Membership certificate and to wish you continued success.

Stay strong and God Speed.

Sincerely,  
Sadie Vagt

Dear TWU:

I'd like to thank you for my retirement gift and for the Honourary Life Membership Certificate.

It has been a pleasure being part of such a hard working union. Many thanks to all the Executive and Officers who have devoted many hours to benefit the members and the Trade Union movement.

Sincerely,  
Bruce Midlane

Dear TWU:

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the \$1000 cheque I received as well as my honorary life membership. I would also like to thank Rod Hiebert for attending my luncheon.

Pat Hartley  
Williams Lake, Local 37

Dear TWU:

"My husband and I" would like to send many thanks for our Retirement Packages. At 53 we both opted for early pension. A special thank you to Grace Jones for all her help with this. Looking back over our 30 plus years the jobs were good but the people we met were the best. We both feel very fortunate right now and let me tell you that "Life After" is wonderful. Good Luck to the negotiating team and all our remaining brothers and sisters as this saga continues.

"Regally yours",  
Judy Takeda (Local 51) and  
Terry Takeda (Local 7)

(Editor's Note: We are amused).

Dear TWU:

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this letter. Since my early retirement on October 31<sup>st</sup> of last year I have been enjoying my new found freedom so much that the time has just flown by.

I wish to express my deepest thanks for making early retirement possible and appreciation of the group medical coverage with Blue Cross. Thank you also for the \$1000 retirement gift, honorary life membership and retirement pin.

Although times are difficult for those brothers and sisters I leave behind, I urge each one to support the Union.

In solidarity,  
Nova Lockhart  
Local 51

Dear TWU:

Thank you very much for the \$1000 retirement gift, honorary life membership and retirement pin.

I have worked for CT&S, BC Tel and TELUS over the last 34 plus years and have enjoyed being a TWU member and working with great people.

Brad Griffin  
Nanaimo  
Local 3

Dear TWU:

A note of thanks for the Honourary Life Membership Certificate, the pin and the \$1000 cheque.

I also wish you all the best in your continuous effort to serve all members.

With many thanks,  
Lucia Chang, Local 50

Dear TWU:

I just received my cheque for \$1000 from the TWU Benevolent Society and I want to thank you all so much, it will come in very handy.

My many years with the telephone company have been most memorable and enjoyable.

I always enjoy sharing stories with my former work mates. I thank you all again for the cheque and the memories.

Sincerely,  
Judy Barrett  
Revelstoke

Dear TWU:

Just a note to say thank you very much for the \$1000 retirement gift.

Lynda Hilleran  
Langley

Dear TWU:

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the cheque of \$1000, lifetime retirement certificate and pin.

I'm sure all the members who have retired will say how great it is to be out of all TELUS nonsense!

Sincere thanks,  
Carol Manson  
Local 50

Dear TWU:

Thank you for the Honourary Life Membership, the pin, and the \$1000 cheque.

I'll always remember how supportive the Union was when my accounting position at Mobility went to Alberta. The Union was right there working on our behalf ensuring we had temporary positions to go to, that we kept our wage groups and most important we had a choice of permanent jobs to chose from. I went to Assignment - Activations and enjoyed my time there very much. Thank you once again for all your help.

Sincerely,  
Diane Stiglich  
Local 50

Dear TWU:

Thank you so much for the \$1000 retirement gift, pin and honorary life membership in the TWU.

My sincerest best wishes to you all, now and in the future.

Sincerely,  
Judy Pratt  
Penticton

Dear TWU:

Thank you for the \$1000 gift, the pin and the lifetime membership. I left the Company in 1996 with the first VSO, and have many wonderful memories of friends and work.

In solidarity,  
June Helmer  
Campbell River and Victoria

Dear TWU:

Thank you for the \$1000 cheque and the lifetime membership.

Retirement is wonderful.

Good luck in contract negotiations.

L. Mae Westmoreland  
Local 7

## Real heroes

Letter to the Editor of the  
Edmonton Journal

Dear Sir:

While watching the massive power outage Down East earlier this year, I was saddened by the fact that this shows who the real heroes of our society are but they will be forgotten quickly, just like the ones from 9/11.

It wasn't the CEOs or managers at the power companies involved who were working around the clock to restore power, but the common workers who, if unionized, are frowned upon by society as greedy individuals for wanting to keep up with the rising costs of living. People who if declared essential - and this blackout surely showed they are - would lose any right to ask for a raise.

I wonder how long people would survive without water, power, heat or communications. Yet the people who ensure these services are kept up and running are at the bottom of the list when it comes to priorities in our society. CEOs, managers, professional athletes and entertainers are on top of the world in both priority and pay scale.

So to all the workers out East working to restore the power, my hat's off to you.

As you can tell I am a union worker. I am employed by TELUS and haven't had a raise in four years, soon to be entering the fifth. I'm a front-line worker who is daily providing service or trying to restore a service that is readily taken for granted and highly appreciated.

Darrell Hawrelak  
Edmonton

## Sports thanks

Dear TWU:

We, the Castlegar Aquanauts Swim Club were the successful applicant of a Minor Sports Sponsorship here in Local 4 of the West Kootenays. We really appreciate the \$500 sponsor. We have purchased an underwater video camera for stroke analysis. It works great!

Thank you very much.

Castlegar Aquanauts Swim Club  
Allan Cecon  
Local 4  
Castlegar

Dear TWU:

I would like to thank Local 8 for their continued support of South Cariboo Minor Soccer which is based in Ashcroft. We have approximately 275 kids in our organization from the communities of Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Spences Bridge, Lytton, Clinton, Loon Lake, Savona and Logan Lake.

Again, thank you.

Ron Jones,  
Ashcroft (Retired)

## TELUS told improve service

In early November, the federal communications regulator ordered TELUS to improve its level of customer service.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission received 400 customer complaints about TELUS in September, and more than 2,000 in October.

The CRTC says most of the complaints were about not being able to get through to TELUS's customer service department. There were also concerns about poor installation and repair service.

CRTC regional director Margaret Vogel said the regulatory body has put TELUS on notice. She said there are 19 customer service indicators that TELUS will have to measure and report on.

"The quality of service standard for how long it takes TELUS to answer the phone, for instance, is that at least 80 per cent of the calls they receive have to be answered in 20 seconds or less," she said.

That could be a tall order for the phone company. TELUS customers have reported being on hold for up to two hours before being cut off.

For the time being, TELUS will have to report on its customer service every week. Telephone companies normally have to file such reports four times a year.

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Fax: 403-802-2381

TWU phone ...(604) 437-8601

TWU fax .....(604) 435-7760

Pension Plan  
office .....(604) 430-1317

TWU hotline ..(604) 435-2224

### TWU Website addresses:

TWU Home Page: <http://www.twu-canada.ca>  
TW Pension Plan:  
<http://www.twu-canada.ca/twpp/pptoc.htm>  
TW Benefit Plan:  
<http://www.twu-canada.ca/twbp/bphome.htm>  
TWU Email Address (Union Office):  
[twu@twu-canada.ca](mailto:twu@twu-canada.ca)  
TW Pension and Benefit Plans:  
[general@twplans.com](mailto:general@twplans.com)

## The Transmitter

Member of

The Transmitter is the official publication of the Telecommunications Workers Union.

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# Strike Vote Special Meetings scheduled for January

The Union has scheduled special meetings at locations throughout British Columbia and Alberta in January for members working at TELUS to conduct a strike vote.

There will be a complete update on bargaining at these meetings. The Bargaining Committee advises members there will be no balloting prior to the Bargaining Committee's presentation.

Following is the schedule of meetings.

## Monday, January 5

<b>Kamloops</b>	7 pm	<i>Plaza Heritage Hotel, 405 Victoria St</i>
<b>Terrace</b>	7 pm	<i>Best Western Inn</i>

## Tuesday, January 6

<b>Williams Lake</b>	7 pm	<i>IWA Hall – 124 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.</i>
<b>Smithers</b>	7 pm	<i>Alpenhorn Pub Meeting Rm.</i>

## Thursday, January 8

<b>Prince George</b>	Noon, 7 pm	<i>Coast Inn of the North – 770 Brunswick St.</i>
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## Saturday, January 10

<b>Vancouver</b>	10 am, 2 pm, 7 pm	<i>Italian Cultural Centre – 3075 Slocan</i>
<b>Surrey</b>	10 am, 2 pm, 7 pm	<i>Days Inn – 9850 King George Hwy</i>
<b>Abbotsford</b>	10 am, 2 pm	<i>Exhibition Park – Cadet Hall, 32470 Haida Drive</i>

## Monday, January 12

<b>Victoria</b>	12 noon, 7 pm	<i>Da Vinci Centre – 195 Bay St</i>
<b>Vernon</b>	7 pm	<i>Village Green Hotel, 4801 27<sup>th</sup> Street</i>

## Tuesday, January 13

<b>Nanaimo</b>	7 pm	<i>Beden Parak Rec Centre – 2300 Bowen Rd.</i>
<b>Kelowna</b>	7 pm	<i>Coast Capri Hotel, 1171 Harvey Av</i>

## Wednesday, January 14

<b>Campbell River</b>	7 pm	<i>Labour Centre, 830-14<sup>th</sup> Ave.</i>
<b>Penticton</b>	7 pm	<i>Ramada Inn, 1050 Eckhart Ave.</i>
<b>Castlegar</b>	7 pm	<i>Castlegar &amp; District Rec. Centre, 2101 6 Ave</i>

## Thursday, January 15

<b>Cranbrook</b>	7 pm	<i>Labour Centre, 105-9<sup>th</sup> Ave</i>
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## Saturday, January 17

<b>Calgary</b>	10 am, 2 pm, 7 pm	<i>Red &amp; White Club (north end McMahon Stadium) 1833 Crowchild Trail NW</i>
<b>Calgary</b>	9:30 am, 1 pm	<i>Glenmore Inn, 2720 Glenmore Tr. SE</i>

## Monday, January 19

<b>Richmond</b>	7 pm	<i>Best Western Richmond Inn – 7551 Westminster Highway</i>
<b>Lethbridge</b>	7 pm	<i>Holiday Inn Express, 120 Stafford Dr. S.</i>
<b>Fort McMurray</b>	7 pm	<i>CEP Office, 10020 Franklin Ave.</i>

## Tuesday, January 20

<b>Medicine Hat</b>	7 pm	<i>Royal Canadian Legion, 702 2 St. SE</i>
<b>Vermillion</b>	7 pm	<i>Vermillion Public Library, 5001 49<sup>th</sup> Ave.</i>
<b>Dawson Creek</b>	7 pm	<i>IWA Hall</i>
<b>Burnaby</b>	7 pm	<i>Operating Engineers Hall, 4333 Ledger Ave.</i>

## Wednesday, January 21

<b>North Vancouver</b>	7 pm	<i>Alano Club, 176 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St.</i>
<b>Red Deer</b>	7 pm	<i>Red Deer Lodge, 4311 49 Ave</i>
<b>Camrose</b>	7 pm	<i>R&amp;R Inns &amp; Suites, 6508-48<sup>th</sup> Ave.</i>
<b>Fort St. John</b>	7 pm	<i>Quality Inn Northern Grand, 9830 100<sup>th</sup> Ave.</i>

## Thursday, January 22

<b>Vancouver</b>	5 pm	<i>Library Square (VPL) 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 350 W. Georgia</i>
<b>Calgary</b>	7 pm	<i>SAIT Campus Centre Building (Symposium Rm. – V202), 1301 16 Ave NW</i>
<b>Grande Prairie</b>	7 pm	<i>Trumpeter Motor Inn, 12101 100 St.</i>

## Saturday, January 24

<b>Edmonton</b>	10 am, 2 pm, 7 pm	<i>Alberta Teachers Association, 11010 142<sup>nd</sup> St.</i>
<b>Edmonton</b>	9:30 am, 2 pm, 7 pm	<i>Chateau Edmonton South, 7230 Argyll Rd. NW</i>

## Monday, January 26

<b>Edmonton</b>	6 pm	<i>Alberta Teachers Association, 11010 142<sup>nd</sup> St.</i>
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## BONNIE TAYLOR

has just retired from the TWU clerical staff, after working nearly 17 years in the Union's Burnaby office.

One of five staff members in the Burnaby office to accept a retirement incentive package offered by the TWU, Bonnie completed her time with the TWU at the end of November.

Bonnie started with the Union in February, 1987, and for the next 12 years she was the "voice of the TWU" for members calling in, handling the switchboard until 1999.

That year, on the retirement of Peggy McLean, Bonnie moved into the main clerical office and took over Peggy's former secretarial duties, which primarily involved assisting the secretary-treasurer and executive council through typing and other clerical functions.

Convention delegates became familiar with Bonnie over the past four years, as she attended the annual convention to take minutes for subsequent transcribing.

Prior to coming to the TWU, Bonnie worked for CALFAA, the flight attendants union, for a couple of years, and before that had worked at Uniroyal for about four years. It was when she began at Uniroyal in 1980 that Bonnie became a member of the OTEU, the union of the TWU office staff.

Born in Victoria, Bonnie moved to North Burnaby with her family as a child, where she attended Burnaby North High School. Since then, she has lived in the North Burnaby area her entire life, where she and husband Bob have resided in the same house for some 37 years. Her three children and five grandchildren all live in the Lower Mainland.

Bonnie and Bob, who is semi-retired, plan to do some traveling now that Bonnie is retired, but will continue to make their home in North Burnaby.

Friends and colleagues at the TWU wish Bonnie all the best in her retirement years.



## YVONNE KEOGH

After more than 25 years with the TWU clerical staff in the Burnaby office, Yvonne Keogh has retired.

Yvonne started with the union in April 1978, shortly after the three divisions amalgamated and formed the TWU. Her last day at work was October 31, 2003.

Starting in the machine room, Yvonne moved up to the clerical office after a couple of years. Some years later, in the 1980s, she was appointed Office Co-ordinator, a position she held until her retirement. In addition to co-ordinating the clerical work, Yvonne would fill in when and where she was needed in the office. Yvonne joined the OTEU when she started with the TWU in 1978, and for a time served as shop steward.

Prior to working with the TWU, Yvonne was employed with National Trust for 10 years.

Born in England, Yvonne moved to Vancouver with her family at age 13, and has lived in the Lower Mainland since then. She completed her schooling at Kitsilano High School in Vancouver.

Yvonne is planning a trip to England, Spain and Australia this coming summer to visit family who reside in each of the three countries. On her return, she will continue to live in the Lower Mainland.

Friends and colleagues at the TWU wish her many happy years of retirement.

### BOYCOTTS

All readers are asked to support the following trade union sponsored consumer boycotts. Please do not patronize or purchase any of these goods, services and/or retail outlets:

**All Non-Union Postal Outlets**  
Dispute with CUPW  
**Philips Electronic Products, Quebec**  
CLC/USWA 7812  
**Essex Kent Mushroom, Essex**  
**Continental Dist. Inc. or Unionville Farms, Kingsville, Ont.**  
CLC/BCFL - UFCW National



TWU delegates to BC Federation of Labour convention held in Vancouver November 24-26

## Organizers report on LRBs

Organizing in BC and Alberta is affected by the respective provincial Labour Relations Boards. There should be a balance in the appointments to the boards between people with union and employer backgrounds.

Currently in BC that balance has been skewed by the appointment by the governing Liberals of a person with a CLAC background to the union side, this despite protests from the BC Federation of Labour. CLAC (Christian Labour Association of Canada) has a reputation of being an employer-dominated union. CLAC is neither an affiliate at provincial or federal level with any congress of labour. They are often invited in by the employer to organize a company's employees when the boss catches wind of an attempt to bring in a real union.

As a result of new legislation from the provincial government, starting in January 2004, the BC Labour Relations Board will be charging fees for every service including certifications and unfair labour practices. This is a clear barrier to organizing, as most campaigns result in multiple filings of paperwork at the board which will all cost money. This will impact smaller unions considerably.

As well recent decisions from this BCLRB have appeared to be heavily weighted towards the employer community. One notable

decision involving the BC Government Employees and Services Union (BCGEU) and RMH (a 1,400 person call centre) in Surrey, BC has resulted in an emergency resolution from the BC Federation of Labour November Convention which condemned the decision as allowing BC employers to run American-style anti-union campaigns in the workplace. We encourage you to find and read this decision in full on the web at [http://www.lrb.bc.ca/decisions/B345\\$2003.pdf](http://www.lrb.bc.ca/decisions/B345$2003.pdf).

The situation is even more serious in Alberta, where the Alberta Federation of Labour in its Labour Day press release warned that labour relations in the province are in jeopardy of

collapsing. The Alberta Federation states it is becoming increasingly obvious that the Alberta government is directly manipulating the Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB). In fact, the Alberta Federation is warning that the Alberta Labour Movement may need to 'bypass' the ALRB all together should things continue in this way.

The one bright note is that, under the new 'friendlier' provincial government in Ontario, organizing is now on the up swing in that province. We urge all members to find out the stance on labour relations of all candidates in their home ridings. Clearly how we vote in elections affects us and others in our work lives.



TWU activists support BC Ferry Workers on picket line December 10 at Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal

# Great Financial Plans



By **BILL BILES, CFP**  
**Financial Planner**

**Van Tel/Safeway Credit Union**

I know I have written about the following topics here in the past, but they are more relevant today in light of the ERIP/VDIP packages many of you have accepted from TELUS in the last year and a half. I also know that, unlike my Mom, you probably don't keep everything I've ever written, so I'd like to readdress the subject of what to do with your Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan (TWPP) as you depart TELUS.

If you are less than 55 years of age and are accepting a package, you have the option of either selecting a deferred pension or transferring the present value of your commuted pension benefits to a locked-in RRSP. If transferred to the RRSP these funds may be invested in any RRSP-eligible investment (term deposits, mutual funds, stocks and bonds, etc.). You may select any RRSP-beneficiary you wish, and you may begin accessing these locked-in RRSP funds when you turn 55. The added flexibility sounds very attractive but there may be an enormous cost.

The present value of the commuted benefits (the amount available for transfer to a locked-in

RRSP) is calculated for benefits paid only from age 65. If you are otherwise eligible for an unreduced pension at age 55 (i.e. if you have 25 years of service), you are losing 10 years of pension payments in the commuted benefit calculation. If you are eligible at age 60, you lose 5 years of pension benefits in the calculation.

The \$30,000 (approximately) you lose from your VDIP payment to take an ERIP-Equivalent so that you may apply for an unreduced pension at age 55 or 60 may offset the lost years of payments in the commuted amount to some extent, but only to great extent if you have at least 10 years of compounding returns before your earliest pension access age.

Generally speaking, I think if you have 25 years of service and access to an unreduced pension at age 55, you should select the ERIP-Equivalent package and your pension funds should remain with the TWPP in a deferred pension. If you have less than 25 years of service and more than 10 years until you turn 60, you might consider taking the full VDIP package and asking for the present value of your commuted pension benefits to be transferred to a locked-in RRSP. With less than 10 years until you turn 60, however, I think you should remain with the TWPP in a deferred pension.

Applying for a reduced pension is another option for those of you not yet eligible for an unreduced pension. For example, if you are less than 55 years of age and have 25 years of service, you may apply for an early pension but the monthly benefit will be reduced by approximately 6% for each year you are early. The pension benefits received in advance of turning 55 may offset the fact that you receive a smaller pension for the rest of your life. If you live much past 70 years of age, however, in most cases you will receive fewer total dollars

from a reduced TWPP over the course of your lifetime than if you waited for an unreduced pension.

Finally, for those of you selecting your actual pension benefits, you have either 12 options (without a spouse) or 28 options (with a spouse) to choose from. If you don't have a spouse you will be selecting from three basic Single Life options with five, ten or fifteen year guarantees. If you have no financial dependents I recommend you select the least guarantee (i.e. the five year). If you pass away before receiving your pension for the full five years, your beneficiary receives the entitlement for the remainder of the five years. If, however, you have a 15-year-old dependent, for example, and wish to guarantee an income at least until he/she is 25, you might select the 10-year guarantee.

If you are trying to determine what continuing pension to provide for your spouse, you have four Joint-With-Right-of-Survivorship options to choose from (i.e. 50%, 60%, 75% or 100% continuance). You should first determine what your surviving spouse's retirement income would be without a continuance. Look at his/her own CPP, the survivorship pension from your CPP, his/her OAS, company pensions, RRSPs (including yours if he/she is your designated beneficiary), any non-registered savings and insurance policies, and any other potential source of retirement income available for the survivor. Then determine how much more is necessary to add to these incomes for your survivor to live properly and select the continuance option that provides that amount.

Women statistically live longer than men (by about four or five years), and your health and family history can imply more or fewer years of survivorship. If your spouse is

likely to outlive you by five to ten years or more you may wish to provide a richer continuance to help offset inflation (remember, your TWPP is not indexed).

You may also select to integrate your TWPP with either or both of the government pensions (i.e. the CPP and the OAS). Integration does not start your government pensions earlier, nor does it affect the amount of government pension you may receive. An integrated TWPP simply pays a higher monthly benefit before age 65 and is reduced at age 65. Integrating with both government pensions today will see your TWPP reduced by about \$1263 per month when you turn 65 – a substantial drop in retirement income. Only those with higher income needs for the years prior to age 65, or those with shortened life expectations should consider these options. If you live to collect your TWPP beyond age 72, you generally see more total dollars from the plan if you do not integrate.

All of these topics are more easily explained in person that here in writing so I encourage those of you who are able to pay me a visit with these considerations.

For those of you unable to see me or some other advisor with an understanding of your pension options, give me a call and we can try it over the phone.

In the mean time, please enjoy your Holiday Season and accept my best wishes for a Happy, Prosperous New Year. I wonder if Mom will keep this article...

*You can call Bill Biles at (604) 656-6289, email at [bbiles@vantelsafeway.com](mailto:bbiles@vantelsafeway.com), or contact a Van Tel/Safeway Member Service Representative at (604) 656-6200 or toll free at 1-800-663-1557. Please visit Van Tel/Safeway's website at [www.vantelsafeway.com](http://www.vantelsafeway.com).*

## Employment Insurance appeal hearings held

By **George Doubt, B.A.**

The Employment Insurance Commission has decided that members who left TELUS with the ERIP option of the VDIP will have the same amount of severance pay allocated as income as members who took the VDIP option.

These options applied only to members of the Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan (TWPP) in B.C. Members who took the VDIP option received a higher severance pay amount in exchange of forfeiting their right to apply for an unreduced pension before the age of 65.

The TWU is representing over 100 members affected by this decision in a Group Appeal.

The Board of Referees Hearing has now heard four separate appeals into this issue where the members have been represented by the TWU. Three of the appeals were on behalf of individuals and the fourth was the Group appeal.

Business Agents George Doubt and Lesley Hammond have worked on the cases.

The first three appeals were allowed. That is to say, the Board of Referees agreed with the Union's position.

Each Board of Referees is independent however and is not bound by decisions of other boards.

The Referees denied the group appeal. That board decided that the EI Commission had made the right decision in the first place.

Board of Referees decisions can be appealed to an Umpire. The Employment Insurance Commission is appealing the three decisions that the Union won and we will be appealing the Group Appeal decision.

Umpires decisions are precedent setting and other Umpires and Boards of Referees have to take them into account when making subsequent decisions.

There are members affected by the EI decision who left the Company too late to join the first Group Appeal. Those members can still appeal their decision.

The Union is gathering names for a second group appeal to include members leaving the company up to Dec 31, 2003 and for members making delayed appeals.

Some members affected by the decision were not aware of their options and did not begin an appeal within the 30-day time limit imposed by the Employment Insurance Act. It is possible for members who missed the deadline for appeal to apply for a Delayed Appeal. The TWU can also assist in that process.

Members who have questions about their Employment Insurance Claims should contact Business Agents George Doubt or Lesley Hammond.

## TWPP Plan in sound condition

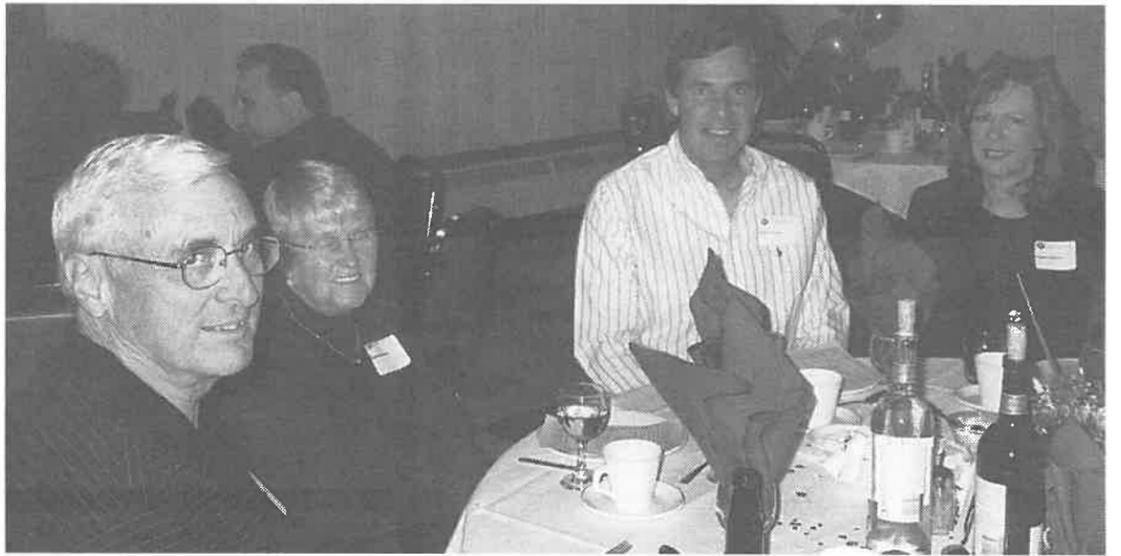
**Trustees of the Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan (TWPP) say the Plan remains in sound financial condition.**

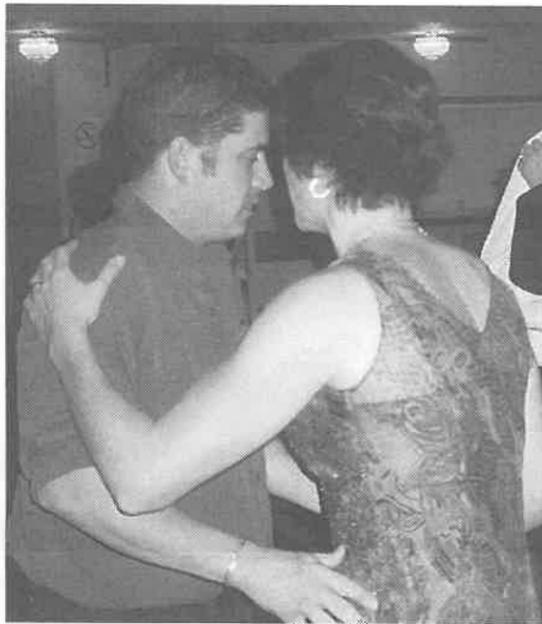
**At a recent Board of Trustees meeting, the Plan Actuary presented the results of the Actuarial Valuation made as of January 1, 2002.**

**The Actuarial Valuation shows Accrued Plan Assets of slightly more than \$2 billion, the Present Value of Accrued Liability slightly less than \$2 billion, resulting in an Accrued Excess of about \$78 million.**

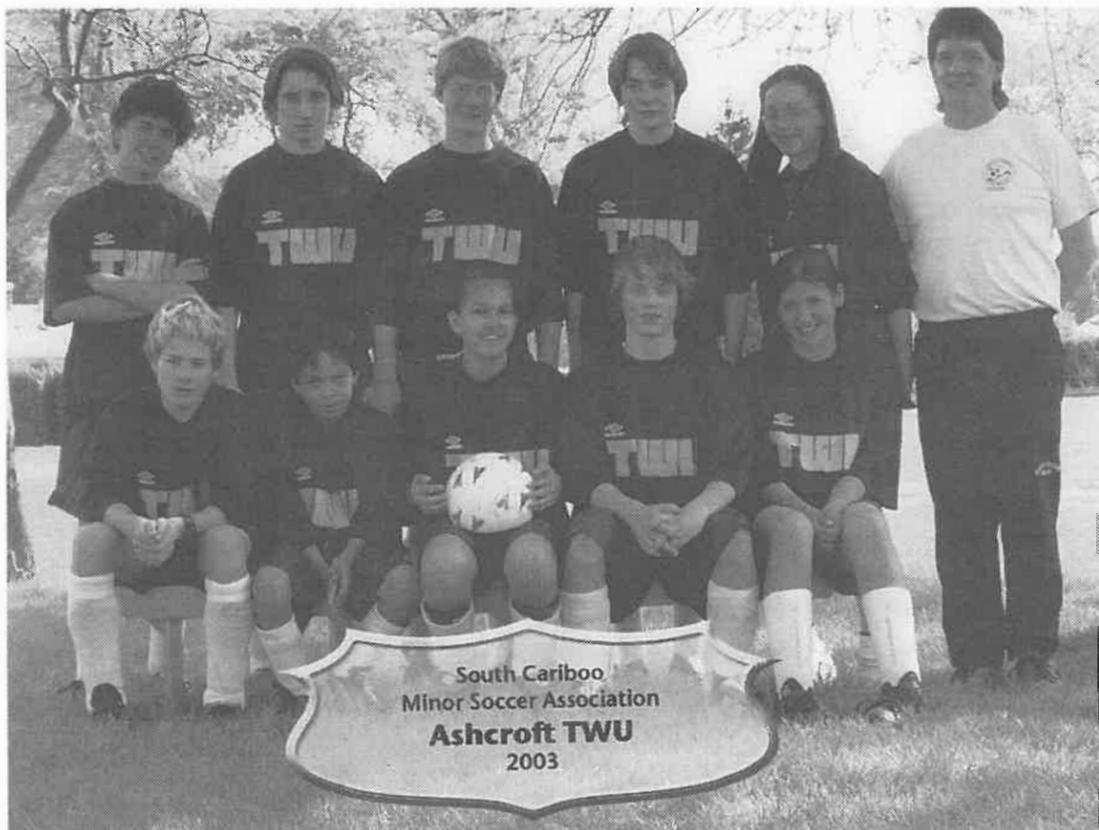
**The specific figures are Accrued Plan Assets of \$2,038,841,000, Present Value of Expected Accrued Liability of \$1,960,842,000, for an Accrued Excess Position of \$77,999,000.**

# *Pensioners Dinner, Edmonton, 2003*





## SPORTS TEAMS



*Kelowna Stars U-15A Girls Soccer team were provincial champions for 2003. The Kelowna team, and the Ashcroft team, above, send thanks to TWU for support during the past year.*



*Cable splicer spends Halloween waiting for TELUS to get down to serious bargaining with TWU for a new contract. Now it's Christmas, and the "skeleton crew" is still waiting.*

## TELUS reports profit

From October 31 *Globe and Mail*

TELUS Corp. swung to a profit in the third quarter and raised its guidance for 2003 on strength of its cellphone network and its cost savings program.

For the third quarter, TELUS reported a profit of \$115.9-million or 32 cents per share, compared with a loss of \$107.4-million or 35 cents a year ago.

Analysts had expected TELUS to report earnings per share of 24 cents on revenue of \$1.7-billion.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization rose 13.8 per cent to \$754.5-million from \$663.1-million a year ago.

"I am pleased that we are again exceeding expectations with our third quarter results and demonstrating the benefits of continued and consistent execution on TELUS' focused national strategy and 2003 corporate priorities," Darren Entwistle, TELUS CEO, said.

"...TELUS is once again raising 2003 full year guidance in several key areas, including earnings, free cash flow and wireless and high-speed Internet subscriber growth."

## Union pleased with blue pumpkin ruling

In early November, a ruling was handed down by arbitrator Donald Munroe in the arbitration over TELUS's Blue Pumpkin scheduling process. Vice-President Hope Cumming says the TWU is pleased with the Munroe ruling.

The arbitration ruling reaffirms that schedule committees are entitled to "meaningful and influential involvement and participation in the development of the schedules as they are posted from time to time."

The arbitrator also ruled that the company must provide all of the required shifts to the elected scheduling committees so that the

scheduling committees can include them in the scheduling process.

The ruling also denies the company the right to implement two-week schedules for Regular Part Time and Temporary employees.

The company was allowed under the ruling to have rolling four-week schedules instead of static four week-schedules. However, this will allow members to seek time off, for example, VO, VT and ATO, six days prior to the new schedule being posted. The new schedule will be posted weekly.

## Workplace disability shifting from physical to psychological

*Excerpts from an article in the Globe and Mail*

The causes of disability in the workplace are shifting dramatically from physical to psychological and Canadian employers are grappling with how to deal with such issues as stress, anxiety and depression, a new study says.

"We are in a knowledge economy now and the heavy lifting isn't done on the backs of labour anymore, it's really done with our minds," spokesman Joseph Ricciuti said about the extensive study by Watson Wyatt Canada.

The survey found that 79 per cent of respondents ranked psychological conditions as the leading cause of short-term disabilities and 73 per cent said those illnesses were the Number One cause of long-term disabilities.

"These are big, big numbers," said Teri Brown, Watson Wyatt's national director of growth and development. "And those kinds

of conditions aren't often as straightforward to get your arms around as something like measles."

She added that the rise of these conditions are troubling not only because they affect the psychological health of an employee, but because conditions such as stress can contribute to physical illnesses and injuries.

More than 180 companies, representing 500,000 full-time employees, participated in the biennial survey of disability management practices.

Watson Wyatt reported disability costs are dropping for most companies, with a 12-per-cent reduction as a percentage of payroll compared to results collected in 2000/2001 and a 23-per-cent drop compared to 1997.

Still, indirect and direct disability costs are costing Corporate Canada about \$16-billion annually, according to conservative estimates by the consulting firm.

Mr. Ricciuti said increased corporate and government awareness and training programs around workplace safety have helped reduce accidents and injuries, especially in the area of workers' compensation claims.

But, "while the numbers look wonderful, that's only half the story," said Mr. Ricciuti, Watson Wyatt's national practice leader of group and health care practice. "We wanted to put up a bit of a warning sign. There is something festering below this."

That's because psychological problems are often harder to detect and treat, he said, and corporate disability management programs often don't closely track the reasons workers take sick leaves, personal days off and casual absences and even short-term disability claims. Often short-term disability is "death of 1,000 cuts," Mr. Ricciuti said, adding that the goal should be to "try to stop it from growing into a long-term disability."



**TWU Executive Council, holding their regular monthly meeting in October in Edmonton, took a break at noon Friday to distribute leaflets to members at TELUS tower, above, then joined CEP members on the picket line in downtown Edmonton in a show of support in the CEP strike against "A" Channel**

## Supreme Court rules statutory rights implied in collective agreements

By **Tim Gleason**  
CALM

There was a time when arbitrators refused to consider violations of statutory rights – including human rights – unless collective agreements specifically included them.

A collective agreement that didn't explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, sex or race provided no protection. You could complain to the human rights commission and – in ten years or so, if you were one of the three to six per cent of the cases to make it that far – you might get a hearing.

Until recently, there was no general rule that a grievance could be based on statutory rights such as those found in human rights legislation. That changed on September 18, 2003 when the

Supreme Court of Canada released its judgment in *District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board v. OPSEU, Loc. 324*. This case established that statutory employment rights are automatically incorporated in all agreements.

The Parry Sound case was about a probationary employee who was dismissed following her pregnancy leave. The agreement said the discharge of a probationary employee was at the discretion of the employer. The employer argued that the case shouldn't be in arbitration, but the majority of the board of arbitration disagreed, saying that they had the jurisdiction to apply the *Ontario Human Rights Code* despite the terms of the agreement.

The Divisional Court quashed this ruling, but the Ontario Court

of Appeal reversed that decision. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal and laid down some expansive principles affecting the jurisdiction of labour arbitrators in Canada. Three things are striking:

1. The Court found that human rights legislation and other employment-related statutes were implied in all collective agreements and are, therefore, enforceable at arbitration.

2. The Court went on to rule that employers and unions could not negotiate terms below minimum rights afforded by human rights and employment laws. Two members of the Court disagreed, but the ruling still promises to expand the scope of employees' rights in collective agreements.

3. The Court endorsed, for the first time, a long-established common law principle that a grievance should be liberally interpreted and not be defeated by errors or defects of form. The Supreme Court found that the Ontario Court of Appeal was correct in applying the *Employment Standards Act*, and even though it had not been raised at arbitration or the Divisional Court.

The Supreme Court has ended the debate about whether an arbitrator can enforce human rights or other employment-related legislation.

*Tim Gleason practices law with Sack Goldblatt Mitchell in Toronto. For more information on labour law issues, visit the firm's web site at [www.sgmlaw.com](http://www.sgmlaw.com)*

## Rogers may offer local phone service

From October 7 *Globe and Mail*

Rogers Cable Inc. may offer local telephone service to its clients as early as 2005, chief executive officer Edward Rogers said in early October.

While the company has yet to develop an exact plan for how and when it will roll out the service, "we're working toward 2005 for getting some sort of product in the market," Mr. Rogers said.

Cable firms such as Rogers already compete with the big telephone companies in television distribution and Internet connections, but the missing product in their competitive lineups is local home telephone service.

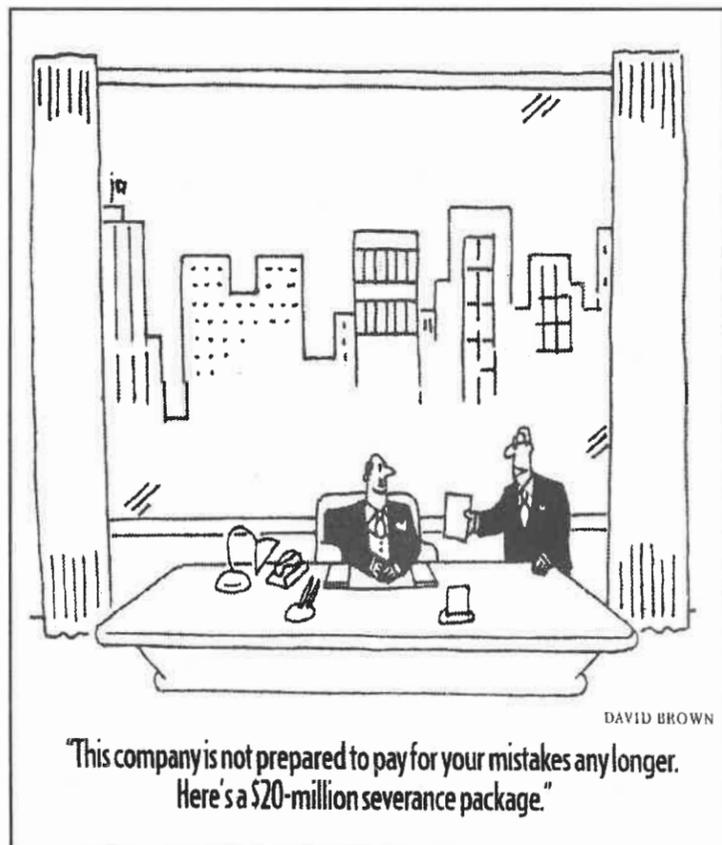
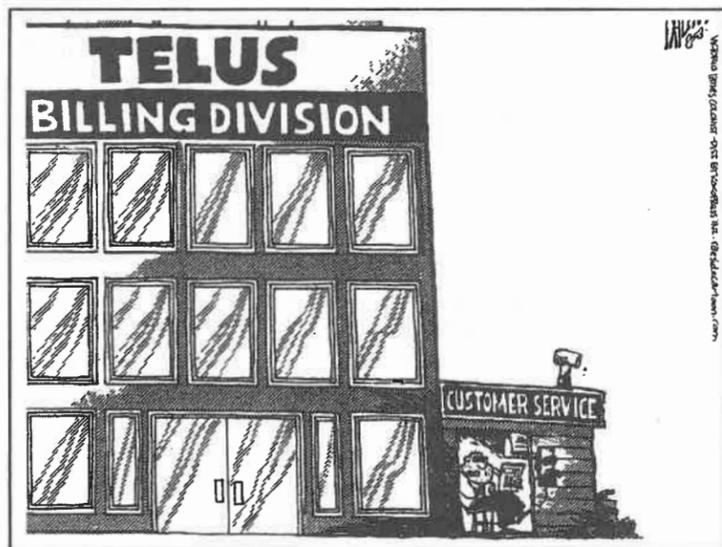
Some cable firms, mainly in the United States, are in the local phone business using what is known as circuit-switch technology. Most competitors, however, are waiting for technical leaps in what is known as Internet protocol, or IP telephony, a more advanced system that uses the Internet.

Rogers is in that group, and "2005 seems to be the timing for rolling out an IP-based telephony service," Mr. Rogers said.

TRANSMITTER - December, 2003 - Page 9



**Long-time TWU activists honoured at separate retirement parties in late November. Above, Lila Wing, leaving TELUS after 35 years, receives cheque and certificate from former Sec-Treasurer Doreen McMillan at Burnaby party November 26. (Thanks to Shelagh White for photo). Below, in Cranbrook November 29, Denise Buchan and Craig Bruce are presented their cheques by Derm Kennedy. (Thanks to Larry Kozak for photo).**



DON'T LET THE COMPANY'S PROPOSALS  
LEAVE YOU OUT IN THE COLD!



BY  
TIM

SUPPORT YOUR BARGAINING TEAM!

## Supreme Court backs workers on chronic pain disability

By Tim Gleason  
CALM

On October 3, 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously that chronic pain disability should be treated the same way as other workplace injuries and diseases.

The case was about an exclusion under Nova Scotia law that denied benefits to workers who were suffering from chronic pain. The provincial appeals tribunal had found that this exclusion violated the equality rights guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal overturned the tribunal's decision, ruling that the exclusion was constitutional. The court also ruled that the tribunal had no jurisdiction to apply the Charter.

The case went to the Supreme Court of Canada, which struck down the Nova Scotia exclusion.

The Supreme Court said the law was unfair and "sends a clear message that chronic pain sufferers are not equally valued and deserving of respect as members of Canadian society."

The Supreme Court noted that the law "not only removes the appellants' ability to seek compensation in civil actions, but also excludes chronic pain sufferers from the protection available to other injured workers."

In Nova Scotia, workers suffering from chronic pain will now be entitled to more equal treatment, as the *Workers' Compensation Act* is amended to comply with the Court's decision.

Other provinces may see an impact from this decision as exclusions on the basis of different types of disability, such as mental stress, come under new scrutiny.

The uncommon unanimity on the Court and the broad interpretation of workers' equality rights suggest that new challenges to unfair laws may be successful.

**Tribunals can use Charter**  
Of less interest to workers, but perhaps most interesting to lawyers, the Court also ruled that administrative tribunals (workers compensation appeals Tribunals, labour boards, arbitrators, etc.) can have jurisdiction to interpret and

apply the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to question the constitutional validity of a law.

The Court reaffirmed its previous emphasis on the importance of administrative tribunals, stating "Canadians should be entitled to assert the rights and freedoms that the Constitution guarantees them in the most accessible forum available, without the need for parallel proceedings before the Courts... Many more citizens have their rights determined by these tribunals than by the courts. If the Charter is to be meaningful to ordinary people, then it must find its expression in the decisions of these tribunals."

Although many in the field of labour law already believed that tribunals possessed jurisdiction to apply the Charter, this view was not shared by the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal in the workers' compensation case. The Supreme Court of Canada has now somewhat settled the issue.

*Tim Gleason practices law with Sack Goldblatt Mitchell in Toronto. For more information on labour law issues, visit the firm's web site at [www.sgmlaw.com](http://www.sgmlaw.com)*

## Quebec unionization rate highest in North America

Update/PSAC/CALM

In Quebec, 40.4 per cent of the workforce is unionized, making it the province with the strongest union presence in Canada – and all of North America.

This rate, which remains unchanged from 2001, makes Quebec number one, ahead of Newfoundland with 39.1 per cent and Manitoba with 36.1 per cent. The Canadian average is 32.2 per cent.

However, the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ) indicated that there remains a wide gap between unionization rates in the public and private sectors in Quebec, and in Canada. No less than 82 per cent of Quebec public sector workers are unionized, compared to a mere 27.4 per cent in the private sector.

The FTQ is the largest labour organization in Quebec with 520,000 members and represents 42.5 per cent of organized workers in the province.

Based on data obtained from Statistics Canada, the FTQ also noted that unionized workers in Canada earn on average \$19.60 an hour, whereas non-unionized workers are being paid \$15.19, a difference of 30 per cent.

Province/Country	Unionization rate
Quebec	40.4%
Newfoundland	39.1%
Manitoba	36.1%
Saskatchewan	35.8%
British Columbia	34.7%
Ontario	28.1%
Alberta	24.5%
Canada	32.2%
U.S.	15.0%

# Robinson urges CRTC to enforce quality standards

Following are excerpts of a letter sent by MP Svend Robinson to the CRTC Secretary General, Diane Rheaume, October 29, 2003.

Dear Ms Rheaume:

I am writing to urge the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to take immediate and decisive action to enforce the Telecommunications Act in regards to the provision of high quality service to Canadians with respect to Telus Communications.

As you are well aware, the number of quality-of-service complaints against Telus has risen dramatically over the past year. These official complaints represent only a small number of the actual number of customers who have faced difficulties when they have tried to obtain service from Telus. The amount of time customers must wait on hold or the problems they encounter with the computerized answering service that send them in circles, the length of time it takes for Telus to provide new service hookups or the long delays in obtaining repair service in rural areas, are only a few of the complaints I have heard from my constituents and other BC residents about the lack of service from Telus. Given that this company has a de facto monopoly on local service provision in BC, this situation is extremely serious.

Telus itself has admitted that they have failed to meet performance targets in four key areas including: meeting repair appointments; clearing out-of-service trouble reports within 25 hours; providing timely customer access to its business offices; and the number of held orders or delayed service installations in rural areas. There is not doubt that Telus has failed to "render reliable and affordable telecommunications services of high quality accessible to Canadians in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Canada" (Telecommunications Act, Section 7 (b)). Telus' promise that there will be improvement by December and into the new year is totally unacceptable given that these issues have been growing and escalating for over a year.

I understand that the CRTC has ordered Telus to improve its services by the end of the year. This response is totally inadequate and does not even begin to address in any meaningful way the abysmal service that BC and Alberta residents have to put up with from this company. There is no doubt that the decline in service is a direct result of the layoff of over 6000 Telus employees which has ensured that the remaining staff is unable to meet the service requirements of our communities. As the CRTC has the legal responsibility to ensure that regulated telephone companies, such as Telus, meet customers needs and abide by the policies and objectives of the Telecommunications Act, I am calling upon you to enforce the relevant sections of the Act to ensure that Telus acts immediately to address this situation and not at the end of the year or sometime next year.

I am also calling on the CRTC to develop meaningful regulations that will serve as a real deterrent to this type of action by companies such as Telus. If the Commission hopes to uphold the provisions of the Telecommunications Act, it must ensure that there are real consequences to actions such as those of Telus, consequences that are real deterrents to these companies.

The CRTC has the right to "in the absence of any applicable provision.....determine any matter and make any order relating to the rates, tariffs or telecommunications services of Canadian carriers" (Telecommunications Act, Section 32 (g)) and to "make rules, orders and regulations respecting any matter or thing within the jurisdiction of the Commission under this Act or any special Act" (Telecommunications Act, Section 57). I urge you to take concrete and meaningful action on this urgent situation and ensure that the provisions of the Telecommunications Act are upheld and that Telus is held accountable for its inaction and neglect of its duty as a telecommunications provider. I look forward to your early reply on this urgent matter.

Sincerely yours,  
Svend Robinson, MP  
Burnaby-Douglas

Mr. Robinson also raised issues relating to TELUS in a recent newsletter to his constituents. Following are excerpts from that newsletter.

I have recently received many telephone calls and letters from constituents complaining about the appalling service they have received from Telus. Some constituents have had to wait over a month to get their telephone hooked up. Others have waited from 40 minutes to an hour just to get someone at Telus to report a problem with their phone. Unfortunately, those complaints are not new and have been on the rise over the past year.

When Telus merged with BC TEL, the company promised us improved service. Instead, what we got was longer waits on hold for service, longer wait times for Telus to carry out new service hookups, and, for customers in rural areas, much

longer waits for repair services. What happened to the new and improved services we were promised?

Profits before people is what happened. Following the merge with BC TEL, Telus promptly laid off 6,500 workers, many of them their top, highly trained professionals. And although Telus has stated that they have hired 500 new employees, it doesn't take much to see that this has not improved the situation. As a matter of fact, complaints to the CRTC are on the rise with quality of service complaints that have jumped five-fold over the past year alone.

It is time to hold corporations accountable. When a corporation like Telus, which holds a *de facto* monopoly on the provision of local telephone service, fails to meet the basic federal regulations for quality of service, it is time for the federal

government to take decisive action.

I have therefore written to the CRTC Secretary General, Diane Rheaume, (see letter, above), calling on her to take immediate action to enforce the Telecommunications Act.

But the CRTC also needs to hear from you, the customers of Telus. Please take out a moment to fill out the reply card (reproduced below) and I will forward it to the CRTC and to the Minister responsible for the CRTC, Heritage Minister Sheila Copps. Your voice can make a difference.

Please be assured that I will continue to call on the CRTC and the Minister to develop meaningful regulations that will serve as real deterrents to corporations like Telus who continue to ignore their roles and responsibilities. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information or a copy of the response from the CRTC.

## YES SVEND,

I support your call for the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that Telus lives up to the Telecommunications Act and provides quality service to its customers. Please pass my comments along to the CRTC on this important issue.

Please print

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## SVEND,

The Telecommunication Act states that Telus is to "render reliable and affordable telecommunications services of high quality accessible to Canadians in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Canada". Telus has failed to live up to their legal requirements. Please continue to press the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to enforce these regulations and tell them that we want the quality of service we are already paying for.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

NO  
POSTAGE  
NECESSARY

**SVEND ROBINSON, MP**  
**BURNABY-DOUGLAS**  
366 WEST BLOCK  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0A6



Rod Hiebert

## President's Report

# THE DEEPENING CRISIS AT TELUS

2003 has been an extremely difficult year for workers and their Unions as private and public sector employers are attempting to diminish or remove affordable universal access to health care, primary and secondary education, hydro electricity, and, of course, quality telephone service, as well as in many other areas. Tens of thousands of jobs have been cut, or contracted out at less than half the existing wage, and the public has been devastated by the loss of vital services.

We believe the only way to build a strong company is to retain and build a loyal employee base and a strong, loyal customer base. The only way to do that is to employ enough people to do a good job and provide good and timely service to customers. Unfortunately that has not been on TELUS's priority list over the past two years.

It has often been said that a company cannot shrink to greatness. Since TELUS initiated its dramatic downsizing program, customers have been voicing their disapproval and outright anger with the resulting poor

service. It is extremely unfortunate that many customers have been taking their anger out on front-line service professionals who are now understaffed and unable to give customers the service they deserve and pay for. Recently, the TWU posted a newspaper alert (*see below, left*) and held a news conference to support front line workers by informing the public, trying to channel that anger in a positive direction that we hope will bring back those needed jobs and improve telephone service. My statement to the media at that time, which was headed "The Deepening Crisis at TELUS", follows.

TELUS employees are deeply concerned with the declining quality of service that the Company is providing to its customers.

The members of the TWU who work for TELUS have always taken pride in providing top quality service to customers, but the Company's new management is making it impossible to provide customers with the service they deserve. Over the

past year, Darren Entwistle and his management team have unceremoniously pushed one-third of their experienced, trained, loyal employees out the door. The employees who remain are being asked to perform the impossible task of doing their own jobs plus the work of the 5,500 people who were forced to leave.

Focusing solely on improving their bottom line, TELUS management is actually disciplining front line service workers who spend more than 35.4 seconds on toll calls or 27 seconds on Directory Assistance calls! Management has threatened front line service representatives with discipline if they spend more than four minutes with a customer, even in cases where the customer has been forced to wait on hold for an extended period of time. There are many other similar examples of TELUS management's misguided priorities.

We understand that many customers are justifiably angry about the terrible telephone, internet and other services they are receiving from TELUS, but we hope they realize that the people

who are still on the job are getting stressed out trying to meet management's impossible demands. To make matters worse, these employees are being forced to bear the brunt of customers' frustration arising from these questionable management priorities. Things have deteriorated to the point that some of our members have been the target of customers' verbal abuse. Some employees have expressed concern for their personal safety.

Although TELUS' service has been declining so dramatically, TELUS Corporation has reported strong growth in earnings and cash flow for the third quarter of 2003. Operating earnings were up 14% over the same period of last year. While Darren Entwistle and his executive team have raked in huge increases in compensation, TELUS workers have seen their standard of living seriously deteriorate over the past three years. In short, this Company continues to show an unbelievable lack of respect for both their customers and their employees.

Instead of addressing these serious organizational problems, TELUS has added insult to injury by refusing to obey instructions from the Canada Industrial Relations Board to bargain a respectful revised collective agreement with our Union. Increasingly, it appears that instead of bargaining, TELUS plans to contrive a confrontation with the TWU so the Company can push the remaining workers onto the street and blame the TWU for the increased service disruptions.

As problems arise, please remember that this terrible situation is not of our making. TELUS management is responsible for both the service crisis and the disastrous state of labour relations. If the situation degenerates into a union-management confrontation, please bear with us - this confrontation is not of our making.

In conclusion, we ask TELUS customers to realize that both the Company's customers and its employees face a common problem: corporate management that is concerned for nothing but its bottom line profits.

TWU will deal with the labour relations crisis, but we ask customers who suffer service problems to do their part by holding TELUS management responsible and directing all of their service-

related complaints to the Canadian Radio Television Commission (CRTC).

## SEASON'S GREETINGS

On behalf of the TWU Executive Council and staff, I would like to extend best wishes and holiday greetings to all TWU members, and their families, across Canada.

This festive season is a time for family, friends and acquaintances to come together and celebrate hope, peace, respect and caring for each other. The Executive Council joins you in your hopes for a secure future.

It is also a time to reflect back on where we have come from and the accomplishments collectively that we have made. It is because of the collective strength of Unions that we are entitled to weekends and shorter work days. Unions fought for and won the struggle against forced child labour and fair wages. Annual vacations and statutory holidays are among the rights that Unions gained for working people. One of the most important things that we have fought for is a world where every worker is able to go to work and return home each night free from unnecessary hazards that kill and maim thousands of workers each year.

As trade unions, we believe that "an injury to one is an injury to all". We believe strongly that all people should be treated with dignity, respect and equality regardless of nationality, colour, race, creed, gender or sexual orientation. What we desire for ourselves we wish for all. It is our objective to make this world a better place for working people to live.

We are all part of the labour movement, and together we are strong. Workers in telecommunications, government services, longshore, grain handling, teaching, automotive, manufacturing, forestry, mining, and other industries, are making a positive difference. We must not allow governments and large corporations to divide and conquer, or break us Union by Union or member by member. It is more important than ever now that every worker stand together, actively participating in collective actions and programs. Together we can build a stable future for all workers.

Good luck and best wishes!



### Are you angry about the service at Telus?

*Please - don't take it out on the workers.*

TWU members share your frustration with Telus service. Over the last few years, the new management at Telus has made it impossible for us to provide you with the service you deserve. They have slashed staffing levels by 30%, removed thousands of jobs from communities across Alberta and BC and radically centralized their operations. It's not surprising that service quality has declined so dramatically.

Unfortunately, some customers who are at their wits end in dealing with the company are taking their frustrations out on us. We want you to know that those of us who are still on the job are doing everything we can under extremely adverse conditions to meet your needs.

There is no indication that management understands how badly the situation has deteriorated. But sooner or later Telus has to realize that the solution to the current crisis is simple: the company must hire and train enough people to provide the service you are entitled to.

**The members of the Telecommunication Workers Union**