

1979-80 - Renewal and Reassessment at Local 1

This has been a crucial year at Local One. It started with a growing sense of purpose and vitality and is ending in confusion and frustration. Questions are being asked - What is AUCE? Can it survive?

At the beginning of the year, the Local One Executive struck a sub-committee to investigate ways of improving the ability of the local to represent our members more effectively. Three major recommendations were to:

- 1) Have a third full-time person in the office.
- 2) Increase the dues to 1% of gross salary.
- 3) Increase the length of the terms of the full-time union officers from six months to one year.

The recommendations were presented to the membership and were largely implemented:

Our dues were increased to \$9 per month for full time members and \$4.75 for part time members;

The terms of the full-time union officers were increased from six months to one year;

And, we now have a Secretary-Treasurer.

Having three full-time people in the union office has had the hoped-for results - our office files are now up-to-date, our books and minutes are accurate and grievances are being processed more effectively. We are now looking at developing more in-depth training for our stewards and steps are being taken to resurrect our steward structure. We also found that having a full-time union officer working with the contract committee was invaluable.

Over the last year we have found that the cost of arbitrations has risen dramatically. Each arbitration seems to be taking longer while with the growing complexity of each case it has been found necessary to use legal counsel. Part of the reason for this growing complexity has been our willingness to test sections of our contract where the university can turn down requests when "reasonable." One example was an arbitration on flexible hours where we can ask for a modified work week but where management can turn down the request if their reasons are "reasonable." After seven days of testimony, which went into such detail that the arbitrator could probably have stepped in and worked in the department, the arbitrator ruled that management was not unreasonable in turning down the request.

These increased costs will probably force us to increase our dues over the next year.

When AUCE was founded we felt that we wanted a union that was different from other unions. We wanted a union that would be run by its members, not a professional elite. We felt that if we built this kind of union, one that would fight for the recognition that women's work - secretarial and clerical work - was skilled work and worthy of the kind of pay that other skilled occupations received, that we would point the way for other clerical workers and set an example for the rest of the labour movement.

Our first contracts were excellent and did make significant movement towards fulfilling these aims - but all too soon these gains were eroded by the Anti-Inflation Board.

This year, after the lean AIB years, we felt would be AUCE's year. We felt that the organizational changes we had made, coupled with the improved contracts that other unions (primarily the Hospital Employees Union, the Registered Nurses Association and the Vancouver Police) had won that we were in a strong position to win a good contract.

The response of the University to our contract demands also led us to believe that we could easily win a good contract. Very quickly they increased their offer from a three year contract for 7, 7 1/2 and 8% a year to 10% and 9 1/2% over two years. We felt that we could win at least 12% and possibly 15%. After all our cause was just - and of course management would recognise the justice of our cause.

One thing that should have disturbed this rosy scenario was the unwillingness of the university to move on any of our outstanding items. We also should have remembered that the university has always fought us over every grievance and every contract item. Why should it have been any different this time?

Our momentum began when we voted for an increase of 18% over one year - when our contract committee recommended 15%. The momentum increased when, in response to the offer of 7, 7 1/2 and 8% over three years that the university gave us, we had a 2 hour study session,

We rejected management's subsequent offer of 10% and 9 1/2% over two years and held a strike vote. The strike vote passed by 70% and management offered 10% over one year and a \$100 signing bonus. Our membership overwhelmingly rejected this offer and gave 72 hour strike notice.

A last minute meeting was held where our contract committee offered a package deal which they would recommend to our membership of 11% over one year plus union leave, 75% medical/dental benefits and 5% and 10% shift differential. The university refused this package and we went out at 3:30 that afternoon. We also reverted to our original demands.

We initially pulled out two buildings (the General Services Administration Building and the Computing Centre) and a week later we pulled out the Housing and Convention Centre.

During the strike a special \$50 assessment referendum was passed to pay the wages of those on the picket lines. Credit Union loans were authorised to pay for any shortfall.

As the strike continued it became more and more apparent that many members were unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to continue the strike. When a membership meeting of over 400 members authorised a referendum to approve an assessment of \$40 - \$50 a week to continue the strike the union office was inundated with phone calls protesting the assessment and voicing opposition to the strike.

A membership meeting was called for Thursday May 29th to discuss the strike and to find out the real feelings of the members. We were uncertain whether the mood of the membership was more accurately reflected by our membership meetings or by the flood of phone calls that we had been receiving.

Fortunately, meetings had been scheduled with the university and it seemed possible that a revised proposal would be forthcoming.

In years to come, this meeting may be recognised as one of the most significant meetings in AUCE's history. Over 950 members crammed into the Lecture Hall and spilled over into the adjoining room. Many of these members had never attended a Union meeting before and only attended in order to end the strike.

The University's latest package was presented. The University offered 10% in the first year, 9% in the second, .5% for "anomalies" (ie: more money for computer operators), union leave, concurrency in tuition waivers and two letters of agreement to set up committees to investigate benefits (sick leave, disability insurance, pension plan, medical and dental plans) and to look into bi-weekly pay.

After extensive and heated discussion the membership voted to reject the University's package and to try and negotiate for a one-year 10% wage offer with the wording that the university proposed except for the clauses dealing with anomalies.

The university immediately responded by offering 9 1/2% in the second year - and the membership voted to refer the offer to referendum. The vote was only 57% in favour of referral.

As of the date of this report the results of the referendum are not known; but various observations can be made. The strike ended not because the timing was wrong, or because the strategy of a selective strike was incorrect, but because the membership was not told that a strike is a long, tough battle which is won in the trenches. Somehow they felt that the strike would be short and easy. Because of this, they were only willing to support the strike as long as the only people who were affected were those on the picket lines. As soon as they were asked to fork out money, they clamoured for a settlement.

If we are going to win the next strike - and if we are ever going to win equal pay for work of equal value there will be at least another strike - we must make significant changes. We must have a system of automatic assessments set up ahead of the strike. We must increase our dues and significantly increase our strike fund to protect us against lockouts. Most of all we must prepare ourselves emotionally so that when we go out again we won't return to work until we have won our demands. We must be realistic - nice unions die young.

We must also face up to the fact that AUCE Local One doesn't exist in a vacuum. We are part of a Provincial Association and unless we significantly increase our involvement in it, and our support of it, it won't be able to help us when we need it.

What is AUCE? We must answer this question ourselves over the next year. Will it survive? Only if we feed it. If we are unwilling to support it, it will become more and more irrelevant - and we will become more and more isolated and vulnerable. 1980-81 must be the year when we decide whether we really believe in AUCE and what it stands for or whether we've been deceiving ourselves for 7 years.

## AUCE LOCAL 2 ANNUAL REPORT

The past year has been active for Local 2 at Simon Fraser University. We have had to deal, not only with the pressing concern of affiliation, but also with the unfinished business resulting from last year's strike. The executive and membership are trying to deal with outstanding financial issues as a result of our rotating strikes. The past few months have seen our treasurer attempting to put our books in order, and with luck, this should be completed in time for our next audit!

The executive has made a concerted effort to improve and strengthen communications with the membership. To a degree we have been successful and this is due to the fine work of the communications committee. Local 2's communications committee has been busy for the past year. This period has seen a new and expanded format for the AUCE Anchor and the initiation of a weekly Bulletin Board which improved the information flow within the general membership of the local.

The Anchor has changed from a small local newsletter concerned primarily with local union affairs to a bi-monthly union newspaper. It includes such regular columns as "Labour Focus" which keeps the membership in touch with what's happening in the labour movement; "Write In" and "Opinion" which provide members with a forum in which to express their views and raise important issues; and, "Know Your Contract" which points out important clauses in our collective agreement and explains or interprets them. There are also articles on labour-related issues in the province or country of interest to our membership. The new Anchor has received favourable comment from other trade unions as well as our own membership.

The Bulletin Board is a weekly information sheet which keeps members up to date with meeting notices, agendas, and other important events as they arise.

The communications committee has enjoyed its active role within the local and looks forward to a continuation of its activities in the year to come.

The Local 2 grievance committee has had an especially active year and has won a number of grievances. Since this committee continues to be extremely busy with the business of labour/management meetings, a full report is not available at this time. Please look out for a full report to be handed out at convention.

The University seems to be trying to put the strike behind us as far as negotiations are concerned. This year's contract talks started at the beginning of March (before the contract expired, for once!) and are continuing in a fairly productive manner. Meetings were taking place once a week but have increased in frequency to two meetings per week. The tone so far has been good. Both sides have presented a number of articles and several of these have been initialled. Actual items negotiated have ranged from a stronger contracting out clause to provisions for bus passes for members. Most items on the table have either job security or improved working conditions at issue. Then there is always the question of money, and the union has not received the University's proposal on money at this time. This could be the cue for a change in the tone of our negotiations!

While contract talks carry on, we are still trying to settle a final piece of business left over from the findings of the Industrial Inquiry Commission last August. The issue at stake is the question of pay grades for temporary workers. Hopefully, these talks can be concluded before the fall.

When we have not been busy with old business or the question of affiliation, this executive has been attempting to improve our educational programme. In the spring, we sent one member of our negotiating team to a seminar on negotiating strategy. We have recently applied for a government labour education grant to assist us in establishing resource materials for seminars. We hope to start a library of books and video materials to be used in proposed shop steward, public speaking, and parliamentary procedure (rules of order) seminars. In May we held a day and a half seminar on labour arbitration which was well attended. The general response was positive and plans are currently afoot to do more of the same. Through improved education Local 2 hopes to encourage greater participation in our union decision making and participation from a better informed point of view.

Generally, it has been a full and exciting year for this local and we hope that once our old business is finally resolved, we can expand in new and innovative directions.

## AUCE LOCAL 4 (CAPILANO COLLEGE) 1980 CONVENTION REPORT

Looking back over the last year, Local #4 at Capilano College can take some pleasure in reporting that, through the efforts of the most active among us, overall participation in the affairs of the Local has increased. This was a key factor in uniting the Local in a year when contract negotiations extended beyond the September 1979 expiry date of the previous contract. Despite the tensions surrounding the latter part of negotiations - the possibility of a strike, mediation, etc. - Local #4 members remained solid.

This was also the year we opened the discussion of affiliation to the mainstream of the labour movement. The question has, unfortunately, received limited debate among Local #4 members, as it overlapped with a crucial time in contract negotiations. As a result, we find too many of our members are confused by the questions put forward on the referendum ballots. This confusion indicates uncertainty over the meaning of the ballot questions and, more importantly, over the issues surrounding the entire subject of affiliation (i.e. independent affiliation, merger, remaining outside parent bodies).

The main areas of our Collective Agreement which have suffered the most abuse, and have exercised the grievance procedure most often, involve the employer's hiring practices and handling of reclassification requests. These areas were not changed substantially in the new contract. One article that did undergo revision was Article 9, governing Youth Employment Programs, Work Study Programs, and other Government grants. The interpretation of this entire article, particularly in regard to consultation procedure and the union wage scale, are in dispute. It is now being taken to arbitration, with the Spring 1980 Y.E.P. guidelines implemented on the basis of an "interim arrangement": while students under Y.E.P. are not being paid the union scale, we have obtained a 10% increase over the (YEP) base rate, plus benefits, and union approval of individual applications. This, however, is still a violation of Article 9, and we are confident an arbitration decision will be in our favour.

These numerous abuses to our Collective Agreement are consistent with the attacks being made on all public sector employees and their unions. To recall a few examples:

- the Provincial Government's threat to implement "wage and price controls" in the public sector: a clear attack on workers' wages;
- Government Agencies set up to monitor negotiations and supply the employers with information not obtainable by the unions involved;
- Bill 46, expanding the definition of "Essential Services" to include areas which do not directly or indirectly threaten life, health or the necessary functions of a community;

- the increasing involvement of the Courts in labour-management disputes (Postal Workers and AUCE), while legislation designed for such situations is by-passed;
- the Federal Government campaign, being duplicated by a number of Provincial Governments, to drastically cut public sector jobs without consultation with the unions whose memberships are affected;
- the Provincial Government's abuse of its "governing role" to give it advantage in its "ultimate employer role" - by legislating out of existence a certified union of the Notre Dame University faculty.

More recently has been the introduction of legislation allowing manipulation of pension plans. There are four pension plans governing all Government employees - those who are directly employed, as well as those indirectly employed. The majority of unions are covered under the Municipal Superannuation Act, including AUCE Local #4. Under each plan there is a committee composed of union representatives from every union under the plan's jurisdiction, employers (also within that jurisdiction) and the Provincial Government. These committees participate in and recommend decisions which affect all parties. Much to our dismay, AUCE is the only union not represented on any committee, an unfortunate and major oversight. This means that when the Municipal Superannuation Act Committee recently voiced support of the revisions, AUCE did not register a dissenting vote, and had to learn of the decision through secondary sources (i.e. press).

We are not suggesting that some revisions in the Municipal Superannuation Act are not necessary. However, we strongly object to public sector workers being forced to pay for the mismanagement of pension funds, poor investment decisions favouring such corporations as B.C. Hydro, and the lack of thorough discussion among those unions whose memberships are affected.

The tactics being used by all public sector employers are highly coordinated and result in the erosion of solidarity and the stability of our members. These tactics undermine the attempts of unions representing public sector workers to further improve wages and working conditions. In fact, we have seen a marked deterioration in our ability to sustain, let alone improve, our standard of living. If we are to see any gains in the coming years, we must substantially strengthen our position, not only at the bargaining table, but in the day-to-day maintenance of our Collective Agreement. The resources currently at our disposal are inadequate to meet that objective. We need resources which are not currently available to us, and will not be available to us as long as we remain outside the labour movement. We are isolated from information which can only be discovered through

intensive research. Our steward system needs to be strengthened, and will not be done if we lack the necessary resources to train our people, and to let our members share the experiences of other, similar workers. Individual members are overworked, especially since the number of grievances has increased dramatically in the last six months. We are lacking information which would enable grievances to be dealt with more smoothly, quickly and efficiently; the stress imposed on individual members who grieve can result in an unwillingness to use this most important procedure in protecting our collective rights.

The difficulties encountered by our local, and the labour movement as a whole, demonstrate clearly that the objectives of the '70s will continue to be the objectives of the '80s. To achieve these objectives, and others we set over the next year, will require improved coordination of our efforts and resources.

Submitted on behalf of AUCE Local #4 by: Robert McKee &  
Colleen Bostwick



AUCE LOCAL 5 (College of New Caledonia)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 1980 PROVINCIAL CONVENTION

Where has the past year gone? In retrospect, it has been generally a good year for all of our members. Our executive has remained stable, (only one resignation due to maternity leave) which is very important in terms of providing continuity of information and action for our members. Particular emphasis has been placed with our stewards to maintain regular visible and verbal contact with the people in their respective areas. Probably due to this regular contact, the membership has become increasingly aware of what and when union activities are taking place. Through the conscientious communication of our stewards, possible trouble situations which could evolve into grievances have been avoided. The few legitimate grievances which did occur were settled quickly and amicably to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Throughout the past year, with the exception of our dynamic Principal and steadfast Bursar, senior administration has experienced a complete turnover. Six positions were involved; Dean of Instruction, Dean of Student Services, Dean of Community Education, Public Relations Officer, Registrar and Data Processing Manager. Although this situation created some apprehension for the affected support staff, the majority of new incumbents seem to fit well into the established work modes and characteristics of each department. One department is experiencing adjustment pains with their new administrator, but hopefully time and familiarity will smooth the situation.

At the time of this writing, the C.N.C. Faculty Association is still locked in turbulent negotiation. The possibility of a mediator being appointed would come as no surprise. Total disagreement on all issues seems to reign, although the administration does seem to concede that the present salary scales must be revised to compete with those of educational institutions in the lower mainland. All of our executive and the negotiation committee especially, are impatiently waiting to see the results of their final settlement.

With the aid of a grant, Auce Provincial was able to provide an Educational seminar for Local 5 on the weekend of March 21-23/80. Topics dealt with covered steward responsibilities, classifications, job descriptions, negotiation tactics and a multitude of organizational information. To be frank, aside from the first evening, the attendance by our members was appalling. However, the smaller size of our group was conducive to an informal sharing of common and individual problems being experienced by our sister locals. Heart-felt bouquets to Joan Wood, Sheila Perret, Suzanne Marria, Carole Cameron and Marcel Dionne for donating their time and energy to this endeavor. Marcel Dionne presented an eye-opening demonstration of the possible confrontations which could arise during a negotiating session. Besides her vast practical union expertise, Carole Cameron provided a mass of printed material which has proved invaluable for reference in relation to setting up classification and job description guidelines.

With the acquisition of a union office on campus, Local 5 now needs to collect all the files and reference materials which have been previously kept by individuals in their respective areas. Carole Cameron from U.B.C. has offered to come up for the second week in June to tackle the initial organization of our office, up-date our filing system, set up a reference library, and probably conduct a half/day seminar for our stewards. We will be delighted to welcome Carole to Prince George.

Slowly but surely the ranks of our local membership are growing. Last year seemed to be "the year of exclusion requests". This year several new positions have been made (eg. Native Program Co-ordinator, Women's Program Animator, Daycare workers) and many regular positions which were previously in limbo (eg. Instructor's aides) have been brought together under our AUCE umbrella.

Many new employees on campus have shown a marked interest in the activities of our union local. The attendance at General Membership meetings has been gradually increasing over the past six months and the growing amount of enthusiastic input at our meetings is wonderful to see. AUCE LIVES AT LOCAL 5!

Brief Notes:

- Our classifications and job descriptions will be finalized by June 30/80.
- Notice to enter negotiations will be served on July 1/80.
- Our contract expires on October 31/80.

## LOCAL SIX ANNUAL REPORT - JUNE 1980

First we would like to express our appreciation of the continued support we have received from the membership of AUCE. This support has helped to ensure our continued existence as well as allowing us to make some positive advances over the past year. The financial aspect of this support has allowed us to hire organisers which, with the high turnover in our bargaining unit, is vital. Your help in the form of a donation for legal fees helped us to fight the University's appeal against a decision of the Labour Relations Board, in our favour - granting us a 4% increase retroactive to the date of certification.

We have now been certified for 18 months, and have been negotiating for 17 of those months in an effort to secure our first contract. For much of May and part of June we were in mediation. On June 9th, 1980, the University walked out of mediation - with only base level union rights separating the two sides. Some of the strong points agreed on were clauses providing for universal dues check-off; no sexual harassment; changes in the structure assigning pay to the bargaining unit; acceptable pay increases for two years, plus 6% retroactive for one year; compassionate leave which includes "homosexual companions". When Convention meets, we will either have accepted their offer, or will be engaged in a battle which will be decisive for our existence as a union.

Organising remains an important aspect of our work. It has been made more difficult this year by a general anti-union sentiment, which surfaced during Local 2's strike last year, and which has not subsided. This is manipulated by a small but noisy group calling themselves the "Ad Hoc Group of Concerned TAs" who constantly harass the union by letters to newspapers, leaflets etc. We hired organisers during the last year, who have attempted to keep up with the rapid turnover in our bargaining unit. This task should be easier once we have a contract, and our steward system in place.

We continued to fight legal battles. After months in which letters were exchanged, the Labour Relations Board ordered a hearing, the result of which was a ruling in our favour, ordering the University to give us a retroactive increase. The increase had been withheld during the freeze period preceding our certification in 1978. This was a precedent-setting decision in B.C., which recognises that a regularly implemented annual increase is a part of the terms and conditions of employment. Although the University appealed the Board's decision, it was upheld - a great victory for our local - and other workers fighting for certification in B.C.

We have an unfair Labour Practice before the LRB at present. It is a complicated issue which is based on the failure of the University to offer re-appointment to one of the Union negotiators - after 5 years of repeated appointments. As the issue of appointment of Sessional Instructors was being discussed in negotiations at the time, the Union is charging the University with bargaining in bad faith, discrimination for union activities and illegal lockout.

A member of the "Ad Hoc" Group applied to the LRB for decertification, and submitted a petition in support of that request. The Board, after examining the evidence, held that there was insufficient evidence to warrant further action, and dismissed the request. This decision by the Board has been appealed.

Each of these cases requires much research, and as most of the work is done by union members, the successes we have achieved are a tribute to the efforts of our legal committee.

As we do not have a contract yet, it is very hard to process grievances. However, our Grievance Officers have had some success. Last year when UIC regulations were changed, teaching support staff were excluded from coverage because their work week is less than 20 hours. After some research the union was able to point out to the University an alternate interpretation, which acknowledges that teachers do not necessarily work set hours, and therefore allows them to be covered if they earn more than \$79.00 per week. This enabled most categories of the bargaining unit to be insurable. The remaining group was covered when the university agreed to alter the "scholarship" component of their wage from half (\$1200) to \$500.

Our executive for 1980 is: President: Bob Wiseman; Treasurer: Jon Paul Henry; Union Co-Ordinator: Peter Lane; Grievance Officer: Alan Mabin; Information Officer: Mark Lushington; Trustees: Jack Gegenberg; & Gabriel Vizzard; Provincial Reps: Wendy Frost & Mary Mabin.

As with the rest of AUCE, the issue of affiliation occupied our attention for part of the time. Although we did not have an affiliation committee, we did attempt to raise the issue for discussion in the local. Two membership meetings, and an issue of the newsletter were devoted to affiliation, and members were invited to Local 2's meetings, too. The sentiment in our local was very divided - between merging with CUPE and remaining independent.

We look forward in the next year to building the strength of our own local, and of AUCE as a whole.  
In Solidarity,

TSSU ( Local 6) EXECUTIVE