



Focus: welcome spring!



Follow us on
Facebook.
You could still
win a Blu-ray
player until
May 15!

facebook.com/cupe556
or see page 5 for details



Leave your mark

If you could leave your mark on our community,
what would you do?

At the last general meeting, some members from the **City of Courtenay** asked if the local could contribute to our community by placing a bench in some public location, perhaps Simms Park with a plaque showing the donation was made by our local. This sparked a discussion as to what type of contributions we could make to the community. **Cumberland** members were going to look into the possibility of replacing a special maple tree in their village that was destroyed by vandals. The members present were enthused by the possibilities. As a result of this discussion, each unit of our Local is being asked to bring forward suggestions as to what they would like to see us do. So the question is, what would you like to do? You can contact your unit vice or any executive member or you can simply send an email to cupe556@members.cupe.ca. The results will be compiled and brought to a general membership meeting for approval. ■



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Courtenay members lend Habitat a hand



Mike Major, Eric Jernslet and some other **Courtenay members** have decided to help **Habitat for Humanity** build homes in the Valley this summer for those in need. They encourage other 556 members to join them. It is a great way for CUPE members to support the community. No previous house building experience is needed. See your shop steward or unit-vice if you are interested in getting involved or send an email to cupe556@members.cupe.ca.

Further details will be announced on our website and Facebook page as they become available.

Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national, non-profit organization working towards a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. The first Habitat home was built in Canada in 1985. Vancouver Island North Habitat built its first home in Courtenay in 2004. ■

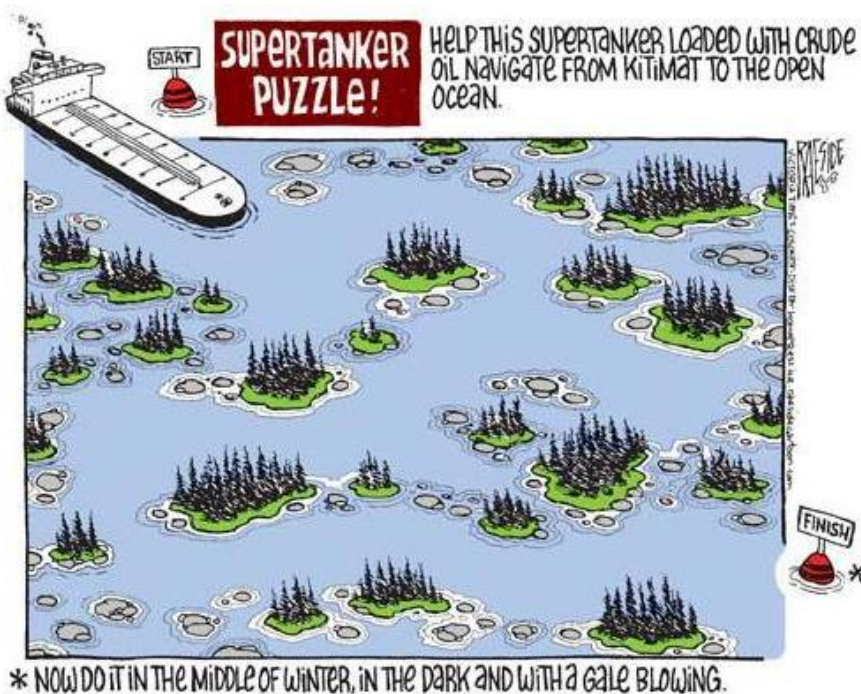
Did you know?



Each year since 1984, former **President Carter** and his wife, **Rosalynn**, give a week of their time to help Habitat build homes.

The Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project helps to raise awareness for the critical need for simple, decent and affordable housing. The event is held at a different location each year and attracts volunteers from around the world. ■

Humour mill



Quote for the Day

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”

Dr. Seuss





Learn, understand, gain confidence

Interested in learning more about CUPE, your rights and how to improve the working conditions for you and your co-workers?

Dates to remember

CUPE BC Convention
April 25-28, Victoria

Day of Mourning
April 28 Nationwide

**Local 556
General Meeting**
May 28

Miners Memorial
June 21-23,
Cumberland

CUPE offers a wide selection of courses to help you enjoy your work day. No matter what challenges you may be facing in the workplace CUPE has training that can help make a difference. Change, however, is only going to come about if you and your fellow members of 556 request and attend workshops.

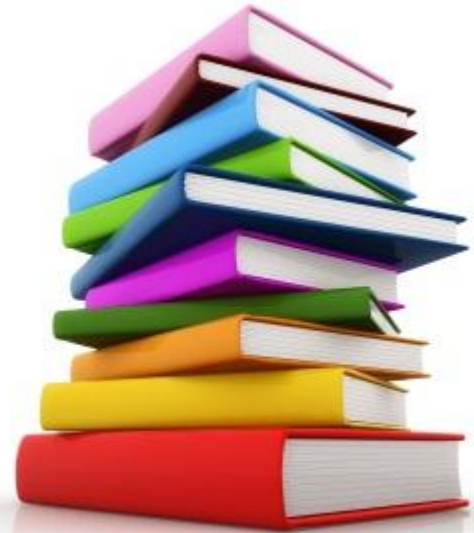
The **556 executive** is looking for your input and suggestions on courses to host this fall in Courtenay. Take a look at the links below and let your shop steward or unit-vice know which courses you would like to attend. Requests can also be emailed to cupe556@members.cupe.ca.

Your local not only covers the costs of the training but covers your wages and assists with travel when required. Take advantage of this learning opportunity, especially if you have never attended any prior training. Now is the time to learn, boost your understanding and gain confidence on standing up for your rights. We know you will be glad you did.



Submit a request today - the deadline is Tuesday, May 8th.

One of the great things about attending courses is the chance to meet members of other CUPE locals and units. It does not take long to realize that they are experiencing many of the same issues at their workplace as yours. Hearing what has helped them resolve issues and support their members is not only informative but uplifting as well. This sharing of stories is a powerful way to gain confidence to deal with issues and make our local strong and united. ■



Course List

<http://www.cupe.bc.ca/sites/default/files/Integrated%20list%20of%20workshops%20March%202012.pdf>

CUPE BC Course Descriptions

<http://www.cupe.bc.ca/sites/default/files/Catalogue%20of%20BC%20Workshops%20-%20March%202012.pdf>

CUPE National course descriptions

<http://www.cupe.bc.ca/sites/default/files/CUPE%20Education%20Workshops%20-%20March%202012.pdf>

Steward Training

http://cupe.ca/updir/Steward_Learning_Series_pamphlet.pdf

These links can also be found on the education page of our website www.556.cupe.ca/Cupe-Training



Member moments



< Bill 22 protest

Mike and Cindy Major's little Grandson and their daughter were also a part of the Rally, protesting along the crowds!!)

On behalf of the executive and myself, we would like to thank all the members that came and joined in on the rally to support the teachers, but also to protest Bill 22! We need to come against this "heavy handed legislation" that take away a worker's right to bargain a collective agreement.

Cindy Major ■

Pink Shirt Day >

Comox Recreation and the **CVRD** participate in Pink Shirt Day February 27, an anti-bullying initiative. ■



Birth announcements

Jonas Velaniskis, Planning technician with the **CVRD** with wife **Heather-Anne** and new sweet baby girl **Mackenzie** born on January 15, 2012. ■

Darry Kempling, Engineering Analyst with the **CVRD** also had a beautiful baby girl **Amelia Paige** on March 6, 2012. ■



Have a member moment or special announcement you would like featured in the Newsletter? Please forward information to Kristy Morro at kmorro@live.ca

General Meeting highlights



General meeting highlights March 27

If you were not one of the 36 people that attended the March 27th meeting here's what you missed.

The membership voted to advance three grievances up to and including arbitration.

Two of the grievances are from the **Regional District**. One regarding overtime pay and the other vacation pay after management changed their view on how to

interpret the collective agreement. The third grievance is from **Cumberland**. It involves how planning staff are compensated for evening work. The Village grievance committee hopes to first settle the dispute trying mediation.

The trustees filed their report for 2011 at the meeting with **Eric Jernslett** informing the membership that the operations of the local are in outstanding shape. The trustees found nothing of concern, had no recommendations and gave past treasurer, **Cheryl Sellers**, a big thumbs up for her excellent record keeping over the past year. The full report of the trustees is available upon request should anyone want to have a closer look. Thank you **Cheryl, Eric, Mike Major and Catherine Gesinghaus** for completing the report.

President Cindy Major announced that members will soon be able to order new CUPE wear. Arrangements are being

finalized with a local supplier of Canadian made shirts, hoodies and yoga style jackets.

The next membership meeting is being held on a Monday evening to give all the members that volunteer with our local fire departments a chance to come to a meeting. Mark May 28th on your calendar now.

The winners of \$50 in the dues draw this month were:

Art Reynolds of Cumberland, **Ed Gauthier** of the regional district and **Thomas Munchster** of Courtenay – the guys walked away with all the dough once again. There were several women among the winners of the water bottles and shirts that were also given away.

You need to be present to win so join in May and try your luck. Win or lose you can still enjoy some pizza and get the scoop on the latest activities of YOUR union.

CUPE 556

Upcoming meetings

Next General Meeting:
May 28th

Check our website!

Executive Meeting
May 8th, 5pm
10th Street Office, Courtenay

Your current executive officers

Cindy Major, President
(Comox Recreation)

Cheryl Sellers, Vice President
(CVRD)

Lisa McPherson, Unit Vice President (City of Courtenay)

Bill Smith, Unit Vice President (Town of Comox)

Mike Murphy, Unit Vice President (CVRD)

Joanne Rees, Unit Vice President (Village of Cumberland)

Brian Allaert, Recording Secretary (CVRD)

Karen Garrett, Secretary-Treasurer (CVRD)

Dave Stewart, Sergeant at Arms (Comox Valley Regional District)

Catherine Gesinghaus, Trustee (City of Courtenay)

Mike Major, Trustee (City of Courtenay)

Eric Jernslett, Trustee (City of Courtenay)

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Like us at facebook.com/cupe556 and win a Blu-ray player!

You still have a chance to win a Blu-ray player by simply liking our page at facebook.com/cupe556. On May 15th we will randomly select one of you to win the Blu-ray player! Our facebook page was launched to give you a fast, easy way to stay in touch with what's going on with YOUR local. Visit it every day!