



Are you ready for Spring?



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Photo by member Joan Pisto

Many of us are busy working full time, and the idea of taking on a garden can be overwhelming. That is why tiny gardens are the answer to the working person's lifestyle. It's easy to grow a pot of lettuce on a balcony or a tomato plant in a hanging basket. For a small yard the square foot garden uses minimal space and time. Square foot gardening looks great, similar to the French Potager garden but smaller. Each square is planted with just a few plants or even just one plant, depending on the eventual size.

Now is the time to make a plan, buy some seeds and soil. A few seeds go a long way, it's easy to over plant and end up with more than you can eat. Remember to feed the soil not the plant, dirt is dirty but soil is a rich living base for plants to thrive in. The health of the soil transfers to the health of the plant and theoretically to the body.

Many people describe gardening as therapeutic, enriching and meditative. Getting our hands dirty takes us back to our early childhood days when we played in the dirt, watched bugs and lost our awareness of time. It's good for the Soul!



Article from Town of Comox Recreation Wellness newsletter

April is Cancer Awareness Month

Spring is a time for renewal and rebirth. What better time to renew our fight against cancer than by supporting community Cancer Awareness Month events. There are many opportunities to aid the Cancer Society in it's fight to combat cancer so please do what you can. To find out how you can volunteer, donate or sponsor any of the local events featured below visit The Canadian Cancer Society on-line at: http://www.valleylinks.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=422:canadian-cancer-society-comox-

http://www.valleylinks.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=422:canadian-cancer-society-comox-



Saturday, June 8 and 9, 2013

GP Vanier Track

7 pm to 7 am

<http://www.relaybc.ca/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1035383>

Did you know



That for 75 years the Canadian Cancer Society is "a national community-based organization of volunteers, whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer"?

The Canadian Cancer Society

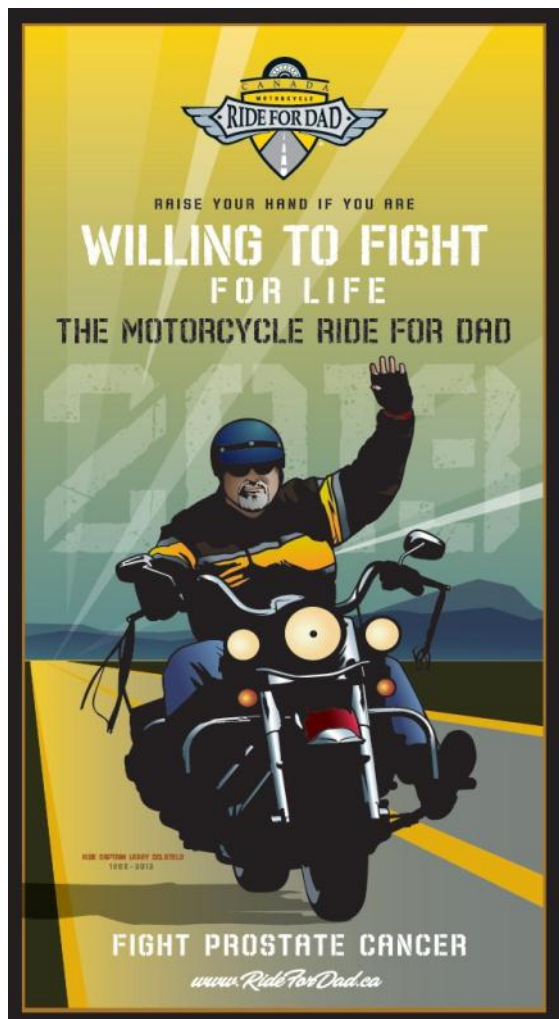


Photo by member Joan Pisto

The 2013 Ride for Dad fundraiser to fight prostate cancer will take place Saturday, June 8 in the Comox Valley. To register to ride, pledge a rider or volunteer for this day please visit: <http://www.motorcycleridefordad.org/chapters/comox>

Dates to remember

March 19
Local 556
General Meeting
6:30 pm

April 10-13, Victoria
CUPE BC Convention

April 11
Day of Pink

April 28 Nationwide
Day of Mourning

March 29
Good Friday

March 31
Easter Sunday

April 1
April Fool's Day

April 22
Earth Day

May 20
Victoria Day

CUPE Education Opportunities

Understand, gain confidence with
CUPE Education



If you are interested in obtaining an in-depth understanding of Occupational Health and Safety, Social Justice, Communications Skills, Arbitrations or Pensions then perhaps one of the week-long education offerings at the Naramata School may be what you're looking for. This intense learning experience provides you the tools and skills necessary to assist and/or represent your fellow workers. If you are interested in attending a week-long school contact your Unit Vice President for more information.



Photo by member Joan Pisto

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

Member moments



On behalf of CUPE Local 556 Municipal Worker members, President Cindy Major, presents a cheque for \$1,000.00 to Richard Clarke, President of Dawn to Dawn , the local Action on Homelessness Society.

New Faces at Comox Town Hall—The Finance Department at the Town of Comox (and the membership of CUPE 556) has had many new faces in the past year.



Andrea Brown joined the Town of Comox Finance Department in November 2012. The Clerk for Accounts Receivable and Comox Marina is an avid crafter who loves to knit, crochet and felt. Andrea has already involved herself in her Union by becoming a clerical shop steward. Andrea lives in Comox with her spouse and dog Molly.

Jessie Schut has held the Clerk IV position at Comox Town Hall since September 2012. She recently successfully completed her studies to become a Certified Accountant and is pleased to offer her skills to benefit the citizens of Comox. Jessie is looking forward to her destination wedding planned for January 2014 in Mexico.



Janice Wright replaced long-time employee Vicki Stevenson in March 2012. She previously was the Sr. Payroll Clerk for School District No. 71. Janice held many union positions with the School District CUPE Local 439 including steward, Chief Steward, Recording Secretary, Vice President and President during her fifteen years there.

CUPE 556 Welcomes these new members!

Have a new member, a member moment, member profile or special announcement you would like featured in the Newsletter? Please forward information to Janice Wright @ jancee2@hotmail.com



2013 EDUCATION BURSARY APPLICATIONS DEADLINE MARCH 31ST - 2013

Educational bursaries will be awarded on an annual basis as follows:

- i. the applicant must be a dependant child of a CUPE Local 556 member at the time of graduation;
- ii. the applicant must be continuing their education full-time at a recognized post-secondary institution no later than January the following graduating year;
- iii. applications must be written by the graduating student and received by the Executive Board no later than March 31st of their graduating year;
- iv. a copy of the acceptance letter from the admitting institution must be supplied by August 15th;
- v. an amount of \$500 per applicant will be awarded to each successful applicant;

Applications may be submitted to your Unit Vice President, or mailed to:
CUPE Local 556
PO Box 3454
Courtenay BC V9N5N5

CUPE Local 556 – Public employees of the Town of Comox, Comox Valley Regional District,
City of Courtenay and the Village of Cumberland – Proudly serving the Comox Valley

You may also wish to consider applying for the Aubrey Burton/Reg Ford Memorial Scholarship sponsored by CUPE BC. Application forms can be found at:

<http://www.cupe.bc.ca/sites/default/files/Scholarship-Aubrey%20Burton-Reg%20Ford%20-%202012.pdf>

The free 'Thinking About Retiring' Seminar to be held in Courtenay on March 25, 2013 is full. There is however room still available in the March 27th seminar being held in Campbell River. Visit the Municipal Pension [site](#) as soon as possible to register.



A very special thank-you to our outgoing temporary National Rep Jocelyn Morgan who has taken a permanent position in Edmonton. We wish you all the best.

We would also like to welcome Roger Oakley who will replace sister Morgan on April 4, 2013. He will need our support to get up to speed as soon as possible. Welcome Brother Oakley!



Be ready for the
May 2013 General Election

**Are you on
the voters list?**

Register to  vote
www.elections.bc.ca/ovr
1-800-661-8683

CUPE is very involved in local, provincial and federal elections. We rally our members to ensure that we all take advantage of our right to vote. Please contact President Cindy Major if you would like to participate in CUPE Local 556 activities designed to encourage our members to vote on TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2013.



[For a strong, healthy community
remember to shop local and
practice the 10% shift!](#)

General Meeting highlights

January Membership Meeting Highlights

It was a full house for the first membership meeting of the year. There were 30 members in attendance with the majority, 11, being Town of Comox members. Two of those Comox members, Janice Wright and Andrea Brown were initiated. Welcome to 556 Janice and Andrea.

Following reports from the treasurer and unit vices votes were held on the 2013 budget and on whether to support a Courtenay grievance proceeding to arbitration if a settlement could not be reached. Both votes passed.

Our national rep, Jocelyn Morgan assumed the role of chair and conducted elections. The floor was opened to nominations for the four empty seats on the 2013 executive. Both Mike and Cindy Major were nominated for president. Mike thought it was best to keep things peaceful at home and declined to run against his wife. Cindy was elected by acclamation. Brian Allaert was also back in by acclamation making him recording secretary for another two years. Mike Bell stepped up to fill the vacant trustee position while Sue Tompkins took over the sgt at arms role. Before anyone could change their mind Jocelyn quickly sworn in the 2013 executive.

The membership thanked Eric Jernslet, Dave Stewart and Lisa McPherson, the outgoing members of the executive their help on keeping the local organized and operating efficiently during their terms.

With plenty of Comox members in attendance it was not surprising that two of them went home with an extra \$50 in their wallets thanks to the much anticipated dues draw. Joining Cindy Major and Andrea Brown as winners in the draw was Courtenay member Dianne Robb. It must be the guys' turn next time.

Thanks to all who attended.

CUPE 556

Upcoming meetings

Next General Meeting:
March 19th

Check our website!

10th Street Office, Courtenay

Your current executive officers

Cindy Major, President
(Comox Recreation)

Cheryl Sellers, Vice President
(CVRD)

Dianne Robb, 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)

Sue Tompkins, Sergeant at Arms
(Comox Valley Regional District)

Catherine Gesinghaus, Trustee
(City of Courtenay)

Mike Major, Trustee
(City of Courtenay)

Mike Bell, Trustee

Telephone
250-338-2447
(leave message)

Email
cupe556@members.cupe.ca

Address
496-10th Street
PO Box 3454
Courtenay, BC V9N 5N5

Website
www.556.cupe.ca



Like us at facebook.com/cupe556



Heather Follis, CVRD, was the winner of the 'Like us on Facebook' contest. Remember—you don't have to have a Facebook account to visit the page.



Help Wanted

VANCOUVER ISLAND MUSICFEST

JULY 12-14, 2013

COMOX VALLEY FAIRGROUNDS

CUPE 556 is seeking volunteers for the MusicFest Living Green Water Program. All team participants will receive a free MusicFest pass. For more information please contact Cheryl Sellers at: csellers@members.cupe.ca

Births



Alicia Thompson (Town of Comox) and husband Preston welcomed their baby girl, Scarlett on Sunday, February 24, 2013.



Vince Van Tongeren (CVRD) and wife Michelle welcomed Sadie Rose on July 18, 2012.



Amanda Yaskinski (CVRD) and husband Ryan welcomed 7 lb, 2 oz son Trenton Colt on June 11, 2012

Milestone Birthdays



Marie Lapp and Colleen Robson celebrated their 50th birthdays together at the CVRD. Looking good ladies!

For Sale



Gold 2002 Nissan Pathfinder Chilkoot Edition, 189,000 kms, new tires put on in the spring runs great and up to date on maintenance. This beauty has been well loved and it's bittersweet to say good-bye but it's time to downsize to car. Automatic, power doors and windows, 6 disc CD player air-conditioned and 4 wheel drive great vehicle.

For more information please contact: Kristy Morro at 250-792-3008



Little Tikes Slide Climber For Sale (not exactly as shown). Please contact Dawn Stevens at Comox Recreation for details.



CUPE BC President Barry O'Neill

Dear Brother Barry O'Neill:

As the April 10, 2013 CUPE BC Convention marks the 50th anniversary of CUPE BC we are cognizant that it also marks your retirement. We've looked to you for strong and decisive leadership since 1991 and you have not let us down. You have been progressive, attentive, effective and above all, honourable. As you begin your retirement we wish to thank you Brother O'Neill for your years of dedication and the remarkable legacy you leave behind.

Always in solidarity,

CUPE Local 556.

