



United Nurses of Alberta  
**NewsBulletin**

**Kiersten Berg**  
Treasurer for Local 1  
(Peter Lougheed Centre)

# NURSING OUR FUTURE

**2011 AGM A SUCCESS**



UNA President Heather Smith and  
Health & Wellness Minister Fred Home







Published by the United Nurses of Alberta five times a year for our members

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# Historic firsts, positive signals characterize UNA's 2011 AGM

With our 2011 Annual General Meeting now behind us, UNA members who contributed to this very positive event are entitled to a real sense of satisfaction. More than 800 members, guests, observers and staff were on hand for the 34<sup>th</sup> annual AGM at the Northlands Expo Centre, Oct. 25-27.

Our theme was “Nursing Our Future,” and there were promising signs for our future of nursing in Alberta and for the future of UNA as the union representing Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and other health care workers.

For the first time in our history, Alberta's sitting Health Minister attended our AGM.

Fred Horne had been sworn in as minister barely two weeks before, and he told delegates the government of Premier Alison Redford is “not interested in a discussion about commercialization of health care,” and moreover pledged not to waste energy that should be devoted to treating patients on continual reorganizations of the system.

Another first was the question and answer session with Deb Gordon, the “Chief Nurse” of Alberta Health Services. We were relieved to hear from Ms. Gordon that Alberta's health system has gone from proclaiming a surplus of nurses to once again recognizing there is a shortage of nursing professionals in our province. More than 150 questions and comments from UNA members have been compiled and will be forwarded to Ms. Gordon's office for her responses.

Ms. Gordon has our respect and thanks for her willingness to listen and her commitment to responding, rather than merely bringing greetings to the meeting.

We also made history at the AGM by welcoming our new First Nations members, the 12 nurses employed by the Blood Tribe Department of Health in Stand Off, near Cardston, and the six employed by the Aakom Kiyii Health Services of the Piikani Nation at Brocket, near Pincher Creek.

AGM delegates also heard from lawyer and health advocate Maureen McTeer, Co-Chair of the Canadian Nursing Association's National Expert Commission on the future of health care, who urged UNA members to make submissions about their concerns and ideas for the future of Canada's health care system. As a member of the commission, I would encourage all UNA members to check the CNA's website and participate in the commission's short survey. You can do this by going to [expertcommission.cna-aiic.ca](http://expertcommission.cna-aiic.ca).

Every one of you deserves the congratulations of each of us, for your solidarity and commitment to our union, and for the contributions that made AGM 2011 such a positive and successful event.

In Solidarity,

Heather Smith  
President, United Nurses of Alberta



## Alberta's nurses are no mere bystanders

**N**urses are not just chess pieces to be moved around the health care board at will, United Nurses of Alberta President Heather Smith reminded delegates, observers and other participants in UNA's 34th Annual General Meeting on Oct. 25 in Edmonton.

"We enjoy tremendous respect from members of the public – and rightly so, because we speak not only for ourselves, but for the future of Canada's and Alberta's fair and efficient public health system," Smith told the more than 800 people in her opening remarks at the first day of the important three-day business meeting.

"We have an opportunity, we have an obligation, to help shape the future in ways that will benefit Canadians and protect our profession," she stated. "We are not mere bystanders!"

The three-day event – with the theme Nursing Our Future – is the most important gathering of our 25,000-member union's year, and included approval of the budget and other important union business, as well as numerous speakers and consideration of policy resolutions.

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*FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CFNU President Linda Silas, UNA President Heather Smith, Alberta Health and Wellness Minister Fred Horne, CFNU Secretary Treasurer Pauline Worsfold, Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses Union President Debbie Forward and Manitoba Nurses Union President Sandi Mowat.*



**NURSING  
OUR FUTURE**







*"We have an opportunity, we have an obligation, to help shape the future in ways that will benefit Canadians and protect our profession."*

Heather Smith

Alberta Health Services Chief Nurse Deb Gordon; below left: CNA National Expert Commission Chair Maureen McTeer; Below: UNA members participate in the union's AGM.



...continued from page 3

The AGM featured a panel discussion about how to respond to the right-wing attack on unions with a senior union official from Wisconsin and others.

For the first time in the union's 34-year history, the province's newly appointed Health Minister, Fred Horne, spoke at length, telling delegates that the government of Premier Alison Redford is "not interested in a discussion about commercialization of health care."

Another AGM first was the question-and-answer session by Deb Gordon, Alberta Health Services' Chief Nurse. Linda Silas, the President of the Canadian Federation of Nursing Unions issued an impassioned call for safe staffing in Canadian health care facilities.

The well-known author, lawyer and health advocate Maureen McTeer, co-chair of the Canadian Nursing Association's National Expert Commission, urged AGM delegates to speak up about their ideas and accomplishments and make submissions or fill out the survey, which can be found at [expertcommission.cna-aiic.ca](http://expertcommission.cna-aiic.ca).

More detailed information on all these speakers and other events may be found on UNA's website, [www.UNA.ab.ca](http://www.UNA.ab.ca).

UNA's AGM is where many of the year's most important decisions are made.

In her remarks, President Smith drew the attention of delegates to another historic first by welcoming nurses employed by the Blood Tribe Department of Health in Stand Off, near Cardston, and the Aakom Kiyii Health Services of the Piikani Nation at Brocket. 🍷





# Time to give nurses the power to say 'No' – CFNU president

**I**t is time to give the power to nurses in their workplaces to say “No” to unsafe working conditions, Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, told the Annual General Meeting of UNA.

“It is time that we have safe staffing in Canada,” Silas told the participants in Day 2 of the AGM at Edmonton’s Northlands Expo Centre.

“We need to develop collective agreement language on safe staffing models,” she explained, noting that if pilots and bus drivers can have legislated hours of work in the name of public safety, so can nurses.

Silas challenged Alberta nurses to be part of the effort “to expand their knowledge of the impacts of very conservative governments. We know the dangers the public service faces, both federally and provincially. Are we the next Wisconsin? Are we the next Ireland?”

The leader of the national nurses’ union organization, through which UNA is part of the Canadian Labour Congress, will be taking a message to the leaders of the industrialized West at their future meetings that nurses “are there to take care of real people, not bankers.”

“Our message to the richest 20 prime ministers in the world will be ‘Take your paws off our public services!’ Medicare is not a charitable service. It’s a right. Especially in countries as rich as ours!”

Good places to start, Silas argued, would be the creation of a national Pharmacare program and raising the alarm about what’s happening in long-term care.

“What we’re doing to seniors in long-term care in Canada is unacceptable and inexcusable,” Silas stated. “We’re not doing enough to protect our seniors.

“It’s time we collect our energy and maintain a national campaign to protect seniors in long-term care,” she concluded. ♡



*“Our message to the richest 20 prime ministers in the world will be ‘Take your paws off our public services!’ Medicare is not a charitable service. It’s a right. Especially in countries as rich as ours!”*



UNA members take part in AGM activities. ▶





## 2011-2012 UNA Executive Board

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## Two VPs re-elected by acclamation; three join Executive Board

**U**NA First Vice-President Bev Dick and Second VP Jane Sustrik were both re-elected by acclamation to additional two-year terms during UNA's 2011 AGM in Edmonton on Oct. 25.

Dick was elected to her eighth term in the position; Sustrik to her seventh.

Elections for UNA's President and Secretary-Treasurer were held at the 2010 AGM.

Meanwhile, UNA has three new Executive Board members after completion of the 2011 AGM elections.

Chris Axtell of Local 79 (Grey Nuns Community Hospital/Edmonton General Continuing Care Centre) and Jennifer Castro of Local 301 (University of Alberta Hospital) were elected as North Central District Representatives and Cameron Westhead of Local 115 (Foothills Medical Centre) was elected as one of the three South Central District Reps. Other District Reps were elected by acclamation. 🇨🇦





# Provincial Office staff prepares to move to new Edmonton home

It was a scene from a humorous video during UNA's Annual General Meeting – and now it will soon be reality.

UNA's Provincial Office staff will be moving in the last few days of 2011 to new space in the Devonian Building at 11150 Jasper Ave. in downtown Edmonton.

The video showed UNA's Executive Officers playing the role of construction workers at the actual site of UNA's new offices. Now the "real" construction workers are almost finished with the work of renovating the office space and UNA expects the move to take place between Dec. 28 and Dec. 30.

With UNA's membership and staff growing and the lease on the old office near the Alberta Legislature nearing its end, the end of 2011 was an ideal time to organize the move, said President Heather Smith.

The new facility will have improved meeting space and more accessible parking for members, while still being close to the downtown core. It is located right across Jasper Avenue from the old Edmonton General Hospital.

Members should note that communications with and from the Edmonton provincial office will be disrupted during the move. Check UNA's Website – [www.UNA.ab.ca](http://www.UNA.ab.ca) – closer to the date of the move for details on how interim communications coverage will be provided during any service disruptions. 🍷

The UNA Executive Officers hams it up at our union's new Provincial Office in Edmonton. From left to right: First Vice-President Bev Dick, President Heather Smith, Second Vice-President Jane Sustrik, Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik.



## UNA welcomes members from two First Nations health services

In a historic first for our union, the United Nurses of Alberta this fall welcomed nurses from two First Nations health service departments in Southern Alberta into membership.

The new members are six Registered Nurses employed by the Aakom-Kiiyi Health Services of the Piikani Nation at Brocket, near Pincher Creek, and 12 RNs from the Blood Tribe Department of Health at Stand Off, near Cardston. 🍷



Patricia Yellow Horn of the Aakom-Kiiyi Health Services, at left, and Darlene Three Persons of the Blood Tribe Department of Health.



# Wisconsin trade unionist urges international solidarity

**W**isconsin's fight is Alberta's, and Alberta's is Wisconsin's, the Secretary Treasurer of the state's branch of the American Federation of Labour told members of the United Nurses of Alberta at their Annual General Meeting on Oct. 26 in Edmonton.

"This is about the survival of the middle class," said Stephanie Bloomingdale, well known as a leader of Wisconsin's unionized working people in the fight against Republican Governor Scott Walker's attack on public service unions that brought more than 100,000 people into the streets of the state capital earlier this year.

Bloomingdale was taking part in a lively forum on the relevance and future of unions, chaired by Edmonton Journal journalist Sheila Pratt, with Armine Yalnizyan of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in Ottawa.

The simple answer to the forum's formal question about union relevance is that, without them, progressive working people would have no voice. "Do you really believe that without a powerful labour movement, without the United Nurses of Alberta, that you would be able to speak out on behalf of quality care?"

Despite the efforts of the U.S. right to divide unionized working people from non-union workers, and public sector unions from private sector unions, those groups stuck together in Wisconsin and proved that "fighting back matters."

Walker did not realize "how much non-union people would support the rights of public employees to have a voice in their workplace, that the private sector would stand in complete solidarity with the public sector," she said. "Together we can restore a healthy middle class and a healthy future for our kids and our grandkids."

Yalnizyan described the choices facing working people as stark, and the role of unions in protecting democracy as essential.

The aims of anti-union activists like Wisconsin's Walker and the companies in Alberta pressing for radical changes to the provincial Labour Code are the same, she argued. In the face of a worldwide labour shortage, which should help raise working people's wages, "their objective is to break the unions before you get a piece of the growing economy."

"What we are fighting about is being able to hang on to our share of prosperity as the boom flows through town," Yalnizyan stated. 🍷

*Union panel: Armine Yalnizyan of the CCPA, Edmonton journalist Sheila Pratt, Wisconsin union activist Stephanie Bloomingdale.*



Main Photo Credit: Andrew Hanton



UNA Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik hands over a cheque for \$10,000 to striking members of Carpenters Local 2010 in Calgary.

Solidarity

# AGM votes to donate \$10,000 to support Carpenters Union

United Nurses members at the union's Annual General Meeting voted to donate \$10,000 to support Calgary members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters who have been on strike against the scaffolding manufacturer for a first collective agreement since mid-summer.

Yard workers at Peri Formwork Systems in Calgary struck on July 4 after six months of difficult bargaining. They are seeking fair compensation and improved working conditions in their first collective agreement. The members of Carpenters Local 2010 members have not received a pay increase in three years.

"Our UNA members in Calgary brought this motion forward because they support these workers' right to a fair collective agreement under the law in the fact of this company's determination to keep the union out," said UNA Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik.

UNA members have joined the Carpenters union members on their picket line at 29 Industry Way S.E. Calgary., and are urged to do so again in the future if the strike continues, Craik said.



# UNA members and Air Canada flight attendants knock on Prime Minister Harper's office door

UNA Secretary-Treasurer Karen Craik and Local 121 member Holly Heffernan joined more than 50 Air Canada flight attendants and other union members at a demonstration in front of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's constituency office in Calgary on Oct. 17.

The Air Canada flight attendants, represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees voiced their strong opposition to maneuvers by the Harper Government to prevent them from striking.

"After 10 years of concessions, they have not even seen the cost of living increase in wages," Calgary local President Ricardo Miranda told a local media outlet.

As the union representing the 6,800 Air Canada flight attendants, CUPE condemned the federal Conservative government's use of the Canadian Industrial Relations Board to circumvent the collective bargaining rights of members.

Local 121 activist Holly Heffernan on the picket line at Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Calgary office.





# Mediator appointed in UNA's Hardisty Care Centre bargaining



A mediator has been appointed by the Alberta government at UNA's request to assist in negotiations with the owners of Edmonton's Hardisty Care Centre.

UNA also asked Health and Wellness Minister Fred Horne to investigate the Hardisty nursing home to ensure the provincial regulation that requires such facilities designate a nurse in charge at all times is enforced.

UNA has been frustrated in negotiations for a new collective agreement by mixed signals sent by Hardisty's B.C.-based parent corporation in response to the demand the employer correct the absence of the designated nurse in charge on evening and weekend shifts as required by the regulation.

"We view this as a serious safety concern because there is no clear process in place at the Hardisty facility on how to respond in emergencies such as a patient going missing or undergoes a sudden health crisis," said UNA Second Vice-President Jane Sustrik at the time.

During negotiations, parent company Park Place Seniors Living gave different responses, telling the UNA bargaining team it is not prepared to designate a nurse in charge on evening and weekend shifts but telling government officials they intend to do so.

Sustrik said UNA's request in its letter to Horne, who was recently appointed to cabinet by Premier Alison Redford on Oct 12, is really one of the first important tests the government's new leadership needs to pass to show Albertans it is serious about health care and the protection of vulnerable citizens.

"It is not uncommon for the operators of nursing homes in Alberta to treat the law and regulations as if they are merely guidelines that can be followed or ignored at the company's convenience," Sustrik said.

"Premier Redford and Minister Horne need to demonstrate clearly they are prepared to enforce the laws and regulations our Legislature has passed to protect Alberta's seniors and others in care," she stated.

"We asked Minister Horne to exercise his jurisdiction under the Act to investigate the situation at the Hardisty Care Centre and to ensure the province's regulation is enforced," Sustrik concluded.

Alberta's Nursing Homes Operations Regulation states "an operator shall designate a person as the charge nurse for his nursing home for each shift." The regulation defines nurse as a Registered Nurse, Registered Psychiatric Nurse or Certified Graduate Nurse.

*"Premier Redford and Minister Horne need to demonstrate clearly that they are prepared to enforce the laws and regulations our Legislature has passed to protect Alberta's seniors and others in care."*

Jane Sustrik  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, UNA

## 2012 Nurses' Planners are here

You'll find a copy of the popular UNA Nurses' Planner for 2012 with this edition of the NewsBulletin.

You may notice that this year's Planner contains some advertisements. This is part of an arrangement with the company that prints the books and provides them to UNA for its members.





# President calls South Calgary Health Campus 'new gold standard'

On Oct. 20, President Heather Smith and several other UNA staff and executive members joined an Alberta Health Services tour of the new Calgary South Health Campus, which is scheduled to partly open next spring.

Even at this dusty and confusing stage of construction, the massive, \$3-billion-plus hospital in the city's southwest corner is an impressive sight outside. Inside, said Smith, the new facility "will be the new gold standard for acute care hospitals, not just in Alberta, but around the world."

With Smith on the tour of the 10-storey hospital structure, which will be at the heart of the campus of health facilities that gives the project its current name, were UNA Secretary Treasurer Karen Craik, Sheila Dorschied from Local 37, Judy Brandley of Local 196 and South Central District Representatives Daphne Wallace, Denise Palmer and Tanice Olson, and Local 120 President Steve Johnson.

In addition, from UNA's staff, Labour Relations Director David Harrigan, Labour Relations Manager Kris Farkas and LRO Jeannine Arbour accompanied the tour. 🍷

*New Calgary hospital rises in the city's southeast.*



*UNA and AHS representatives look at the main entrance way of the new South Calgary Health Campus.*

## AHS 'rapid hire' program had added "200 plus" RNs by late September

Alberta Health Services says it had hired "200 plus" Registered Nurses by Sept. 26 through the Rapid Hire Program it announced last summer.

The provincial public health agency said it expects to release updated information by the end of November.

The goal of the program, announced in mid-July, was to hire 300 Registered Nurses province-wide to meet current demand and anticipated future need for RNs in Alberta, and to address critical staff shortages in areas of high demand.

The positions are located in major facilities, rural sites and community programs, AHS said. Positions will be available in Operating Rooms, Emergency Departments, Mental Health, Home Care, Labour and Delivery, Neonatal ICU, Surgery, Hemodialysis and other areas. The majority of them are full time or near-FTE part-time, AHS said.

AHS has told Alberta media that they expect to be able to hire graduate nurses right out of school as part of the program.

UNA supported the hiring effort, but cautioned at the time that the number of nurses needed in the province was much higher – in the order of 1,500 to 2,000 positions – and that efforts needed to be made to keep every new graduate nurse trained here in the province. 🍷





# Additional training required to meet new OH&S Code standards

By Janice Peterson, UNA Staff

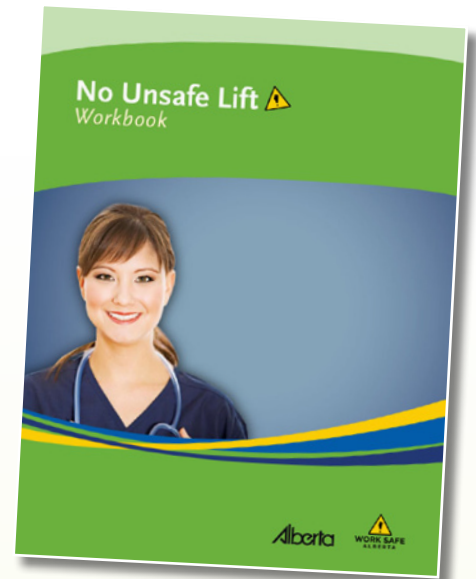
*Providing training to all staff required to lift, transfer and reposition patients is mandatory.*

In the latest revision of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code (effective July 1, 2009) new requirements were added to the legislation regarding safe patient handling, which includes training in specific measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of musculo-skeletal injury.

As follow up to government inspection by Worksafe Alberta, Alberta Health Services was ordered to develop a safe patient handling program that focuses on the use mechanical aids to lift, transfer and reposition patients (ceiling lifts, portable lifts, slider sheets).

As part of that program AHS designed a five-hour hands-on training session to be rolled out in conjunction with the purchase of and installation of mechanical aids.

The training program's stated philosophy is "minimal physical effort making maximum use of equipment and patient participation to result in No Unsafe Lift." The program's cornerstones are the use of equipment that reduces or eliminates the



force required and the use of assessment tools, equipment and moving techniques.

This training is designed for nurses and other staff working in acute-care and continuing-care facilities – some 40,000 employees- and it is UNA's understanding that the training program has been rolled out at a number of facilities.

However, we are also aware of sites where employees have not yet received training and we have been advised that training for nurses working in community care will not developed and delivered for a least two more years.

Providing training to all staff required to lift, transfer and reposition patients is mandatory. So if you have not received this essential training please contact your UNA local representatives so that they can forward this concern at the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. ♥

## Costs & Benefits of Lift Installations

Interior Health Authority of B.C.

Reduction in injuries related to patient handling	55.3%
Reduction in manual list and transfer	72.2%
Time for recovery of investment:	1.3 to 6.9 yrs
Life span of equipment:	12 yrs

*Based on a cost-benefit analysis of mechanical ceiling lift installations at the 16 facilities of the Interior Health Authority of British Columbia*



# Executives from 160-plus locals met in September and October

UNA's fall round of District Meetings took place in Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge and Edmonton through September and October.

Executive members from our union's more than 160 Locals get together at their District Meetings to hear their District Representatives report on the last UNA Executive Board meeting, to inform their reps about the challenges and issues that concern their members and compare notes on developments throughout their regions.

The one-day meetings also included an educational seminar. In this round of meetings, the seminar was a political scan of the province during and immediately after the Progressive Conservative leadership race that was ultimately won by Premier Alison Redford. The session was conducted by UNA Communication Officers Dave Cournoyer and David Climenhaga. 🍷



Participants in the South Central District meeting in Calgary take part in a session on the Regularization process. ▲

## Clarification: e-People payroll system was rolled out only in Calgary Zone



Alberta Health Services' new e-People Human Resources and Payroll system was rolled out in October, but only in the Calgary Zone. A story in the previous edition of the NewsBulletin incorrectly implied that the system was being implemented throughout Alberta.

AHS says that the system provides "self-service functionality" for employees – 24 hours a day for those with home computers.

Implementation of the new system did mean significant changes for the affected employees in the Calgary area, including replacement of their paper pay stub with an online "pay advice," timing of benefit deductions to take place in the pay period in which the first of the month falls, and provision of Human resources assistance on-line or by a toll-free telephone line.

Employees were to be provided with an HR contact card.

The new system also required affected employees to use a new eight-digit identification number when they used the e-People website or contacted the HR Contact Centre. However, they would continue to need their old VAX ID numbers to access other systems.

Employees were to receive the new ID number by postal mail by mid-September. Employees who have not received their new ID number should contact their manager.

E-People is to be rolled out province-wide over the next two years. At the present time it is only in use in Calgary. 🍷





Winston Gereluk at the  
2011 UNA AGM



# 2012 marks centennial milestone for Alberta's labour movement

By Winston Gereluk, Alberta Labour History Institute

**N**ext year will be the year of labour in Alberta.

In 2012, the Alberta Federation of Labour celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, a milestone that will be marked by Alberta unions and other labour organizations created by our province's working people.

The Alberta Labour History Institute is partnering with the AFL in Project 2012 to make education about labour history a vital part of the upcoming celebrations.

*Project 2012: 100 Years of Labour* will involve communities across Alberta. Events will begin in the spring of 2012 with a musical history tour by Edmonton folk singer Maria Dunn. Museums, archives and libraries will host labour history displays, and social studies students across Alberta will compete in a labour history contest.

On April 28, the Edmonton and District Labour Council will unveil an obelisk called "Broken Families" in Grant Notley Park. The monument is dedicated to the families of victims of unsafe workplaces.


The Alberta labour movement formally began in Lethbridge in 1912 when railway workers, miners, farmers, typographers and tradespeople met to unite in the struggle

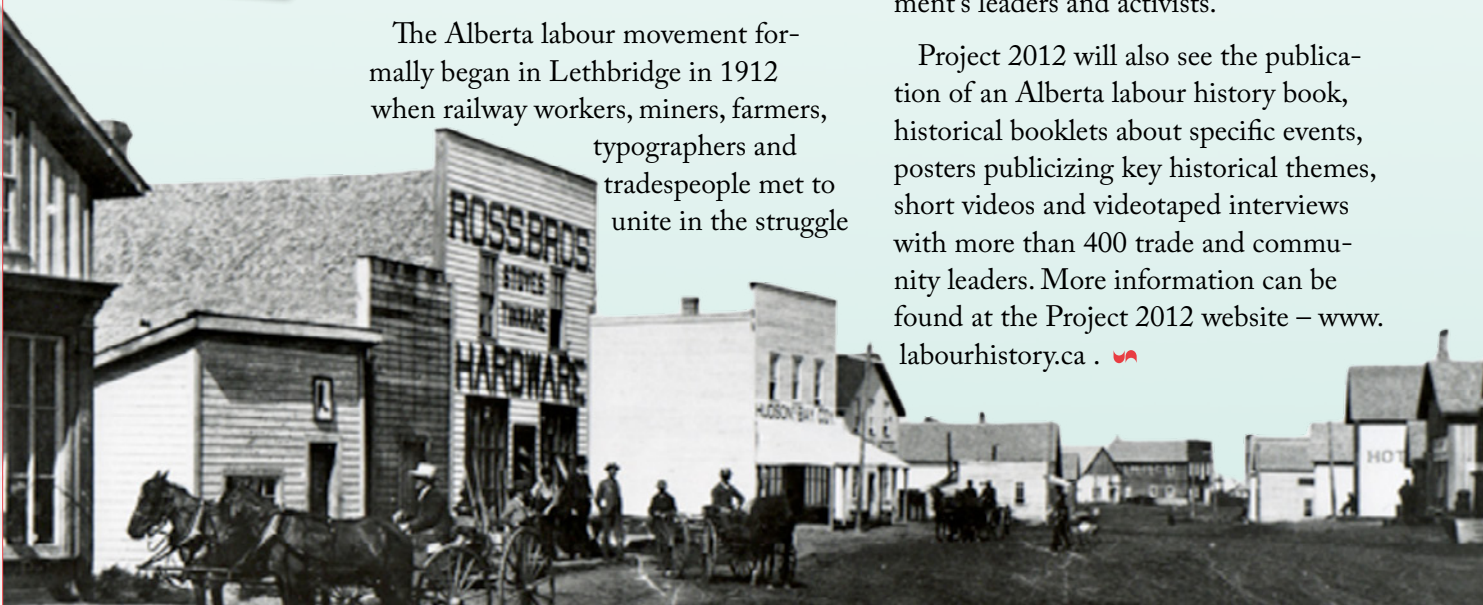
for better wages, working conditions and political reform.

Accordingly, Lethbridge will be the site of a "Picnic in the Park" on May 5, kicked off with a banner parade through the historical streets of that city. The Red Deer Labour Council will mount a large stainless disc with images of labour on a downtown building, and, in Calgary, a group is pursuing an ambitious walking tour of locations where significant events in labour history have taken place.

Events culminate in Edmonton on June 16 with a celebration at Fort Edmonton Park that includes a full day of displays, speeches, performances, films, kid games and a dance. Unions and other organizations are encouraged to bring banners and set up displays.

Before the celebration, on June 14 and 15, a two-day labour history conference will take place, starting with presentation of papers by labour historians and ending in a story-telling session by the movement's leaders and activists.

Project 2012 will also see the publication of an Alberta labour history book, historical booklets about specific events, posters publicizing key historical themes, short videos and videotaped interviews with more than 400 trade and community leaders. More information can be found at the Project 2012 website – [www.labourhistory.ca](http://www.labourhistory.ca) . 







## United Way helps overcome poverty through CUPS program

## Did you know? ...

By Holly Heffernan

Among the health-care-focused projects funded by Alberta United Ways is the Calgary Urban Project Society, which provides health care, social and education services to a population struggling with poverty and marginalization.

United Way of Calgary and Area directly supports CUPS' Family Centre Programs, which provide care dedicated to helping individuals and families overcome poverty.

Programs focus on addressing the root causes of poverty and achieving lasting solutions. The Family Centre is a one-stop location for parents and children to access supports for basic needs, housing, referrals to additional external agency services, social and recreational opportunities, and more formal supports by way of individualized counselling sessions, goal planning and parenting programs.

CUPS also operates a medical clinic that provides primary care, with physicians and nurses available, plus a walk-in clinic, a women's health unit, pregnancy care, and well-baby, pediatric, mental health, Hepatitis C, chiropractic, dental, foot care, eye, diabetes and chronic disease management, and nutritional clinics. Outreach nursing is also provided.

In the Capital Region, the United Way funds a program at the St. Albert Food Bank, which has developed an infant formula program for mothers who are not able to provide proper nourishment and support for their infants. The program, which has been implemented throughout the Capital Region, provided 560 Safeway gift cards worth \$26 to mothers in need of assistance purchasing infant formula for newborns.

In Central Alberta, meanwhile, United Way funds 32 programs including the Central Alberta AIDS Network Society, which provides harm-reduction programs to at-risk populations.

United Way Fort McMurray provides funds to support the Pastew Place Detox Centre, a 24/7 facility that provides a safe and controlled setting for individuals to detoxify from alcohol and other drugs. United Way currently provides funding towards several of Pastew Place's programs including the day program/information series, the pre-treatment program and the post-treatment program.

Every year, AHS employees play an important role through their United Way contributions to supporting needed agencies and programs throughout our province. ♥♥



## UNA scholarship awards encourage new nurses

The deadline has now passed to apply for UNA's seven 2011 Nursing Scholarships.

UNA will award the Nursing Scholarships again this year to assist students in their first year of an approved nursing program in Alberta. The \$750 scholarships are funded to encourage young people, particularly those with a family history in nursing, to take up the profession.

The scholarships are awarded to students related to a UNA member in good standing. The applicants had to complete a short essay to be eligible for the award.

Completed applications were received at the UNA Provincial Office by the deadline of Oct. 14, 2011. The awards will be announced in late January 2012. ♥♥





# District Representatives get thanks and praise upon retirement

**U**NA is facing a combined loss of many decades of union experience with the retirement of three North Central District activists and a move to the union's staff by another representative in the South Central District.

North Central District Representatives Bev Lawrence, Judy Moar and Beryl Scott all announced their planned retirements at the last District Meeting in October and officially ended their terms at the UNA AGM. South Central District Rep Tanice Olson stepped down from her position to take a temporary Labour Relations Officer position with the union.

"We have benefitted enormously from the hard work and activism of all these members," said President Heather Smith. "UNA is losing several decades of experience representing members and speaking on their behalf at the local, district and provincial levels, and in negotiations."

She wished them all the best in their retirements and thanked them for their contributions.



## Veteran UNA social activist **Beryl Scott** retires from Board

After 35 years as an RN and dedicated union activist, Beryl Scott told the North Central District Meeting on Oct. 6 that she is about to retire from the UNA Board. She will remain a UNA member.

Beryl has served as a member of UNA's Executive Board for more than a dozen years. She became active soon starting work at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton in 1981, transferring to the Grey Nuns after a year where she has been an active member of Local 79 ever since.

She is Chair of the Centre for Race and Culture and the UNA Representative and Chair of the Alberta Federation of Labour's Workers of Colour and Aboriginal Workers Committee.

"My passion for social justice and unionism will remain my focal point, even in retirement," Beryl promised.



## UNA will miss **Judy Moar**, departing North Central District Rep

With the keys to a new motor home in her pocket, golf clubs in the back and retirement beckoning, North Central District Representative Judith Moar decided this year not to seek re-election.

A union member since 1972 and a nurse for 38 years, UNA will miss Judy, who got her start as a union activist with the Manitoba Nurses Union, later moving to the Staff Nurses Association of Alberta. She moved to UNA when the SNAA joined this union in 1997.

Judy's been active in Locals 301 and 196 since 1997 and on the UNA Executive Board since 2003. She has also served on the Alberta Federation of Labour Pride and Solidarity Committee since that year.

She and her new spouse Jane are looking forward to travelling in the motor home and golfing.



## **Bev Lawrence**, North Central District Rep, retires

Bev Lawrence has retired after 35 years of nursing in Alberta, 29 years as a public health nurse in Fort McMurray, where she served enthusiastically as a union activist, first with the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union and later with UNA.

Over her years in nursing, Lawrence served as Recording Secretary of CEP Local 717, Recording Secretary and President of UNA Local 229 and as North Central District Representatives.

With her husband Robert also retired from his job as an engineer at Syncrude Canada Ltd., Bev is looking forward to relaxing, enjoying life and spending more time with her twin grandchildren.




## Goodbye and welcome to **Tanice Olson** as she moves to UNA staff

Welcome to UNA's staff as a temporary Labour Relations Officer for Tanice Olson of Calgary means goodbye to Tanice as a South Central District Representative.

Tanice stepped down as South Central Rep after the "incredible experience" of two full terms in the job to use her skills and activism on the UNA's staff. Her term officially came to an end at last month's AGM in Edmonton.

Tanice graduated from the University of Alberta School of Nursing in 1988 and started at Calgary's Peter Lougheed Centre soon after. She recalls now: "I was bumped five times in 10 years – which cemented my commitment to the union!" Most recently, she worked in Labour and Delivery at the Lougheed Hospital.

She has also served as Vice-President and Membership Secretary of Local 1, the 2010 negotiating committee and the UNA-Employer Joint Committee. 





# Distinguished scholar and nurse appointed as PRC Advisor



Donna Lynn Smith

Following a national search, UNA is very pleased that Donna Lynn Smith has accepted an important staff position to advance professional responsibility issues in Alberta.

“Professional Responsibility Committees are a powerful tool for advocating for our patients and our worksites,” said UNA President Heather Smith. “As Professional Responsibility Advisor, Donna Lynn will help bring needed change to the attitudes of our members, employers, politicians and the public about the importance of professional responsibility in nursing.”

Donna Lynn Smith’s role in the new position will be to raise the profile of professional responsibility as an issue of concern and to aid in the resolution of professional responsibility issues. She will work from the Provincial Office in Edmonton.

Smith joins UNA after a distinguished career in nursing and health services management. She is a graduate of the University of Alberta School of Nursing and holds a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology and has been awarded the designation Certified Health Executive by the Canadian College of Health Leaders.

Smith has also been a distinguished teacher, including holding a tenured faculty position at the U of A. She has been the Director of Nursing at Lethbridge Auxiliary and Rehabilitation Hospital, held senior positions at University of Alberta Hospital, served as Co-Director of the U of A’s Health Ethics Centre and been a manager of program development for the Alberta public service. She is a past president of the Alberta Association of Gerontology and a member of the Seniors Ministry’s Demographic Planning Commission. ♡

## Local 183 Laurie Lang Memorial Scholarship recipient named



Mandy Lang, RPN

UNA Local 183, which represents Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Registered Nurses at Alberta Hospital Edmonton, has awarded its first \$2,000 Laurie Lang Memorial Scholarship for 2011.

The singularly fitting winner was Mandy Lang, the wife of Laurie’s son Keith.

The scholarship is intended to provide UNA Local 183 members in good standing with financial assistance for advanced education in nursing.

It is awarded to the author of an essay on a topic chosen by the Local – this year,

“What influences has the union had over nurses’ ability to provide quality care in the workplace.” The essays were judged by the Local’s Education Committee, which didn’t know the name of the applicant.

The annual scholarship is named for the Local’s former president, who died of cancer in 2007. Laurie is remembered for his hard work on behalf of his union, his church and the NDP. He was known as a professional who could relate to difficult patients and help them find the ability to leave hospital and live productive lives.

The award was presented to Mandy at Local 183’s AGM on Nov. 2. Mandy is working on a degree through Douglas College. ♡





Report from Director  
of Labour Relations  
David Harrigan

## *UNA members urged to claim their 2% pension supplement; to be aware of 60-day limit on applying for ARTA benefits program*

### *I – Supplemental retirement benefit contributions by the Employer*

Members of the United Nurses of Alberta, new members in particular, need to be aware of Article 29.05 of the Provincial Collective Agreement, in which the Employer agrees to contribute to a supplemental pension plan in the form of a Registered Retirement Savings Plan contribution.

Moreover, UNA strongly recommends that all members act to take advantage of this provision if they haven't done so. It is a benefit they cannot receive without taking specific action to enroll. So without acting, employees are going without a 2-per-cent retirement-income supplement to their salary that they are entitled to receive under the collective agreement.

Article 29.05 reads:

*The employer shall provide a supplemental pension plan in the form of a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). Effective on the Employee's date of enrollment, a Regular Employee under the age of 72 years shall have the right to contribute up to 2% of his or her regular earnings to the RRSP. The Employer shall match the Employee's contributions into the RRSP. An Employee 72 years of age or older shall receive an additional 2% of her or his regular earnings.*

The agreement does require that employees contribute 2 per cent of their salary for the employer to match, and employees need to enroll in the program for the employer to contribute this money.

UNA members can talk to their own financial advisors about how best to manage these funds. But no UNA member should go without funds for their retirement that their Employer has agreed to contribute.

### *II – Enrollment in the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association Benefit Plan*

In a Letter of Understanding between UNA and the Employer, found on Page 148 of the Provincial Collective Agreement, the Employer agrees to "take all necessary steps to facilitate the enrollment of retired employees" on the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association Benefit Plan for supplemental health care and dental coverage after retirement.


UNA advises members contemplating retirement to examine the details of the ARTA supplemental benefits and to decide for themselves whether it is a good deal based on their retirement expectations and arrangements.

More details of the plan may be found on UNA's website at [www.una.ab.ca/resources/benefits/arta](http://www.una.ab.ca/resources/benefits/arta).

UNA reminds members of an important aspect of this plan that has caused concerns for some members: when you retire, you have 60 days to enroll without a medical.

Moreover, if you are using your spouse's benefit plan and they retire and lose their plan, you have 60 days to enroll without a medical.

UNA is aware of cases in which members have waited longer than the 60 days, have been required to take the medical and have been denied benefits based on the outcome of the medical.

As a consequence, UNA advises any retiring employee who is contemplating enrolling in the ARTA plan to do so within the required 60-day period. 

**A regular guide to protection and rights  
provided by UNA Collective Agreements**



# Advocating for Albertans.

It's an important part  
of being a nurse.

A properly staffed and supported public health care system guarantees good care for all of our patients, residents, and clients. Alberta's nurses are committed to working toward an improved public health care system that benefits all Albertans and provides the care they need when they need it.

The union of 25,000 Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and allied health workers.



**United Nurses of Alberta**

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