

January 2004

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It is that time of year again where we reflect on the events of the past twelve (12) months. By all accounts, 2003 had its ups and downs for UPCE members. Here are some of the highlights from that period:

Classification Review Committee – The Job Evaluation Plan Classification Review Committee met on an on-going basis during the past year and the committee finally concluded its mandate in November. Nearly 700 members were impacted by this review and approximately 40% saw an increase in their classification as a result. In addition, we proceeded to arbitration regarding Canada Post's refusal to pay for the expenses related to the attendance of the UPCE member of the Committee - the arbitrator ruled in our favour.

Pay Equity – Twenty (20) years after our pay equity complaint was filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and after over ten (10) years of hearings, the Tribunal finally sat for the last time on August 27, 2003. UPCE/PSAC members held events in the workplace on September 24, 2003, to mark the 20th anniversary. A decision by the Tribunal is expected later this year.

Service Expansion and Innovation and Change Committee – Both the Steering and Working Committees have met on a regular basis during the past year. The first positions were finally created in 2003. Four (4) positions were created in the Linguistic Department in Ottawa at the T2 classification and level (consisting of 2 translators and 2 revisers). These members started working on the project in November. Shortly after, 13 positions were created in the Ottawa Payroll Department (A1 and A3) to process CPAA timesheets. The project became fully operational in December. We are currently working on two (2) other projects that should result, in the next few months, in the creation of over thirty (30) positions.

Bargaining Unit work – While the work of the Service Expansion and Innovation and Change Committee has been positive, the employer continued its reorganizations in 2003 and to delete positions filled by UPCE members. In some of these reorganizations, the work disappeared. However, in too many of these reorganizations, the remaining work was redistributed to corporate employees outside of our bargaining unit. **This serious issue has continued to be one of the most important issues dealt with in 2003 and will most likely be a priority during the next round of bargaining.** **Staffing** – Many members were declared surplus to requirement in the last twelve (12) months (as a result of the reorganizations specified above) and many members have been unhappy with their new appointment or assignment (some even preferred to leave Canada Post instead of taking these new assignments). Many of these members were also denied the opportunity to be offered any new assignments (issue still unresolved with the employer as of today). Finally, the most disturbing action was the assignment of UPCE surplus members last January to positions outside the bargaining unit (against their will) while there was still work required to be performed inside our bargaining unit (also unresolved issue as of this day). In addition, although the Staffing Committee met on a regular basis during the year and a lot of information was exchanged between the parties, the Committee did not arrive at any decisions involving the four (4) items contained in Appendix "N". However, the knowledge and information acquired during those meetings will most likely be useful in the upcoming round of negotiations as staffing continues to be an area of great concern with the membership.

The coming months... - As stated above, we are expecting a decision from the Pay Equity Tribunal later this year. However, the coming months will undoubtedly be focused on the upcoming round of negotiations with Canada Post (the collective agreement has an expiry date of October 31, 2004). Locals are expected to hold meetings in the first couple of months of 2004 to solicit your input for this round. We hope that you will participate throughout the entire process and we are committed, once again, to consulting with you and providing you with timely information as negotiations develop. All the best to you in 2004.

In Solidarity, Luc Guevremont
National President