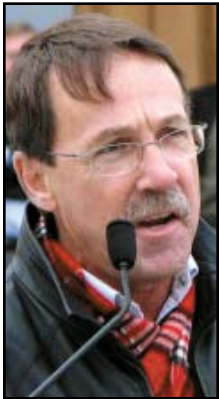




# Labour Reporter

Saskatchewan's Voice of Labour

MARCH 2010



**“Our government seems to be moving backwards around the issue of fundamental human rights.”**

## The importance of being an advocate

**ON SO MANY FRONTS**, the labour movement is advocating for a stronger democracy, respect for human rights, and a thriving Saskatchewan economy. This edition shares just a few of those stories.

The SFL Trade Committee is working to expose the provincial government for signing onto an anti-democratic trade deal at the World Trade Organization. The procurement agreement could jeopardize local and provincial government's ability to support local job creation and smaller businesses.

Guess who brokered the deal? That's right, the Harper government, the same government who prorogued Parliament to avoid scrutiny over the treatment of detainees in Afghanistan. In a single back-door deal, we see both levels of government moving democracy backward.

Our Solidarity and Pride Committee is preparing arguments to present to the Court of Appeal on the Wall government's proposed changes to the Marriage Act. The changes amount to discrimination against same-sex couples. Again, our government seems to be moving backwards, in this case

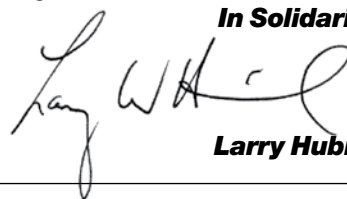
around the issue of fundamental human rights.

You'll also read an update on the Building Trades campaign to have Bill 80 withdrawn. The construction industry is thriving without Bill 80 – the current system provides labour stability, good jobs and a solid apprenticeship system. These things contribute to a stable economy and support tradespeople who want to work and raise a family in Saskatchewan. Call your MLA now. It's not too late to have your voice heard.

Finally, I invite you to enjoy a special feature on SFL Executive Vice-President, Jan Cibart. Jan is a member of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and was recently appointed to the International Labour Organization as a worker representative on the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Every time we advocate for fairness, equality and a strong Saskatchewan our trade union values shine through.

**In Solidarity,**



**Larry Hubich**



### It's a fact:

■ Stephen Harper's yearly salary is \$301,600. That works out to \$5,800 per week. So far, he has cancelled Parliament for four weeks, but he'll still collect \$23,200 in pay while prorogation is in effect. Parliament will sit for just 114 days in 2010.

### Index:

- p.2 Trade deal bad for Sask.
- p. 3 Human rights on trial
- p. 4-5 Bill 80 campaign heats up
- p. 6-7 SFL-Vice President at the ILO
- p. 8 Where's the beef?

*“The citizen can bring our political and governmental institutions back to life, make them responsive and accountable, and keep them honest. No one else can.” - John Gardner*



iSTOCK image

# Back room deals bad for Saskatchewan

**THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT** recently agreed to sign onto the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement. Labour and our allies, like the Council of Canadians, say it's a bad deal. The Labour Reporter sat down with Gary Schoenfeldt and Marlene Brown from the SFL Trade Committee to get the scoop.

*LR: What do we mean by 'government procurement'?*

**MB:** Municipal and provincial governments spend a lot of taxpayer revenues on purchasing (procuring) goods and services. So it's a fair question to ask: how do local governments decide on which businesses to buy from? Should they support local businesses? Should they support green businesses? Should they support unionized businesses?

By signing this WTO agreement, the provinces have opened up the bidding process on those large contracts to multinational corporations. The worry is that because these corporations are huge, they can afford to bid on those contracts in a way that undercuts domestic firms.

**GS:** This could be very hard on local businesses who rely on government contracts. It's the same idea as what happens when

Walmart comes into local communities and drives mom and pop shops out of business. We are asking, why would we sign away our ability to build a stable and strong Saskatchewan economy, one that supports local job creation and local business?

*LR: Good question, why would the provinces agree to this?*

**GS:** President Obama said in return for signing the WTO agreement, Canadian businesses could receive a limited exemption from Buy American provisions in the US stimulus spending package. In other words, Canadian corporations can bid on some of the contracts that are being tendered to stimulate the American economy.

The problem is that most of that stimulus money has already been spoken for, only 37 states were open to it, and the provinces signed the deal with only about 10 days left to bid on anything. So it really looks like we got crumbs, if anything, out of the deal. Mr. Harper alluded to the deal being 'precedent-setting', but the Americans have not agreed to open access to any future stimulus funding.

**MB:** These deals are driven by global capital and their need to endlessly expand economic growth, which is measured in

terms of corporate profits. The Council of Canadians has been tracking negotiations on another trade deal, this one between Canada and the European Union, in which large European companies also want access to our markets. This WTO agreement appears to have paved the way to make sure Canada is open to exploit.

*LR: Do citizens have a say in all this?*

**GS:** Perhaps one of the worst aspects of these kind of quick and dirty trade deals, is that they take place with no public oversight, and no legislative scrutiny. Neither the Harper nor the Wall government consulted citizens before making this deal, yet citizens and local businesses are really affected.

We always ask - who benefits from this trade deal? It looks like the multinational corporations do. Who loses? Local businesses stand to lose a lot. Citizens who want to see their taxes invested locally wherever possible also lose.

And ultimately, democracy loses – key decisions about economic development have been signed away in yet another back room trade deal.

For more information on the Procurement Agreement and on the Canada-EU trade deal, visit [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org). 🇺🇸

# Human rights on trial in May

**THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT** recently announced it is seeking to amend the Marriage Act to allow government-appointed marriage commissioners to opt out of marrying same-sex couples.

The government referred the proposed amendment to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal because the change may violate the equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The SFL Solidarity and Pride Committee has been granted intervenor status in the case and will be able to make arguments to the court. Other intervenors include the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, the Prairie Lily Feminist Society and Égale Canada and individuals from the LGBT community.

“Allowing marriage commissioners the ability to opt out of marrying same-sex couples is a straightforward case of discrimination. A state-sanctioned marriage ceremony, in which a marriage license is issued, is no different than the process a citizen goes through to receive any other government service. Your sexual orientation should not enter into the picture,” says Ryan Huber of the SFL’s Solidarity and Pride Committee.

“I expect continuity through all government organizations I deal with. I am currently proceeding through the adoption process — should this be denied because of a social worker’s personal beliefs? I would hope that we send the same message in both scenarios — that as a society we believe in loving and inclusive families and that civil servants carry out their duties in a way that supports human dignity for all,” adds Huber.

Kerry Armbruster-Barrett, another member of the SFL’s Solidarity and Pride Com-



**“Individual members of the civil service should not be able to discriminate against citizens based on sexual orientation. It’s like saying, ‘it offends my religious conscience to marry people of a faith or ethnic background different from my own’. Those are not the values we believe Saskatchewan stands for.”**

mittee recently applied to become a marriage commissioner.

“The application form stated very clearly, that if you accepted the job, you may be asked to marry same-sex couples. It also stated that you had the option of referring couples to other marriage commissioners if you could not make yourself available to do a marriage ceremony. So why are these

changes to the Marriage Act even being contemplated?”


Huber worries about the direction Saskatchewan appears to be taking: “It took decades of struggle and organizing on the same-sex marriage issue and eventually a large enough cultural shift happened in Canada and we won the legal right to marry. This advance in human rights occurred despite federal Conservative party efforts to block the new law. Why is the Wall government moving Saskatchewan backwards?”

The proposed Marriage Act amendments may arise from the fact that in 2008, Orville Nichols was fined \$2,500 by a Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal for refusing to marry two Regina men. Even though he was hired by the government as a marriage commissioner, he argued it was a violation of his religious rights to be asked to marry a same-sex couple.

Nichols has appealed the Human Rights Tribunal ruling.

“There is nothing in the Marriage Act that infringes on anyone’s right to worship under the religion of their choice. And churches in Saskatchewan are still allowed to make their own decisions about who can be married within their confines. We are simply arguing that individual members of the civil service should not be able to discriminate against citizens based

on sexual orientation. It’s like saying, ‘it offends my religious conscience to marry people of a faith or ethnic background different from my own’. Those are not the values we believe Saskatchewan stands for,” says Armbruster-Barrett.

The Saskatchewan Court of Appeal will hear the matter on May 13 and 14. 

# SPOTLIGHT:

## SFL Executive V-P Jan Cibart



**“Even now, there are so many misconceptions of who gets HIV/AIDS and how. I saw my role as an educator and encourager — giving hope to those with the disease.”**

— Jan Cibart

**BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE...** at the right time... with the right skills and determination... can result in an amazing career for those willing to see the silver lining behind every cloud. This is true for Jan Cibart, who has been a registered nurse since 1982.

Cibart was recently appointed to a tripartite committee with the International Labour Organization (ILO), an agency affiliated with the United Nations. The committee, supported through the CLC (Canadian Labour Congress) and CFNU (Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions), has been asked to develop an international labour standard as it relates to the rights of persons with HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

How Cibart’s career as an RN led to her becoming part of this committee is quite a story in itself.

The year was 1990 and the nurses’ strike in Saskatchewan resulted in her being bumped from her position in Pediatrics at the Regina General Hospital. She decided to move to New Orleans to work in a children’s hospital.

“That’s where I got my first taste of working with disenfranchised people,” says Cibart. “Shortly afterwards, I took a position in Maryland in a rural community for three years working for Children’s Medical Centre in Washington, D.C. I moved into Home Care and got very involved in the community. It was also my first experience with HIV/AIDS patients. It was 1993 and HIV/AIDS was reasonably new then – I really didn’t know what HIV or AIDS was – or what the acronyms really even stood for; it was something that wasn’t going to affect me.”

She cared for her first infant patient with AIDS, “Baby Larry” who was six weeks old. Cibart discovered the baby’s mom was also HIV positive. Baby Larry lived for one and a half years.

Throughout her time caring for HIV/AIDS patients, Cibart began to realize there was hope as new treatments became available. Having AIDS was not necessarily a death sentence. “At that time, and even now, there are so many misconceptions of who gets HIV/AIDS and how. I saw my

role as an educator and encourager – giving hope to those with the disease.”

Cibart moved back to Canada and continued to educate people about HIV and AIDS by speaking to community groups and health organizations. In 1996, she went to Zimbabwe on a vacation, and while there, she volunteered to help support and develop education programs led by a small women’s group called BATANAI (A Shona word for “coming together”).

Led by Auxilia Chimsoro, the group’s mandate was to assist women in rural African communities who were HIV positive. “When I was in Africa, I discovered the government and people were very aware of HIV and AIDS, more so than the Western world,” says Cibart. “So much of what was keeping them from preventing transmission and seeking support evolved around their cultural and traditional beliefs.”

Cibart became good friends with Auxilia (who unfortunately died of AIDS in 1998), and together they spoke to women, hoping to empower them to take control of their sexual health. This was not easy in a culture where women are expected to be submissive to men. “A lot of our education was done through song and poetry, as well as role playing,” remembers Cibart. “Auxilia was the driving force - she broke down barriers. The people saw me as a foreigner, but because I was a nurse, they thought I would be able to fix their HIV problem.” Cibart says women would give her their babies, and take her to elders dying of AIDS, with eyes full of hope that she could perform a miracle. “They would see just my presence as being a healing method,” notes Cibart. It was a very humbling experience for her.

After her work in Africa, Cibart came back to Canada to work in Home Care, focusing on work in the First Nations/Métis community with a particular interest in addictions. There again, she got involved in HIV education.

In 1999, Cibart joined the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses’ Solidarity and Pride Committee. She also sat as a Labour representative on a ministry

**“When I was in Africa, I discovered the government and people were very aware of HIV and AIDS, more so than the Western world. So much of what was keeping them from preventing transmission and seeking support evolved around their cultural and traditional beliefs.”**



advisory committee focusing on HIV/AIDS issues, until the committee was dissolved.

“It was my labour/social action, my work with HIV and AIDS that landed me the position with the ILO,” notes Cibart. As part of the tripartite committee, Cibart went to Geneva, Switzerland for two weeks in June, 2009 for intense meetings aimed at developing an international instrument (guideline) for workers who have HIV/AIDS, to be followed by countries who are members of the United Nations. “The committee is an interesting mix of people from all different nations of the UN – workers, employers and government representatives,” shares Cibart. “I am part of the worker group who drafted an agreement around HIV and AIDS for workers and workplaces.” Cibart says the committee will be coming up with the final document in June, 2010.

“Being involved in this committee has been a huge learning experience,” explains Cibart. “I have come to realize that every country has different priorities and structures in place for protection of the people. Canada is one of the leaders when it comes to protecting workers with HIV/AIDS (you can’t get fired if you have HIV) – we’re far more ahead in that sense. I noticed there were certain barriers we couldn’t get over as a group. For example, some countries refused to acknowledge that any men in their country could be gay or re-

fused to talk about men and their sexuality and women’s rights. We never did reach a consensus on the “men who have sex with men” (MSM) issue, so in our draft document MSMs are not mentioned as one of the vulnerable groups with HIV. To be able to maintain your country’s stand and then maintain a global perspective was quite a challenge.”

Cibart isn’t quite sure how the next chapter of her life will unfold. However, she is so grateful for the opportunities that have been provided to her as an RN. “I appreciate the ability to work in a profession that is not only respected around the world, but also provides you with opportunities to move throughout the profession and try different areas. Not too many professions offer such diversity and mobility.”

Whatever happens next, Cibart is grateful for the chance to make a difference in people’s lives. “That’s what I like about nursing – working with clients and their families; providing skills or information that someone needs in order to feel better or be in control of their own health. When I have something I can share that will better their situation – that makes for a good day.” 🌱

Jan Cibart is working in Palliative Home Care for the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region.

*This article reprinted with permission from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.*

## **HIV AND AIDS STATISTICS:**

■ Number of people living with HIV in the world today: **33 MILLION**

■ Number of people under age 25 who become HIV-positive every minute: **4**

■ Number of children infected with HIV each day: **1,014**

■ Percentage of the population with HIV in the world’s most AIDS-affected countries: **MORE THAN 20**

■ Percentage of the population infected with HIV in Canada: **0.3 PERCENT**

■ The number of people who die each day of AIDS: **5,479**

■ Amount pledged by Canada to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in 2005-2006: **\$450 MILLION**

■ Annual worldwide military spending: **\$1.3 TRILLION.**

**Source: World Vision Canada**



The construction industry is  
Tell the government NOT to



# Trades hammer at

**Without talking to working people in Saskatchewan, labour minister Rob Norris and the Saskatchewan Party government introduced Bill 80 to amend The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act.**

## **The amendments to Bill 80 will:**

- » Let contractors - not workers - choose the union to represent workers.
- » Lead to lower wages for construction workers.
- » End province wide collective agreements and destabilize the construction industry.
- » End the practice of organizing along trade-specific lines.
- » Invite the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) into Saskatchewan to negotiate employer-friendly deals in which workers will have no say.
- » Allow unionized employers to shed their union certifications through "abandonment" provisions.

## **What are the building trades doing to stop Bill 80?**

**WE ASKED TERRY PARKER**, business manager of the Saskatchewan Provincial Building Trades Council, to describe their campaign.

"We've worked really hard on two fronts to get this bill scrapped. We've been educating our members and the broader labour movement about its effect, and we've been trying to convince the government they are making a big mistake. We made a detailed submission to the Human Services Committee on how Bill 80 will drive down wages in the construction sector and how it will have such a negative effect on our apprenticeship programs," Parker said.

"We met with government officials twice to outline our concerns in detail, but so far they seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

"The minister is more interested in talking about bringing temporary foreign workers into the province than in building the construction industry with the workforce we have here in the province.

"They are looking for cheap, unskilled workers and we are saying the way to build



Terry Parker

Isn't broken.  
fix it.



# Bill 80

a strong industry is to apprentice our young people, who can then build a career here, and stay in Saskatchewan to raise their families.

"They want to create a cheap and exploitable workforce which is really just pandering to a call for relentless and irresponsible economic growth — we are saying that a strong construction industry that respects our apprenticeship system is a sustained model of economic growth.

"It will keep people here in the province, making decent wages and spending them locally," Parker said.

"One of the best aspects of our campaign so far has been bringing these issues to our members and to the larger labour movement," he added.

"We've made presentations to workers all over the province. We held a Labour Day community rally in the park that was a huge success. We invited our tradespeople and their families and had lots of activities for the kids.

"Many of our members are young and are just starting families, or will be in the near future. Bill 80 affects more than just a few tradespeople — it's an issue that affects a much wider community." 🦘



Chuck Rudder, financial secretary-treasurer of the Building Trades, Randy Nichols, president of the Building Trades and Terry Parker organize against Bill 80.



## The Building Trades need your help

**BILL 80** is expected to hit Third Reading in the March session of the legislature and it is not too late to stop it. Here's what you can do:

» Visit [www.saynotobill80.ca](http://www.saynotobill80.ca) and sign the on-line petition asking for Bill 80 to be scrapped.

» Order anti-Bill 80 leaflets, postcards, lawnsigns, stickers, shopping bags and give them to your neighbours and co-workers. Contact [sk.blding.trades@sasktel.net](mailto:sk.blding.trades@sasktel.net).

» Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining why Bill 80 is unnecessary.

» Call your MLA and tell them why you do not support Bill 80!

## What's up with CLAC...

» The Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) recently opened up an office in Saskatoon;

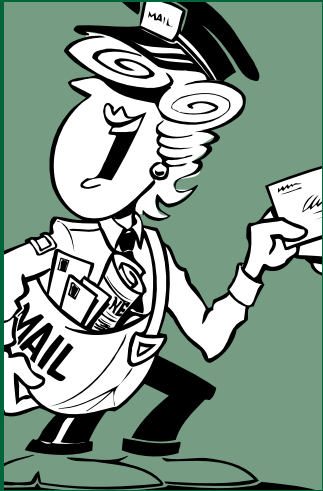
» lobbied the Saskatchewan Minimum Wage Board to set the minimum wage at 10 per cent less for workers under age 21;

» is infamous for negotiating sub-standard collective agreements; and

» is the only 'employees association' who asked for Bill 80.

For more information visit [thetruthaboutCLAC.ca](http://thetruthaboutCLAC.ca).

## Submissions & feedback welcome



Do you have a story you'd like to share with other workers, or an event you'd like to promote?

Send your articles to the *Labour Reporter* editor at [sfl@sfl.sk.ca](mailto:sfl@sfl.sk.ca).

We also welcome letters to the editor, so keep the mail coming in!

## Ask your grocer

**200 MEMBERS** of UFCW Local 1400 have been "locked out" from their jobs at XL Foods Ltd. in Moose Jaw since September 18, 2009. Prior to this they were on lay off since April 2009 and scheduled to return to work on September 28, 2009.

XL Foods locked out those workers to put pressure on them to accept concessions at the bargaining table.

When shopping for meat at a grocery store or meat market be sure to ask where their meat comes from. If the answer is XL Foods – don't purchase.


If you are at a restaurant ask where the beef is coming from – if the answer is XL Foods – consider some other product.

AND be sure to ask every time you purchase beef because businesses often change sup-

pliers back and forth because of pricing.

The workers at XL Foods deserve our support and this consumer pressure is one way we can all help.

**DON'T MINCE WORDS – get ANSWERS!**

For more information call Don Anderson at 924-8572 or Norm Neault at 384-5787. 



## Day of Mourning April 28th

The Saskatchewan Power Corporation recently ordered 2,500 Day of Mourning stickers for employees and managers to wear on the April 28th, the International Day of Mourning. Order stickers from the SFL today, and encourage your co-workers and managers to observe a moment of silence for those injured or killed on the job.

## Mark your calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
March 6	Prairie Lily Feminist Society – 100 Year IWD Tribute	Regina
March 8	International Women's Day	
March 21	Int'l Day for Elimination of Racism	
Mar 22-23	SFL Shiftwork Conference	Regina
April 28	Int'l Day of Mourning	
May 1	Int'l Worker's Day (May Day)	
May 9-14	SFL/CLC Spring School	Saskatoon
June 13-17	Prairie School for Union Women	Waskesiu

Want to stay up to date on what's happening with labour? You can receive copies of our monthly e-newsletter the **SFL Mobilizer**. It contains urgent updates, important deadlines, and a few timely articles of interest. Just send an e-mail to [sfl@sfl.sk.ca](mailto:sfl@sfl.sk.ca) and we'll add you to the list.

## Union Made Directory

The SFL's *Union Made Directory* lists the goods and services provided by Saskatchewan unions.

Click on "Buy Union" at [www.sfl.sk.ca](http://www.sfl.sk.ca) to check it out.

If you know of unionized services or goods that need to be added, please forward the information to us.

Union-made products add value for our communities. Take the time to find and use union-made products and services!

