

Annual Meeting Canadian Committee on Labour History, University of Waterloo, Ontario, 30 May 2012

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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MINUTES / PROCÈS-VERBAL

Annual Meeting
Canadian Committee on Labour History
University of Waterloo, Ontario, 30 May 2012

IN ATTENDANCE

Alvin Finkel,
Greg Kealey,
Ben Isitt,
Jeff Taylor,
Kathy Killoh,
Bryan Palmer,
Joan Sangster,
Jennifer Anderson,
Myron Momryk,
Donica Belisle,
Craig Heron,
Jason Russell,
Linda Kadis,
John Price,
Janis Thiessen,
Richard Allen,
Marcia Braundy.

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm, with President Alvin Finkel in the chair.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Bryan Palmer moved that the agenda be approved as presented, seconded by Donica Belisle.

CARRIED unanimously

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

Janis Thiessen moved that the Minutes of the 2011 Annual Meeting be approved as presented, seconded by Bryan Palmer.

CARRIED unanimously

BUSINESS ARISING

The President informed the committee that business arising from last year's minutes would be dealt with under specific items on the agenda.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Alvin Finkel provided his President's Report.

He noted the recipients of the 2012 Eugene A. Forsey Prize in Canadian Labour and Working-Class History:

Jessica van Horssen was awarded the graduate prize for her doctoral dissertation, defended at the University of Waterloo in 2010, "Asbestos, Quebec: The Town, the Mineral, and the Local-Global Balance between the Two."

Alison McMahon was awarded the undergraduate prize for her essay, "Fair Play for Cuba: the British Columbia Left Greets the Cuban Revolution, 1959–1965," completed at the University of British Columbia in 2011.

The president advised that no CCLH workshop took place at this year's Congress due to a lack of organizers in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

The President's report was tabled temporarily pending consideration of other matters of business.

EDITOR'S REPORT

Bryan Palmer provided his report as Editor of the journal *Labour/Le Travail*.

The journal remains in very good financial shape, as does the relationship with Athabasca University (AU Press).

Dr. Palmer thanked staff at AU Press, including Kathy Killoh, and thanked Donica Belise for assuming the role of Book Review Editor. He also thanked Alvin Finkel for his prior service as Book Review Editor.

According to Dr. Palmer, the biggest challenge facing *L/LT* is declining print subscriptions to the journal, a problem facing other journals.

He suggested that the committee focus on enhancing the journal's digital presence and revenues while maintaining print subscriptions at the current level.

He noted that the journal is always looking for new submissions and said that the field is increasingly a cross-over field, focused on a broad conception of class, conjoined with other categories of analysis (race, gender, ethnicity, place/region).

He noted the decline in younger scholars defining themselves as labour historians per se, which presents both strengths and challenges to the journal.

The challenge is to continue to present the journal as a compelling and important place to publish their work.

The journal would like to increase the volume of submissions to the journal.

Dr. Palmer reported that the release of the current issue of the journal has been delayed (a rare occurrence), but will be released by the summer.

The committee accepted the Editor's Report as presented.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (RESUMED)

Alvin Finkel resumed his President's Report.

Dr. Finkel asked for volunteers to serve on the Forsey Prize committees for 2013.

Turning to the CCLH publications series, Dr. Finkel noted that four titles had been added to the "Working Canadians" series, published jointly by CCLH and AU Press and edited by Greg Kealey and Alvin Finkel:

Eric Strikwerda, *The Wages of Relief: Cities and the Unemployed in Prairie Canada, 1929–39*

David Frank, *Provincial Solidarities: A History of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour* (aussi traduit en français par Réjean Ouellette)

Carmela Patrias and Larry Savage, *Union Power: Solidarity and Struggle in Niagara*

Alvin Finkel, *Working People in Alberta: A History*

Dr. Finkel also drew the committee's attention to two additional works in the field published by AU Press:

Todd McCallum, *Hobohemia and the Crucifixion Machine: Rival Images of a New World in 1930s Vancouver*.

Jason Russell, *Our Union: UAW/CAW Local 27 from 1950 to 1990*.

A fulsome discussion followed the President's Report, centring on the publishing arm of the CCLH and related works published by AU Press.

Greg Kealey said that the CCLH series had been created to provide a means for publishing works in labour history that required a subsidy distinct from the ASPP grant.

Bryan Palmer spoke to the value of maintaining a separation between the CCLH series and other labour-oriented scholarly works published by AU Press. He reiterated the original intention of the series was to support the publication of those works outside the conventional ASPP scholarly publication process.

Alvin Finkel said that *Working People in Alberta* was published with the aid of other external funding.

Marcia Braundy drew the committee's attention to a work she recently published in the field with Fernwood Publishing and inquired about possible future linkages between the CCLH and labour-related works published by other publishers.

Alvin Finkel further discussed the relationship between the CCLH and AU Press.

Craig Heron said he agreed with Bryan Palmer that the distinct identity of the CCLH series should be preserved.

Kathy Killoh discussed the focus of the CCLH series on accessible works appealing to a wide public audience.

Committee members discussed financial aspects of *The Wages of Relief*.

Ben Isitt discussed the possibility of the CCLH developing a scholarly labour history series distinct from the original CCLH series.

Joan Sangster discussed the benefits of AU Press developing a scholarly labour history series, building from works currently on its list in this area.

Greg Kealey discussed the distinction between ASPP-supported works and works published by a "vanity press."

Bryan Palmer warned of the danger of developing a CCLH-AU Press series that would be perceived as somehow inferior to other works.

Kathy Killoh said AU Press would be open to developing a series in labour history.

Janis Thiessen supported exploring the idea of a CCLH imprint or endorsement on ASPP-funded scholarly works published by AU Press.

Alvin Finkel concluded the discussion by speaking to the benefits of the popular orientation of works in the CCLH series.

The committee accepted the President's Report.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Greg Kealey provided the Treasurer's Report.

He discussed the two branches of CCLH financing: *Labour/Le Travail* financing and other CCLH operations.

Speaking to *L/LT*, he said that print subscription revenues were down from previous years, alongside a small decline in the SSHRC grant, while other revenues were up, primarily royalties and other electronic payments. Electronic providers JSTOR and Project Muse were bringing in substantial new revenue.

In terms of other CCLH operations, there were limited incidental expenditures as well as subsidies to AU Press to support the CCLH book series.

Greg Kealey concluded his report saying that the CCLH was in very good financial shape.

He said that this financial situation put the CCLH in the position of being able to support new initiatives, stating that if committee "members have good ideas, we can do good things." He suggested that CCLH funds could be used to leverage other funds as well.

The committee accepted the Treasurer's Report.

CCLH WEBSITE REPORT

Alvin Finkel discussed improvements to the CCLH website, to create a more dynamic and up-to-date website with a view toward increased visitors and greater awareness of the CCLH and the field of labour history in Canada.

Pursuant to a decision at the 2011 annual meeting, a committee including the President and Secretary had met and was proposing to expand funds on the improvement of the site, including a change in website hosting to facilitate ongoing content management.

Ben Isitt elaborated on the proposal and the longer-term vision of a "Canadian Social History Portal," which would provide a digital platform and common protocol for scholars to publish their work as well as sources and

audio-visual materials.

Marcia Braundy spoke to the benefits of Open Source and open access to the website.

Joan Sangster said that revitalizing the CCLH website could help to revitalize the CCLH itself. She provided the example of the Labor and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA), which attracts considerable traffic, including a large and dynamic teaching section. Dr. Sangster spoke to the benefits of including teaching modules and other resources on an enhanced CCLH website or "Labour History Portal."

Jennifer Anderson agreed with the benefits of a teaching component, including examining historicalthinking.ca. She also spoke to the benefit of co-operating with archivists to develop the website.

Jennifer Anderson agreed to serve on the CCLH website working group.

MOTION: Alvin Finkel moved, seconded by Bryan Palmer, that the CCLH expend up to \$2000 on web design and up to \$500 on web hosting for the CCLH website.

Marcia Braundy discussed the server system for KootenayFeminism.ca, proposing that lower cost or in-kind hosting options be explored.

Craig Heron spoke to the benefits of a Wordpress-powered site, to facilitate ease of access.

John Price spoke to the benefits of an institutional support system for website design and hosting.

Kathy Killoh discussed the benefits of translation in Canada's official languages.

Greg Kealey discussed the possibility of hosting the site at the University of New Brunswick and said he would inquire and report back to the CCLH Secretary on this matter.

On being put to a vote, the motion

CARRIED unanimously

CCLH WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

Alvin Finkel discussed planning for the 2013 CCLH Workshop at the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences in Victoria, BC. He said that Ben Isitt had agreed to serve as organizer of the workshop.

Dr. Finkel discussed the timing of the workshop and proposed holding a half-day mini-conference on the final day of the CHA, to increase turnout

and integrate the content into the CHA program, with the benefit of greater proximity to the annual meetings of associations of sociologists, anthropologists, and Socialist Studies.

Discussion followed on the timing and focus of the workshop.

Craig Heron said that he was not enthusiastic about shifting to the end of the CHA, speaking to the benefit of holding the event on a Sunday so that working people from the community could attend.

Joan Sangster said that the CHA program committee may be reluctant to accommodate a CCLH mini-conference during the CHA because of scheduling conflict with other sessions. She also spoke to the benefit of joint sponsorship with other groups, such as *Studies in Political Economy*.

Janis Thiessen discussed events at the 2012 CHA meeting that occurred within the CHA program, including a half-day mini-conference organized by Active History on the “War of 1812.”

Marcia Braundy said that based on her involvement with the labour movement in BC, there could be considerable interest among labour leaders and activists, including those from the BC Federation of Labour and the Victoria Labour Council.

Ben Isitt asked for input on the thematic content for the Workshop.

Bryan Palmer discussed the CCLH’s consistently broad conception of class, which informed the workshop in past years. He said that the success of the workshop and attendance would depend more on on-the-ground organizing than on theme or topic.

Committee members discussed the success of the Winnipeg workshop in 2004, held at the Ukrainian Labour Temple with David Montgomery was a guest speaker.

Craig Heron discussed the benefit of a topic relating to the BC election, which is scheduled to take place two weeks prior to Congress 2013, possibly a panel on the “Politics of Labour.”

Bryan Palmer proposed that a committee work with Ben Isitt on the CCLH workshop.

Alvin Finkel, Craig Heron, Marcia Braundy and Ben Isitt agreed to serve as a program committee for the 2013 CCLH Workshop.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Secretary temporarily assumed the chair to conduct the election of CCLH President.

The Secretary asked for nominations for the office of President of the CCLH.

Craig Heron nominated Alvin Finkel, seconded by Greg Kealey.

The Secretary asked three times whether there were any further nominations.

There being none, he declared Alvin Finkel acclaimed as President of the CCLH [applause].

The President re-assumed the chair.

The President asked for nominations for the office of Vice-President of the CCLH.

Greg Kealey nominated Janis Thiessen, seconded by Jeff Taylor.

The President asked three times whether there were any further nominations.

There being none, Janis Thiessen was acclaimed as Vice-President of the CCLH [applause].

OTHER DISCUSSIONS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Craig Heron drew the committee's attention to a greater openness within the Ontario Heritage Trust to rectify the current dearth of labour-oriented plaques within its inventory, and encouraged committee members to communicate with the Trust supporting the commemoration of more labour-oriented content.

Alvin Finkel drew the committee's attention to the upcoming Alberta Labour History Conference, taking place in Edmonton on 12–14 June 2012.

Janis Thiessen drew committee members' attention to a protest occurring that evening at Waterloo City Hall at 8pm, in opposition to Quebec's Bill 87, emergency legislation restraining the right to protest and imposing fines with a view toward breaking the post-secondary students' strike against proposed tuition-fee increases.

Joan Sangster drew the committee's attention to the upcoming North-Eastern Regional Conference of the Labour and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA), taking place in Lower Manhattan, USA, from 6–8 June 2013. Dr. Sangster also noted the formation of a LAWCHA "Global Issues" committee.

There being no further business, Greg Kealey moved that the meeting adjourn, seconded by Janis Thiessen.

CARRIED unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 1:16pm.