Winter 2016

Union Library Worker Blog, 2016 Review

Sarah Barriage, Rutgers University - New Brunswick/Piscataway
Elaine Harger, Washington Middle School
Kathleen de la Peña McCook, University of South Florida

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/sarah-barriage/12/
January 5, 2016
Library Workers Picket in Beverly, Massachusetts

Library workers in Beverly, MA were among the city workers picketing outside an event featuring an address from the mayor. The workers are currently without a contract, and have stated that the mayor has been slow to begin the bargaining process.

January 7, 2016
New Contract for Elk Grove Library Workers, Illinois

Library workers in Elk Grove Village Public Library in Illinois have ratified a new four year contract that includes salary increases. The library workers are represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.


January 13, 2016
New Contract for Peterborough Library Workers, Ontario

Library workers at Peterborough Public Library have a new four-year contract with city administration. The collective agreement includes a wage freeze for 2016, with increased wages in subsequent years. The workers are represented by CUPE Local 1833.


Strike Vote in Lambeth, England

Library workers in Lambeth, a borough of London, England, have voted in favor of strike action as part of their campaign to protest the closure of library branches, as well as plans to turn some branches into health centers operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited. The workers are represented by UNISON.


January 17, 2016
Vancouver Island Regional Library Workers Reach Tentative Agreement, British Columbia

Workers at Vancouver Island Regional Library have reached a tentative agreement on a new contract. The workers, represented by CUPE Local 401, had voted in favor of strike action back in December if an agreement could not be reached. However, strike action was not necessary after a mediator became involved in the bargaining sessions. The contract has yet to be ratified.
January 18, 2016
Petition Filed to Save Scottish School Libraries, Scotland

UNISON has backed a petition submitted to the government of Scotland asking for school libraries to be protected from planned cuts. East Renfrewshire Council has put forward a proposal that would reduce library services by fifty percent, cutting both library hours and librarian positions.


January 22, 2016
New Contract for Belleville Public Library Workers, Illinois

Library workers in Belleville, IL have a new three year collective agreement that includes wage increases.

http://www.belleville.net/DocumentCenter/View/532

January 29, 2016
2015 United States Union Membership Survey Released

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has released its annual report on union membership. Among its findings, in 2015:

• union membership was 11.1% – the same as in 2014
• 14.8 million workers belonged to a union
• workers in education, training, and library occupations had the second-highest unionization rate at 35.5% – up slightly from the 2014 rate of 35.3%

https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm

February 9, 2016
Planned Library Closures in Darlington, UK

Unite, the union representing library workers in the borough of Darlington, has spoken out against planned cuts to library services in that borough. The council has proposed closing two of the library branches in the borough as well as the library’s mobile service, which would also result in the loss of thirty staff positions.
Strike Possible at California State

Librarians, professors, and other faculty at California State University may go on a five-day strike in April if an agreement has not been reached with administration on a new collective agreement. The workers, represented by the California Faculty Association, are asking for a 5% raise for all workers, as well as an additional raise of 2.65% for those at the low end of the pay scale. The administration has offered a 2% pay increase.


February 10, 2016
Supporters Speak Up For Libraries in UK

Yesterday library staff, authors, and other library supporters gathered together at Central Hall Westminster in London as part of Speak Up For Libraries, a rally in protest of widespread funding cuts and closures of library services across the UK. After several speeches from various library supporters and a UNISON representative, attendees were encouraged to meet with their Members of Parliament in the House of Commons. Search the hashtag #SUFLlobby16 on Twitter for pictures and commentary on yesterday’s event.

Staff at several library systems, including Greenwich, Bromley, and Lambeth, are on strike this week in conjunction with yesterday’s protest. Tim O’Dell, a UNISON representative, said: “We’re closing the libraries for a day to fight for the future of the service.”

A library staff member was quoted as saying:

Libraries are a valuable community resource providing all sort of services. What replaces that if you take it away? These gyms will have a few shelves of books—that’s not a library service.

Various boroughs have proposed closing libraries, staffing remaining library branches with volunteers, and incorporating library services into “leisure centers” including gym facilities, in response to cuts in funding.

http://speakupforlibraries.org/sufl-lobby-2016/key-lobby-messages-sufllobby16/

https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/42151/The+best+way+to+defend+union+rights+is+to+strike+like+Lambeth+library+workers

**February 19, 2016**

New Contract for Thompson-Nicola Regional District Library Workers, British Columbia

Workers at the Thompson-Nicola Regional District Library System in British Columbia have ratified a new three-year contract that includes wage increases. The workers are represented by BC Government and Service Employees’ Union.

http://www.cfjctoday.com/article/513334/tnrd-library-staff-agree-three-year-pact

**February 23, 2016**

Budget Cuts at National Library of Australia

Coming budget cuts at the National Library of Australia are expected to result in the elimination of at least twenty staff positions and reduced services, including cancellation of subscriptions. Additionally, some services may be outsourced. Community and Public Sector Union deputy secretary Beth Vincent-Pietsch stated:

> What’s become clear from our meetings is that the cuts to jobs and programs that have been announced so far are only the start of the process. We expect all of these agencies to be forced to make further cuts. The government needs to recognise the long-term and in many cases permanent damage these cuts will do, and reverse them immediately so that Australia’s cultural heritage can be kept alive.

The reduction in funding from the Australian government will result in similar measures being taken at other Australian cultural institutions, including National Museum of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, Museum of Australian Democracy, National Film and Sound Archive, and National Gallery of Australia.

National Archives Workers Reject Enterprise Agreement, Australia

Workers at the National Archives of Australia have rejected an offered enterprise agreement from the government for the first time in its history. According to the press release issued by the Community and Public Sector Union, the agreement would have removed workers’ “important rights and conditions.” The archives has been under a wage freeze for the past 18 months.

http://www.cpsu.org.au/content/national-archives-staff-vote-70-no-deal

February 24, 2016
New Contract for Woburn Public Library Workers, Massachusetts

Workers at Woburn Public Library have a new four year contract, retrospective to July 2014 that includes wage increases.


New Contract for Lethbridge Library Workers, Alberta

Workers at Lethbridge Public Library have a new four-year contract, retrospective to January 2015. The workers are represented by CUPE Local 70.

http://www.lethbridge.ca/NewsCentre/Pages/Agreement-with-Library-staff-ratified.aspx

February 26, 2016
Strike at Bolton College, England

Bolton College was closed on Wednesday as library workers, lecturers, and support staff went on strike amid proposals for a wage freeze. The workers are represented by UNISON and University and College Union.

http://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/14298798.College_staff_strike_over_pay_dispute/?ref=arc

March 3, 2016
The Precarity Monster, Ontario

The Toronto Public Library Workers Union has created a video addressing the issue of precarious work in their library system (see below). This issue
is of central concern to the contract negotiations currently ongoing between the union and the city of Toronto. Maureen O’Reilly, president of the union, has stated:

We’re a female-dominated workplace. Precarious work hurts women, racialized workers and youth the most. We have given generously to the City’s fiscal responsibility — saving money off the backs of the most vulnerable workers in the library is just no longer acceptable.

Library supporters are encouraged to email the Chair of the Toronto Public Library Board to voice their concern with the lack of stable, full-time positions at Toronto’s libraries.


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vf2FTAuZK68

March 9, 2016
New Publication: The Role of the Union in Promoting Social Justice

*Perspectives on Libraries as Institutions of Human Rights and Social Justice*, edited by Ursula Gorham, Natalie Greene Taylor, and Paul Jaeger, has recently been published by Emerald as part of the Advances in Librarianship series. It includes a chapter titled “The Role of the Union in Promoting Social Justice” by Sarah Barriage that draws from the news items included in this blog.


Center for Labor Education & Research Winner of Sessions Memorial Award, Hawaii

This year’s winner of the John Sessions Memorial Award is the Center for Labor Education and Research at the University of Hawai’i West O’ahu. From the award committee: “The mission of the labor archive at the Center for Labor Education and Research (CLEAR) is to preserve labor history materials for future generations, protect the artifacts and make them accessible for public use, and defend the importance of working class history.” The John Sessions Memorial Award is presented by the Reference and User Services Association of the American Library Association.
http://www.hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/home/


March 13, 2016
Toronto Public Library Workers Vote for Strike Action, Ontario

Members of Toronto Public Library Workers Union (CUPE Local 4948) have voted in favor of strike action as contract negotiations with the city continue. One of the major issues for the union is the increasing number of precarious positions in the library system.


Plymouth State University Faculty File Petition to Join Union, New Hampshire

Faculty at Plymouth State University have filed a petition to join the American Association of University Professors. Gary McCool, a librarian at the university, said:

The entire university community benefits when faculty are empowered to help ensure the quality of education at PSU by having fairly negotiated, legally binding policies and conditions of employment.

An election is anticipated to be held in the coming months.


March 23, 2016
Information Picket at Windsor Public Library, Ontario

Workers at Windsor Public Library held an information picket earlier this week amidst ongoing contract negotiations. If an agreement is not reached with the library administration today, the library workers may be on strike tomorrow. The workers are members of CUPE Local 2067.

March 24, 2016
Owens Community College Faculty Association Takes Pay Cut, Ohio

Library workers, child care workers, counselors, and other faculty at Owens Community College in Ohio have agreed to a new collective agreement that includes salary cuts and the elimination of overload and summer pay. The college is under a fiscal watch after enrollment has declined significantly, and members of the faculty association have agreed to the reduction in compensation “in order to continue to provide this important education to students in our community”, according to the faculty association president.


Deal Reached at Windsor Public Library, Ontario

Library workers at Windsor Public Library, members of CUPE Local 2067, have reached a tentative agreement with the library administration, averting strike action. The union and administration met with a provincial mediator before reaching the agreement.


March 28, 2016
Strike in Lambeth, England

Library workers in Lambeth held a two-day strike last week in protest of planned branch closures. The workers were joined by UNISON members from nearby districts, as well as supporters from the community. The planned closures in Lambeth echo a troubling trend in the UK of library closures, conversion of library spaces to exercise facilities, and reliance on volunteers to run library services.


March 31, 2016
Ruling in Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association

The Supreme Court of the United States ruled in Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association earlier this week, resulting in a 4-4 deadlock that
upheld an appellate court decision that the collection of fair-share or agency fees from employees who choose not to join a union is constitutional.


Mass Lay-offs at Argentina’s National Library

Two hundred and fifty workers at Argentina’s National Library, a quarter of its current staff, have been laid off. It is expected that many of the library’s services, including publishing and digitization projects, will not be able to continue operating with the reductions in staffing.


Supervisors Removed from Saskatoon Library Union, Saskatchewan

Workers in supervisory positions at Saskatoon Public Library will no longer be a part of CUPE Local 2669, the union that represents the library’s workers. The library’s administration is taking advantage of the Saskatchewan Employment Act, which allows supervisors to be excluded from joining bargaining units. The CEO of Saskatoon Public Library has stated that the workers in these supervisory positions will be able to form their own bargaining unit, separate from that representing the other library workers.


How Much Are Toronto’s Librarians Worth? Ontario

Union president Maureen O’Reilly says the time has come for the city to treat its library workers properly.


April 2, 2016
Chicago Teachers Union Holds One-Day Strike, Illinois
Teachers, librarians, and educational support staff at Chicago Public Schools held a one-day strike yesterday, closing schools as they held a massive demonstration amid ongoing funding and contract negotiations. School administration have filed a complaint against the Chicago Teachers Union, arguing that the strike was illegal.

For more articles, photographs, and commentary on yesterday’s events, check out #CTUStrike on Twitter.


April 7, 2016
Association of Teachers and Lecturers Calls for School Library Inspections, England

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers, the union representing education professionals in the United Kingdom, passed a motion calling for inspection of school libraries by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, citing reductions in library collections and decreasing library staff. The individual who proposed the motion stated:

How can you have a school without a library? Libraries are a mirror of the societies in which we live and grow. Should that be forgotten, ignored or disregarded, then it will reflect badly on everything that is truly good about education in its widest sense.


Bristol Library Workers Vote in Favor of Strike, England

Library assistants in Bristol have voted in favor of strike action in response to the closure of one of the city’s libraries and the reduction of hours at the remaining six libraries. The changes in hours of operation has resulted in changes to the library assistants’ work schedules. The workers are members of UNISON.

http://www.bristol247.com/channel/news-comment/daily/politics/bristol-library-staff-to-strike-over-hours

April 13, 2016
Read-In At Toronto Reference Library, Ontario
Members of the Toronto Public Library Workers Union (CUPE Local 4948) held a read-in at the Toronto Reference Library earlier this week. Authors, library patrons and library supporters also participated in the event. The union is currently in negotiations with the library board. One of the most pressing issues facing workers in the Toronto library system is the high rate of precarious employees.


New Contract for Library Workers in Mahoning County, Pennsylvania

Librarians and library assistants at the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County have a new four year contract that includes bonuses and wage increases. Other library employees, including clerical and maintenance staff, are represented by a separate bargaining unit and are still in negotiations with the library administration.


April 16, 2016
Toronto Library Workers Request No Board Report, Ontario

Toronto Public Library Workers Union (CUPE Local 4948) has requested a no board report with the Ontario Labour Ministry after failing to come to an agreement on a new contract with the library board. The library workers may soon be in a strike position.


April 27, 2016
New Contract for Castlegar Library Workers, British Columbia

Library workers at Castlegar & District Public Library have a new four-year contract retroactive to January 2015 that includes wage increases and improved benefits. The library workers are represented by CUPE 2262.


Pay Equity Payout for Peterborough Public Library Workers, Ontario
Women workers at Peterborough Public Library are set to receive a payout totaling $845,400 in a pay equity settlement after the completion of a review comparing their wages to those of men in male-dominated jobs with the city. The library workers are represented by CUPE Local 1833.


“A Portrait of Failure” — Union Report on Australia’s Cultural Institutions, Australia

Australia’s Community and Public Sector Union has released a report detailing the effects of budget cuts on libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions. The full report, titled “A Portrait of Failure: Ongoing Funding Cuts to Australia’s Cultural Institutions”, can be viewed on the union’s website. The budget cuts have negatively impacted digitization projects, staffing levels, opening hours, and exhibitions. In the accompanying press release, the deputy secretary of the union said:

The people who work in these institutions are dedicated to carefully searching out, preserving, nurturing and displaying the very best of us. Whether it is our fine art or our comic relief, our iconic films or our oral history, our war memories or our family ancestry, we all need our cultural institutions to continue preserving our past and protecting our cultural heritage.


http://www.cpsu.org.au/content/efficiency-dividend-gutting-national-cultural-institutions

April 28, 2016

Raises for Taunton Public Library Workers, Massachusetts

Workers at Taunton Public Library will receive wage increases after a review found their wages were much lower than those of workers at comparable libraries nearby, with the differences ranging from 22% to 26%. Beginning with their new contract that takes effect July 1, library workers will receive incremental pay increases that will, over time, bring their salaries more in line with those of library workers in nearby communities.

http://www.tauntongazette.com/article/20160427/NEWS/160426267
Bristol Library Workers Strike, England

Library workers in Bristol, England went on strike earlier this week in protest of changes to their work schedules. Due to changes to the libraries’ opening hours, workers will be scheduled to work an increased number of shorter shifts. Bristol City Council chose to shorten the libraries’ opening hours instead of closing library branches in order to save money. The workers are represented by UNISON.


Tentative Deal for Toronto Public Library Workers, Ontario

Toronto Public Library Workers Union (CUPE Local 4948) has reached a tentative agreement with the library administration on a new four-year contract. The union engaged in a number of activities over the past few weeks to raise awareness and community support, including a public opinion poll and a Teddy Bears Picket. One of the biggest issues for the union was the precarious nature of work in the library system. Details of the contract are not currently available.


May 8, 2016
Accusation of Union Busting in Newfoundland, Canada

The Canadian Union of Public Employees has accused the government of Newfoundland and Labrador of union busting in response to recently announced changes to library services. Fifty-four of the provinces’ public library branches are slated to close over the next two years, resulting in sixty employees losing their jobs. The education minister recently announced that volunteers and student workers may be asked to staff school libraries during the evenings in order to provide some services to the communities left without a public library branch. Dawn Lahey, head of CUPE Local 2329, said: “What a slap in the face to someone. Not only union busting, but it’s a slap in the face to someone who’s given their life to that library.”


May 11, 2016
Information Picket at Washington-Centerville Public Library, Ohio

Library workers at Washington-Centerville Public Library organized an information picket earlier this week in order to inform the public about their concerns with the library administration’s “stall tactics”. Six years
ago, the workers voted to form the Washington Centerville Public Library Staff Association but have yet to negotiate a contract.

http://www.whio.com/news/library-employees-plan-picket-tonight/6DmWvJEJbraUYVMEMTnKmO/

2015 Union Review Available Online

The latest annual union review, “‘A Seat at the Table’: 2015 Union Review”, based on posts on this blog, was recently published in issue 44 of Progressive Librarian.


May 25, 2016
CUPE Local 4705 Requests Provincial Conciliation, Ontario

CUPE Local 4705, the union representing library and other city workers in Sudbury, ON, has requested a provincial conciliator after negotiations with the city proved unsuccessful. The workers have been without a contract since March 31.


Show of Solidarity for Universal College of Learning Library Workers, New Zealand

On Monday, library staff at the Universal College of Learning in New Zealand were joined by workers from nearby libraries and schools in a show of solidarity in response to planned job cuts as a result of restructuring at the college. The workers are represented by the Tertiary Education Union.


Strike in Lewisham, England

Library workers in the London borough of Lewisham went on strike on Saturday in response to plans to close four of the borough’s library branches. The workers, members of UNISON, were joined by library workers from Lambeth as well as community library supporters.
May 26, 2016
United Teachers of Wichita Vote to Shorten School Year, Kansas

United Teachers of Wichita has voted in favor of shortening the overall school year and lengthening each school day in response to state budget cuts. The alternative option that the union is trying to avoid is the elimination of some librarian, data leader, and custodial positions. The changes to the school year are pending approval from the district school board.

http://kmuw.org/post/wichita-teachers-vote-lengthen-school-days-shorten-year

June 11, 2016
Concerns over Lay-Offs at University of Manitoba Libraries, Canada

The union representing library workers at the University of Manitoba has expressed concern after a quarter of the library’s staff have been let go since the beginning of the year. According to the union president, this reduction in staff will make it difficult for the library to continue to serve their community during the upcoming academic year. The university president has argued that the increasingly electronic nature of library services has lessened the need for librarians. The library workers are represented by the Association of Employees Supporting Education Services.


Labor Programming at ALA Annual, U.S.

At the upcoming ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee will be hosting a session entitled “Building Stronger Libraries Through Collective Action” on Monday, June 27th at 10:30 AM in OCCC Room W101B. From the conference program:

A century after the first library workers union was founded, library workers continue to work within labor unions to improve wages and working conditions. Unions also advocate on behalf of library employers, coordinating campaigns with library administrations to protect and increase funding and awareness.
Speakers will highlight examples of labor-management collaborations for library advocacy, service enhancements, and share strategies and outline legal protections for those looking to form a union and organize through social media.

Additionally, all are invited to attend the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee annual meeting on Saturday, June 25th at 10:30am, OCCC Room W234, and to stop by Booth #2209 in the exhibition hall.


VIDEO: CUPE Launches TV Ad Campaign in Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada

The Canadian Union of Public Employees, the union that represents library workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, will be launching a TV campaign next week to protest the recently announced decision to close 54 of the province’s libraries.

While the province maintains that the closures and resulting lay-offs are necessary due to budget cuts, one of the CUPE ads contrasts the anticipated $1 million in savings with the $1.4 million in severance the province will be paying a former CEO of Nalcor, a provincial energy corporation.

Contact information for the province’s education minister as well as a template email protesting the closures are available via the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association website.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Sk-rcTHDbU

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdeY2qwt9G4


CUPE 561 Voices Concern Over New Management Structure, British Columbia

Members of CUPE Local 561 have voiced concerns over planned changes to the management structure of Coquitlam Public Library. The library director has argued that the addition of six new managerial positions is necessary in order to engage in more outreach and more technology-oriented services.
The union is concerned with the amount of money that will be spent on these positions instead of being spent on books and other library resources. 

**June 15, 2016**

**Barnet Library Workers Strike in Protest of Plans for Unstaffed Libraries, England**

Barnet Council library workers are on strike once again in continued protest of planned changes to library services and staff hours. The council is facing serious budget cuts, and in response has plans to keep libraries open to the public without library staff present. They hope to accomplish this by staffing the libraries with volunteers and installing self-service equipment as well as security cameras. Children under the age of 15 years will be unable to make use of these unstaffed locations unless accompanied by an adult. Barnet Council hopes these measures will save £2.85 million.

Six of Barnet’s library branches were closed this week as a result of the strike. Barnet library workers are represented by UNISON.

http://www.nlhnews.co.uk/article.cfm?id=111066&headline=Six%20libraries%20closed%20as%20staff%20go%20on%20strike&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016

http://www.times-series.co.uk/news/14556223.Unison_members_strike_over__drastic__changes_to__library_services/

**Unity Break Held at Berkeley Public Library, California**

Members of SEIU 1021 participated in a “unity break” to protest issues with the management of Berkeley Public Library. Workers and administration have disagreed on the process of weeding the library’s collection for some time. The former director of the library resigned after it became public that an exponentially larger number of items had been removed from the library’s collection than had been announced. It has been alleged that a current library worker is being terminated in retaliation for disclosing the accurate number of items removed from the collection. A union spokesperson said:

> One of the core tenets of librarianship is intellectual freedom. That the people who brought that to light are being punished instead of rewarded is shameful.
Unfair Labor Charge Filed Against Washington-Centerville Public Library, Ohio

The union representing workers at Washington-Centerville Public Library has filed an unfair labor charge with the State Employment Relations Board in response to what union members have characterized as “punishment” for employees taking sick and family leave.

Library administration is set to begin bargaining sessions with the Washington-Centerville Public Library Staff Association this week. The union formed six years ago but has yet to negotiate their first contract.

Pay Equity for New Brunswick School Library Workers, Canada

School library workers, educational assistants, administrative assistants, and intervention workers in the New Brunswick education system will be receiving pay equity increases after an evaluation found that these female-dominated positions had lower salaries in comparison to other positions. The workers, represented by CUPE Local 2745, will receive back pay for the past four years and additional increases over the next six years.

Information Pickets at Newfoundland Libraries, Canada

Library workers in Newfoundland held information pickets across the province yesterday in order to make their communities aware of upcoming planned location closures. Fifty-four libraries in Newfoundland are set to close over the next two years, resulting in the loss of sixty jobs. The library workers are represented by CUPE Local 2329.
Essex County Library Workers on Strike, Ontario

Workers at Essex County Library in Ontario have been on strike since Saturday, June 25. At issue for the workers are proposed changes to policies related to short-term disability and sick leave. The library system has 14 library branches and 58 workers who are represented by CUPE Local 2974. According to the union unit chair: “Management and the county created a phantom issue to push workers out on the picket line – sick time is not a problem at our workplace and the employer and the county know this and have acknowledged it.”


https://cupe.ca/essex-county-library-workers-strike-fair-contract

New Contract for Sudbury Library Workers, Ontario

Library workers in Sudbury, Ontario are among the city’s inside and outside workers who have ratified a new three-year contract after bringing in a provincial conciliator. The workers are represented by CUPE Local 4705.


Plans to Close 54 Newfoundland Libraries Suspended, Canada

Dale Kirby, education minister of Newfoundland and Labrador, has announced that the planned closure of 54 library branches in that province has been suspended until an external review is completed. According to Kirby, public concern over the plans to close rural library branches and lay off library employees has prompted the suspension. CUPE Local 2329, the union representing Newfoundland’s public library workers, has held information pickets, ran TV ads, and encouraged members of the community to make their opposition to the planned closures heard.


Strike Over at National Museum of Wales
A “long-running dispute” at the National Museum of Wales over weekend payments appears to have been settled after the museum workers accepted the administration’s latest offer. In the past, museum workers were paid a premium for working on weekends, but the museum no longer wants to pay this premium. The accepted offer includes a 4% wage increase and a lump sum payout equal to five years’ worth of premium payments, and comes after workers have been striking periodically for the last two years. The workers are represented by Public and Commercial Services Union.


Strike Vote in Mississauga, Ontario

Library workers in Mississauga have voted in favor of strike action and may be on the picket lines on July 4. The workers, members of CUPE Local 1989, have cited low wages and the precarious nature of many library positions as issues needing to be addressed in the collective agreement currently under negotiation.

http://1989.cupe.ca/2016/07/01/mississauga-library-workers-vote-to-strike/

July 4, 2016
Mississauga Library Workers on Strike, Ontario

Library workers in Mississauga, ON are on strike, closing all 18 library branches. The workers are represented by CUPE Local 1989.


July 7, 2016
Plymouth Library Workers Protest Glass Ceiling, Massachusetts

Library workers at Plymouth Public Library have been handing out pamphlets and wearing buttons that read “End the Glass Ceiling: Library Staff are Town Employees Too”. The pamphlets additionally state the following: “As a predominantly female group, we believe we are being discriminated against on the basis of gender through the town’s refusal to provide wages and benefits that are provided by it to predominantly male and mixed gender employee groups.”
The union has pointed out that positions at the library that require a university education pay less than positions elsewhere with the city that require a high school diploma only. Contract negotiations between the union and city administration are ongoing.


Greenwich Library Workers Stage 48-Hour Strike, England

The planned cancellation of a mobile book service has prompted Greenwich library workers to strike for 48 hours this week. Over the last year, the mobile book service delivered 33,000 books to area children at schools and child-care centers. A Unite official said:

Literacy is a fundamental human right and anything that erodes that life chance should be strongly opposed. Good reading skills are the key to decent employment in adulthood – so the blinkered actions of the council need to be condemned.

http://www.union-news.co.uk/battle-of-the-books-as-greenwich-library-workers-go-on-strike/

Library Workers in Ireland Vote on Industrial Action

Library workers in twelve counties in Ireland were asked to vote on industrial action after plans were announced to amalgamate library services. IMPACT, the union representing the library workers, has stated that the workers and other relevant officials were not properly consulted about the plans, which could leave some counties without a librarian and force workers to travel long distances to get to their new workplace. In total, 87% of the library workers voted in favor of industrial action. The affected counties include: Carlow, Cavan, Cork City, Cork County, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Longford, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo and Westmeath.


**July 8, 2016**

CUPE Shows Support for Striking Library Workers in Ontario, Canada
Striking library workers in Ontario received support from the provincial and national levels of the Canadian Union of Public Employees this week. CUPE officials attended a rally in support of workers at the Essex County Library system, who are members of CUPE Local 2974, as well as a solidarity barbecue for workers at Mississauga Library System, members of CUPE Local 1989. The president of CUPE Local 1989 said: “Knowing we have such tremendous support from our community allies and from CUPE Ontario and CUPE National is nothing short of amazing for us.” Essex library workers have been on strike since June 25. Workers from Mississauga began striking on July 4.


July 22, 2016
Tentative Agreement Reached for Mississauga Library Workers, Ontario

A tentative agreement has been reached between CUPE Local 1989, the union representing library workers in Mississauga, and the city. Details of the agreement won’t be available until it is ratified. The workers have been on strike since July 4.


August 10, 2016
AFSCME offers new member benefit — free college degree, U.S.

The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, a union that represents many library workers and librarians (mostly at public libraries) has just announced a joint venture with Eastern Gateway Community College for AFSCME members to earn an Associate Degree online...for FREE!


August 17, 2016
Library workers in Essex County, Ontario, on strike
Canadian Union of Public Employees urges end to strike.


CUPE Local 2974 https://www.facebook.com/Cupe2974Library/

**August 27, 2016**
School librarians disappearing from Chicago, Illinois

In 2012, Chicago Public Schools had 454 librarian positions in the budget. That dropped to 313 in 2013 and 252 in 2014. Last year there were 217 library positions in the budget. This year, there are just 160 librarians budgeted.

https://www.wbez.org/shows/wbez-news/librarians-continue-disappearing-from-chicago-schools/499ab8a5-b4fc-41e8-a4d2-a9ab68772597

Essex County library workers strike at two months, Ontario

The strike by Essex County library workers is now in its second month and the main stumbling block remains sick time.

http://windsor.ctvnews.ca/new-source-of-frustration-for-striking-essex-county-library-workers-1.3042538#

Ohio public library — 7 year organizing struggle

CENTERVILLE, Ohio (WDTN) – A local public library is spending thousands of dollars every year, not on books, but on legal bills. For more than 7 years, a group of employees at the Washington-Centerville Public Library have been trying to get a union up and running, but the library management claims it wasn’t done properly. This fight is costing tax payers thousands of dollars every year.

“The longer they fight the notion we should organize to support each other and ourselves, the more obvious it becomes that we must,” said Library Union Employee, Joyce Fisher


Union’s website: http://wcplsa.ohea.us
Union opposes LSSI in San Benito County Library, concerned about privatization, California

Mark Weirick, SEIU 521 union organizer, warned against the county working with LSSI, which he claimed had a reputation of taking over and privatizing libraries at the expense of communities and library employees.

http://benitolink.com/privatization-county-library-not-option-official-says

September 2, 2016
Lock-out threat at Long Island University, New York

A contract dispute between the union representing LIU Brooklyn faculty and the university’s administration has led to a planned lockout and threats for picketing, just as the fall semester is set to begin.


Union’s website: http://www.liuff.net

LIU lockout continues, New York

When Kiyonda Hester started the final year of her master’s program in social work, on Wednesday at Long Island University’s Brooklyn campus, an instructor began a course by acknowledging he was unqualified to teach it.

The temporary instructor, who is an administrator, told the students that he had to be there so he wouldn’t be fired, Ms. Hester said. He took attendance and noted that the syllabus had been posted online.

http://www.chronicle.com/article/As-Lockout-Continues-at-Long/237731

September 9, 2016
LIU librarian writes about lockout, New York

Locked out! And not backing down by Emily Drabinski

Four days before classes began — those days we usually use to prep for the new semester — the faculty at Long Island University-Brooklyn was locked out by management. It was an aggressive act, equal parts enraging,
terrifying, and sad. For me, a librarian, faculty member and secretary of LIU Faculty Federation, it feels like a betrayal, really, worse than when we went on strike five years ago. Here is what it’s been like on the ground, condensed from my blog, which I’ve kept from the beginning.

https://medium.com/voices-on-campus/liu-lockout-24a8a3c2fe20#.wg0u78yql

**September 14, 2016**
LIU Lockout Ends, New York

LOCKOUT OVER by E. Drabinski

Dear LIUFF Colleagues,

We have won a victory. The administration will end their unprecedented lockout effective 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, September 14. We will be reunited with our students and can resume our professional lives. Our collective bargaining agreement is extended until May 31, 2017, and the administration agreed to our condition that we engage a professional mediator to facilitate a fair contract. This timeframe gives us the opportunity to negotiate in good faith while preserving LIU Brooklyn.

The LIU administration will make the faculty whole for health care costs incurred during the lockout period. The union’s unfair labor practice complaints relating to the lockout and our arbitration on pay parity remain active and will be vigorously pursued.

Read more at: http://www.liuff.net/blog/2016/09/14/lockout-over/

Tentative contract agreement on Sunday openings - Rockford (IL) Public library, Illinois

ROCKFORD — The Rockford Public Library Board of Trustees approved a new three-year labor contract with employees tonight that opens the door to Sunday hours. All six branches of the city’s library system are closed on Sundays. Library leaders have long blamed that on contract language that requires them to pay time and a half to employees on Sundays. The higher wages imposed a potential financial burden that kept libraries closed on Sundays despite requests from the public.

On strike since June 25 - Essex County Library - CUPE, Ontario

The library strike in Essex County continues after contract negotiations once again fell apart.

Officials from the Essex County Library Board issued a statement Wednesday night, saying they spent another two days talking with CUPE Local 2974, but those discussions failed...


Emily Drabinski, secretary of Long Island University Faculty Federation wants to go back to work at the library.

September 17, 2016
Behind the Lockout, New York

BEHIND THE LOCKOUT
The Long Island University lockout is over. A rank-and-file librarian explains how faculty won and why it matters for public education around the country.

by Edna Bonhomme & Emily Drabinski


December 1, 2016
Janet Irwin of AFSCME Local 88 turns the page on 46-year library career, Oregon

Janet Irwin of AFSCME Local 88 turns the page on 46-year library career.

“I worked very hard getting library workers involved in Local 88,” said Irwin, who served as an elected vice president and secretary of Local 88, as well as a delegate to state and international AFSCME conventions.”

Janet Irwin retired Oct. 31 after 46 years as a librarian for Multnomah County. At the same time, she also surrendered her seat on the Executive Board of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, where she was the second most senior member.

Irwin has been a member of Multnomah County Employees AFSCME Local 88 for 26 years. Prior to that she was president and 20-year member of the independent Library Employees of Multnomah County. At that time, Portland-area libraries were privately operated by the Library Association of Portland, which received the bulk of its budget from public funds.

Read more about this intrepid union librarian at Northwest Labor Press:


December 27, 2016
LOCAL 1321 QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD — A Great Union, New York

A great union.

Executive Board 2016-2019

• President: John Hyslop
Library of Congress Professional Guild, AFSCME Local 2910, celebrates 40th anniversary in 2016

http://www.guild2910.org

National Labor Relations Board ruling, U.S.

The text of the National Labor Relations Board ruling that determines student workers at private universities have right to organize.


Union activism at Yale Libraries — In the family blood — One part of the story 12/01/2016, Conneticut

From New Haven Indy article:

Ruth Resnick’s family has lived that story for three generations. Back in 1970, when she worked at Sterling Memorial Library, Resnick joined an
ultimately unsuccessful effort to unionize clerical and technical workers through a group called the Yale Non-Faculty Action Committee, one of several organizing efforts that set the stage for the ultimately successful campaign by the union now known as UNITE HERE (then known as the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees). Resnick watched her late father Sid, who worked in Yale’s law school library, play an active role in the successful Local 34 organizing drive a decade later. Her mom Arlene walked a Local 34 picket line when she worked at the medical school. Wednesday night Resnick attended the City Hall rally with her son Gabe Johnson, who today is one of five Local 34 organizers at the School of Management. He’s keeping a family social justice tradition alive, Resnick said.


December 30, 2016

Christmas Day 2016 — Six months on strike in Ontario

Meet the defiant library workers waging one of the region’s longest strikes ever, by Anne Jarvis, *Windsor Star*

“...Wightman celebrated her 50th birthday on the picket line. Someone else celebrated a wedding anniversary; her husband joined her. At least one member lost her mother. Another lost an aunt.

The strike has been one of the toughest things many of these people have ever done.

Neumiller, who has two young children, pickets three times as many hours as she works — for less pay. One woman collapsed from heat stroke last summer. Now, ‘it’s pretty flippin’ cold out there,’ said Johnson. They all got glove warmers last week.”


Collective self-governance at University of Manitoba — a union issue, Canada

Beyond Bread and Butter, by Jen Hedler Phillis, *Jacobin Magazine*
When we think of strikes, we usually think of disputes over wages and benefits. Strikes make the case that it’s easier for bosses to pay workers more than to run a company without them. But unions often fight for more than money. Workers can walk off the job to demand new rights at work, fighting for control over their working conditions. The recent strike at University of Manitoba focused on these issues. At the end of negotiations, the provincial government intervened, demanding both parties sign a one-year contract with no wage increase. The University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA), which represents 1,200 full-time faculty and librarians, filed an unfair labor practice complaint.


Back to bargaining for Cape Breton University, Canada

Back to bargaining for Cape Breton University Faculty, by George Mortimer

Cape Breton University and the faculty association representing about 150 members are working to avoid a potential strike by heading back to the bargaining table next week.

The faculty association has been in a legal strike or lockout position since Monday following the filing of a report by conciliator Peter Lloyd and the expiration of a 14-day cooling-off period.

The association represents a variety of staff including librarians, research chairs and professors, among others.


Cape Breton University Faculty Association website: http://www.cbufa.ca/news2/

California state workers strike averted, contract vote January 4-17

State employees in California, SEIU Local 1000, which counts library workers among its 95,000 members, voted to strike in November if a tentative contract agreement was not reached. One has been, and it will be voted on in the upcoming weeks. Main sticking points in negotiations were salary increases, a demand from Gov. Brown that workers pay larger
percentage in retirement benefits, civil service reform, and gender pay disparities.

http://www.seiu1000.org


December 31, 2016

Happy New Year from Union Library Worker! Recommended acquisition for all library union activists and all library collections to support and inspire the social/workplace/environmental justice activists in your community!


Articles published in 2016 about union library workers:


Annual compilation of library worker union activism from the blog Union Library Workers.


A personal narrative is presented which explores the author’s experience of working as a teacher librarian and collaborating with local unions and task forces as part of their advocacy for library services and professional duties at intermediate schools.


The article offers the author’s insights on the challenges faced by library managers in writing and revising job descriptions. Topics discussed include working in a union environment adds to the complexity in crafting job descriptions, acquiring a copy of the governing collective bargaining contract is important step for a person going into union negotiation, and
standardized language is the best practice used by managers to familiarize with the state of job descriptions.

Editors Note: Union Library Workers blog was established in 2002 by Kathleen de la Peña McCook. Past contributors include Braden Cannon, Joanna Kerr, and Sarah Barriage. In August 2016, Elaine Harger took over posting to the blog.