

**GOVERNMENT LICENSED PROFESSIONALS CHAPTER
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 20, 2006**

CHAPTER CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

"On the Value of Professionals"

Hello fellow GLP members. It's nice to be back in Kamloops—I've always enjoyed the hospitality of Kamloopians.

I'm, anxious to get to the main address but first I need to highlight the notable accomplishments over the past year, and they are numerous:

The GLP Executive and Bargaining committee are very proud of the collective bargaining work resulting in our 13th collective agreement. The agreement provides for:

- Cross board wage increases of 10.7% over four years;
- A one-time payout averaging \$3836 (less Stephen Harper's cut);
- Recruitment and retention allowances of 4.3 to 40%;
- CBA language confirming compensation for forest fires and Provincial emergencies;
- A new Licensed Psychologist Grid description plan;
- Protection of OSS;
- Employment security for regular status employees;
- Numerous other side benefits.

I'd like to show our thanks and recognize the dedication and hard work of your bargaining committee: These folks are: Kathy Bissett, Brian Chow, Frank Kohlberger, Julie Orban, Gerald Reichenback, Jodi Jensen and Tony Bute, and yours truly. Thanks.

Although bargaining consumed a huge amount of our time, outside the CBA framework there has also been a lot of hard work on other things including:

- Updating our wage survey data for bargaining preparation;
- Representations to government to protect Member's interests—a good example is the ABCFP RFT proposals;
- Maintaining Oil/Gas Professionals within the PEA;
- And most important of all we started work on a GLP Strategic plan which will guide us into the future.

Again these things don't just happen and are outcomes of some good work by your GLP Executive: Jim Annunziello, Brian Chow, Kathy Danchuk, Trudy Goold, Julie Orban, Gerald Reichenback and Les Thiessen. This crew is well supported by our Executive Director—the very capable Jodi Jensen and her PEA staff. Let's show our appreciation.

So you are probably wondering by now if this guy has the right title for his talk, and that leads me to the topic I **would really** like to speak to:

“On the value of Professionals”

You may also be thinking ...boring...what kind of topic choice is this?...and what has this got to do with me? Well stay tuned and I'll tell you.

Picture this: Eight members of your collective bargaining team are sitting in a boardroom across from a like number of employer representatives (mostly Branch Directors and PSA folks). For the last hour your CBA team has been presenting well reasoned, rational arguments concerning how licensed professionals bring value to governments and are a key part of delivering operations. We eloquently explained how the current wage structure lags Industry, the Federal government and most other “have” Provinces. This was politely acknowledged by the government side, who adjourn to caucus.

Your bargaining committee feels very good about the points raised, and feel that this high level of emotion will certainly spur the Employer's side to offer a decent wage package. **WRONG.**

Our optimism was shattered and we were totally deflated to hear the Employer's rep (a dirt Ministry Director) tell us:

- We basically only need Professionals to sign and seal to meet legislation.
- We can rely on our many capable Technical GEU staff.
- We are only interested in providing decent funding where recruitment is a problem.
- Otherwise, you do not deserve compensation any different that the BCGEU.

So at that point: Did we feel like valued licensed Professionals? **NO WAY.**

Did we feel valued by the employer? **NOT A CHANCE.** and

Did we feel that the government is interested in offering professional levels of compensation – **FORGET IT.**

Just a bargaining ploy? **I THINK NOT** —It is how the employer thinks.

So this caused us to reflect and think why does the employer not distinctly value the work of professionals? - Which led us to “Do we value ourselves as professionals?—

Well,... we were not sure if we do. Your CBA team wondered “How many of us would be willing to step forward, and stand up for market levels of compensation”?

If we don't, government sure as ---won't. They will pay you as little as possible to keep you in your seat.

The reality of the bargaining process is that logic does not prevail. The employer will hint that we are not adequately compensated but they believe that the membership is not willing to do

anything to demonstrate its dissatisfaction. In collective bargaining, the primary tool available to us is to withdraw services. The employer's belief that that card will not be played limits the ability of the bargaining committee to obtain a logical and fair outcome.

If you want proof- you see market level wages only where the employer is finding it difficult to hire staff are they willing to pay more, e.g. engineers, petroleum geologists, etc.

Upon more reflection, your GLP Executive sure thinks your services and value to the employer and the people of the province that we serve is worth a lot more, and we intend to do something about it. We realized that we need to shift our actions to something different – but what??

In that vein, a bargaining debrief was held with the full bargaining team and the GLP Executive. As an outcome of the debrief, a strategic planning exercise has been undertaken in order to focus the activities of the GLP Executive in representation of the membership. The preliminary Action Plan ideas are contained in the Strategic Plan document—coming soon to a website near you. The vision statement of the Strategic Plan is:

“Government Licensed Professionals are respected and valued”

Like the sound of that? Sounds very nice doesn't it. I believe we all would like that. I'll say it again in case you missed it the first time.

“Government Licensed Professionals are respected and valued”

So what are We going to do about this? --Before you answer please remember that we is not just the GLP Executive, and not just the Bargaining Team, and not just Jodi Jensen and PEA staff—**“WE” is all of us. “We” are a collective. “WE” are a union.** And most importantly **“WE” are the sum strength of all our brains, muscle and collective determination.** The strength of **“WE”** is represented by your elected representatives, but is only as strong as the army of members that follow.

In order to get others to value us as professionals, we also need to have the membership value itself and reflect that in their activities.

Remember a few years ago the movie “Brave Heart”? I believe it starred Mel Gibson. Did he win battles with only his other leaders and generals? No, the motivated and strongly united troops behind him won the battle. They were willing to pay the price. Strong leader + strong troops= success.

But winning a medieval war was not easy, and is not that much different from gaining and protecting decent wages in collective bargaining.

I believe we have Brave Heart leaders in our midst (although they may not look like Mel Gibson). The question is –“Do we want to build our collective strength and win the CBA war”? If so, it starts with each and every one of us.

The seemingly innocuous and sometimes boring Strategic Plan just may contain the plans to win the war and achieve a condition where:

“Government Licensed Professionals are respected and valued”

In these few minutes, I can't do justice to explaining our Strategic Plan, and it still needs a lot more work. What I'll try and do is to ask you to read it and:

- Consider-- Where is the GLP headed—is this the right way? Or is there a better way?
- Speak up
- Get involved
- Be proud
- Practice and demonstrate your professionalism every day
- Value ourselves as professionals and continually reflect and distinguish your professional value to your employer and those you work with.

Here are my final thoughts on this. Those words from that Director concerning our value to government still ring in my ears. It still hurts. As I said earlier, we need to do something different. As Brian Chow commented and frequently stated during bargaining **“If we do what we have always done, we will get what we've always got”**.

So, lets work together, stand together until our vision is realized and:

“Government Licensed Professionals are respected and valued”.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Annunziello
Chair