

**President's Report for VAC AGM October 19, 2011**  
**Jamey Mills**

Sisters and Brothers, firstly I would like to thank you. Thank you for supporting me as Vancouver Area Council President, thank you for the role you play in your own union and thank you as proud members of our community. As activists I don't think we hear that often enough.

In the past year Labour has had its' share of success. At the same time we have come under direct attack by a regressive Conservative government. While we saw success at the Federal level and rode the wave of the Orange Crush, we lost our leader and now fight a majority government not chosen by the majority of Canadians.

This annual report, as brief as it is, entails more than the past year, more than the current year and certainly more than the next year.

Already we are seeing cuts to services that affect Canadians. We are seeing Canada Post call centres dissolved and outsourced. EI call centres with staff levels reduced to levels so low no one can access them. A Department of Fisheries and Oceans that is forecasting budget cuts so deep fishermen are terrified.

As we see, eroding funding is affecting all Canadians at some level. Be it in accessing your tax information or ensuring the food we eat is inspected properly. We as union and community activists need to continue bringing the issues to the forefront. This involves talking with our coworkers, families and friends, petitions, workplace actions and protests. Writing letters to the editor, your union newsletter or speaking with your MP.

This all culminates at the ballot box by supporting progressive governments at all levels that support public services.

At the same time we see slashed budgets we also see collective bargaining being abused. In the past 6 months we have seen two, and now possibly a third unionized workforce legislated back to work. To say what has happened with the Canadian Auto Workers and Canadian Union of Postal Workers has been unfair is a gross understatement.

Now more than ever we need to stand together, with our friends not only in the PSAC, but the broader workforce, unionized or not, special interest and social groups and our friends, families and neighbours.

Sisters and Brothers, I may be too young to remember when we fought this battle at such a level before, but I know that we were there arm in arm in solidarity standing up for what we know is just.

I encourage everyone in this room to challenge themselves. Educate yourself and speak freely of how you want your Canada shaped. Don't forget, we are the 99%.

To steal some lyrics from a favourite song of mine:

If we don't take action now, we'll settle for nothing later.

Thank you.