

Stromberg takes leave after winning COPE communications awards 19 consecutive years



COPE has had another remarkable year for communications awards, including the prestigious Cliff Scotton Prize from the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

COPE 378 Communications Director Paula Stromberg who writes and produces the union newspaper won CALM's Cliff Scotton Prize for the best piece reflecting the history, traditions and culture of the labour movement for her stories and graphics about our union's dramatic separation from the International union and subsequent legal battle in Florida over our drive for Canadian autonomy. "We're a 100% Canadian union" was published in *COPE 378 News June July 2004*.

Labour media awards are based on work done in the previous calendar year.

Stromberg also won an International Labour Communicators Association (ILCA) Saul Miller Third Award for the Best Organizing Story in 2005. Her Saul Miller award recognized the best political activism story by a local union, "We Have a Right to Exist", about our full time effort to preserve union jobs published in *OPEIU 378 News* (now COPE) February /March 2004.

Stromberg has won awards every year consecutively since she joined the union office in 1986, an achievement unmatched by any other individual labour communicator.

In a telephone interview from Washington DC, outgoing ILCA President Martin Fishgold com-

mented that the main purpose of the awards is to recognize excellence in labour communications. "It's impressive that COPE's Paula Stromberg has won awards year after year. This is consistent quality communications."

"COPE members can be proud of our union communications," added COPE 378 President Andy Ross. "They always identify it as a priority."

ILCA (International Labour Communicators Association) is an arm of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Council of Industrial Organizations) and runs the largest labour communications competition in the world. These awards are considered the 'Pulitzer Prize' of labour journalism. In 2005, the combined per-issue circulation of ILCA member publica-

tions exceeded 10 million.

Stromberg has won more than 50 national and international awards for her communications, writing, photography and design work.

In addition to her labour communications awards, she won the top prize, Best in Show, in 2005 for her creative writing and artwork collaboration with Richmond psychiatrist Dr. Caroline Choo. The artwork "Transformed by Nature" is a mixed media and poetry installation that documents one woman's journey as she comes to terms with her once-beautiful body being deformed by rheumatoid arthritis. [Photo below.]

The piece was exhibited at the American Psychiatric Association (APA) meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in May 2005. More than 17,000 psychiatrists and exhibitors from around the world attended the APA conference. Art exhibit winners were chosen by popular vote.

Stromberg is taking a year's sab-

atical from the COPE office in 2006 to attend the Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University. In addition, she signed a Hollywood contract after a Los Angeles TV producer read her story on same-sex marriage that was carried in the union newspaper and several other publications.

"We're pleased with the excellence Paula has brought to communications for our union members, and that despite those accomplishments, chooses to return to university to broaden her skills. We wish her every success and look forward to her return," said Ross.

During Stromberg's absence in 2006, COPE communications will be reviewed and the union's website www.cope378.ca updated. COPE is studying what other unions across Canada are doing and how their members communicate with them. "Our immediate plan is to transmit union news in real time video communication on the Internet," Ross said.



COPE 378 Communications Director Paula Stromberg holds this year's labour media awards against a backdrop of her collaborative artwork that won Best in Show at the American Psychiatric Association Art Exhibit in Atlanta, Georgia. She has won more than 50 writing and publishing awards in her career.