



IN THIS ISSUE:

INTERNATIONAL TRADE
DISPUTES ESCALATE

>> PAGE 2

PREVENTING AIRPORT PRIVATIZATION

>> PAGE 3

FALLEN WORKERS
MEMORIAL DONATION

>> PAGE 4

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Long-term care workers deliver a petition signed by over 3,000 Nova Scotians demanding restoration of funding.

Unifor marks Nursing Week with action for safer workplaces

Nursing Week, from May 8-14, is an opportunity to recognize nurses and the health care teams who work hard to provide excellent care every day. Unifor members and leadership are ensuring the recognition goes further than a simple "thank you" by campaigning for an amendment to the Criminal Code to protect nurses at work, and by demanding adequate health care funding.

On May 2, two Ontario nurses, along with Assistant to the President Katha Fortier, went to Queen's Park to tell MPPs from all parties that the government's help is needed to prevent violent assaults by patients and patients' families toward nurses and

>> Continued on page3

Challenges, renewal and progress

The 2017 Aboriginal and Workers of Colour conference brought together workers from across the country to talk about and make plans to act to address discrimination and racism in the workplace.

More than 190 delegates, many participating in the national union for the

>> Continued on page2

Quebec Council Focusing on Activism

Over 400 delegates met at the Château Frontenac in Quebec City May 3-5 for the Unifor Quebec Council. Quebec Director Renaud Gagné reported on the union's many actions since last fall. Among other things, he stressed the importance of conducting political campaigns with the decision makers of our society.

"Whether it's Lumber,

Delastek, Timber, Alstom, Eska Water or all the others, we have to put pressure on the elected officials and the decision-makers to protect jobs and defend our values of social justice," said Gagné.

Unifor National President Jerry Dias also spoke to delegates on a number of topical issues, including the thorny issues of trade

>>Continued on page3

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

On May 17, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) will be celebrated in at least 130 countries worldwide. The date is significant, as it was on that day in 1990 that the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

The motto for the 2017 IDAHOT is "Love makes a family". To mark IDAHOT Unifor will join in a day of global mobilization, as millions unite to stand against the violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people internationally and to support human rights and equality for all.

Read Unifor's International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia statement at unifor.org/pride.



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Unifor takes strong stand on softwood, and trade issues

Over the course of a week, trade issues around softwood, NAFTA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership flared up in Canada, with Unifor taking a leading role in standing up for the rights of working people, good jobs and communities.

"We have a unique opportunity to radically reshape our global trading system, for the betterment of working people, but the goal here should be fairness for workers not punishment," said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President.

The U.S. slapped countervailing duties of about 20 per cent on Canada's softwood lumber, putting up to 25,000 jobs at risk.

Days later, U.S. President Donald Trump said he wants to renegotiate NAFTA, with a possible U.S. withdrawal from the trade pact if he's not happy with the talks.

A week later, it was revealed that Canada was hosting closed meetings at a secret Toronto location with other Pacific Rim countries to revive the TPP without the U.S., as Trump pulled out of the TPP shortly after becoming president.

"TPP was a bad deal then, and it's a bad deal now," said Dias. "We were told we had to be in the TPP because the U.S. was in it. Now, the U.S. is out. Why would we revive a trade deal that was so bad for Canadian workers and



Tariffs imposed on Canadian softwood by the U.S. could impact up to 25,000 jobs.

communities?"

Amid all this, Unifor trade activists from across Canada met to plan the union's ambitious new trade campaign, to be formally launched at Canadian Council in August. For more information on Unifor's trade campaign, go to unifor.org/fairtradefuture.

>> Continued from "Challenges, renewal..." on page 1

first time, showed the growing commitment to increasing involvement and representation of equity.

Unifor Human Rights and International Director, Mohamad Alsadi, addressed the crowd on the opening night marking that, "Equality is not going to happen just because we are nice or say please. It will happen because we will make it happen." Delegates heard that message loud and clear and set to keep fighting for all workers to be treated with respect.

Christine Maclin of Local 195 and Kesang Kashi of Local 4004 presented the initial results of Unifor's Equity Audit, which they coordinated over the past year alongside the Human



AWOC Conference delegates gather at the Family Education Centre in Port Elgin, ON.

Rights and International Department. Delegates reviewed the data and gave suggestions to increase support and representation through tools such as building equity committees.

Ruth Price of Local 1106 was re-elected to the National Executive Board as Unifor's Aboriginal and Racialized Worker's Representative with a commitment to continue

her work to bring more marginalized voices into decision-making spaces.

At the closing of the conference, delegates shared regional challenges and priorities. First-time delegates and experienced representatives all gained perspective and tools to take back to locals in all regions of the country to push for change.

>> Continued from “Unifor marks Nursing Week” on page 1

other health care staff.

“We are asking for a signal from Ontario’s provincial politicians that the wave of violent assaults against nurses and health care staff is unacceptable,” said Sandra Hillcoat, a Unifor RPN from Kitchener, ON. “The amendment we are asking all MPPs to support would require a judge to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a health care worker as an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.”

A similar Criminal Code provision covers transit employees in Canada. The amendment would apply to a nurse, doctor, personal support worker, paramedic

or any other health care worker including those in long-term care, home care and other community support staff.

The amendment to the Criminal Code being sought can be found at unifor.org/nurseviolenceamendment.

Meanwhile in Nova Scotia, members have been active in campaigning against the McNeil Liberal government’s cuts to long-term health care.

“Care needs have escalated dramatically in recent years,” says Linda MacLeod, a long-term care worker in Cape Breton. “People used to walk into our facility but now everyone arrives by ambulance needing far more complex care. With budget cuts, we’re all forced to deliver more care in



Unifor and CUPE hold joint press conference to ask Ontario MPPs to support increased Criminal Code protection for front line health care workers.

less time and with fewer supports.”

On April 26, Unifor presented over 3,000 signed petitions to the Nova Scotia NDP and Progressive Conservative leaders to demand public investment in long-term

care. Both opposition parties have pledged to restore government funding to long-term care in the province, should they form the next government after the May 30 election date.

For more information, visit unifor.org/LTC.

>> Continued from “Quebec Council...” on page 1

relations with the United States.

Daniel Boyer, President of the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), focused on the last Quebec provincial budget, pointing out that Quebec has the means to acquire good public services, but that it is primarily a matter of choice for society.

During one of the workshops for delegates Christian Nadeau, Professor of philosophy at the Université de Montréal, addressed the issue of democracy within our locals. For over an hour, members exchanged views on barriers and solutions to ensure members’ participation in union life.



Renaud Gagné, Quebec Director, addresses Quebec Council delegates at rally for good jobs in front of the National Assembly.

Charles-Philippe David, a professor at UQAM in the Department of Political Science, also gave a lively and appreciated presentation on the “first 100 days of Trump”.

A Unifor march in favor of protecting jobs was held on Thursday, which culminated in a large rally in front of the National Assembly of Quebec.

Opposition to airport privatization grows

When Transport Canada tabled its new infrastructure strategy last fall, it hinted that privatizing critical infrastructure, such as airports, was up for discussion.

Unifor reacted quickly to oppose the trial balloon and made a submission in April to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure, and Communities to express the union’s concern.

“Canadians get incredible value from publicly-owned airports,” said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. “From rent revenue to good jobs, airports are massively important infrastructure hubs that should remain public.”

Airport authorities pay

the federal government approximately \$305 million per year in land rental charges; the revenue helps to pay for important public services that Canadians use every day. To date, airport authorities at Vancouver, Calgary, and Ottawa have strongly opposed the privatization, and the list is growing.

Privatization is a major concern because historically it has led to higher costs for the public, lower-paying jobs, and reduced public oversight. Privatizing airports only brings risk and uncertainty to services that are indispensable.

Unifor is encouraging members to write Transportation Minister Garneau at unifor.org/publicairports. 3



Local 4212 honours fallen Canal workers

Unifor members who work on the Welland Canal marked the National Day of Mourning by honouring those who lost their lives in its construction a century ago.

Local 4212, representing operations, maintenance and clerical employees of the St. Lawrence Seaway in Niagara and Cornwall, donated \$25,000 to help build a memorial to the fallen workers.

Members of the Local joined relatives of lost workers, representatives of the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force and local and federal politicians at the April 28 ceremony.

“The memorial will recognize all of the workers who lost their lives building this truly amazing engineering marvel,” said Local 4212 Chairperson Rory Dempsey. “We are proud to honour their hard work and sacrifice.”

The memorial will pay tribute to the 137 workers who died while building the canal, in what is believed to be the largest loss of life on a federal government infrastructure project in Canadian history.

Construction projects of the time worked with the expectation that one man would die for every \$1 million spent. The Welland Canal cost \$130 million. The

IN THIS ISSUE : Nursing Week marked with call for Criminal Code changes to protect against violence on the job and restore long-term care funding. Quebec Council delegates discuss the future of international trade as the battle over softwood lumber intensifies. Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Conference challenges inequality and racism. Fallen Welland Canal workers remembered and more!



Unifor Local 4212 presents donation to the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial.

memorial will be inscribed with the 137 names of the fallen, their places of birth and the age that they died.

Walter Sendzik, Mayor of St. Catharines, Ontario, acknowledged the donation for the memorial, scheduled to be unveiled in his city

later this year.

“On behalf of the Task Force, I’d like to thank Unifor Local 4212 and family members of the fallen workers for the thoughtful donation in honour of our fallen workers,” said Sendzik.