

Unifor celebrates defeat of Harper

Unifor celebrated the defeat of the Harper Conservatives and called for Liberal and NDP cooperation to rebuild Canada. “Tonight’s election results offer Canadians an opportunity to rebuild our country,” said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President after media outlets called a Liberal majority government.

“The Liberals have promised to be a champion for the middle-class. They have committed to improve the Canada Pension Plan and protect our national healthcare system. Unifor will ensure the Liberals are held to account for these commitments – which are crucial first steps to creating the change Canadians have indicated they want,” said Dias.

Ontario Regional Council gathers in Toronto



Local leaders and activists gathered in Toronto on December 4th and 5th from across Ontario for the second Ontario Regional Council since the founding of Unifor. The Regional Council discussed what lies ahead for workers in the province, with a new federal government and major auto talks planned for 2016.

“This will be a very important meeting as we plan for the year ahead,” said Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier. Unifor National President Jerry Dias, Secretary-Treasurer Peter Kennedy and Fortier spoke to delegates as well as author and social justice activist Angela

Robertson, Toronto Star Ottawa columnist Susan Delacourt and Katrina Miller from the Keep Hydro Public Coalition.

Oakville Mayor Rob Burton, who leads a coalition of auto city mayors, and Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn also spoke to the 700 delegates. The health sector is well represented on the Ontario Regional Council Executive in addition to Fortier by Vice-Chair: Candace Lavalley, President Local 7-O; Anne Marie MacInnis, President Local 598; Jim Reid, President Local 27 ; Kari Jefford, President Local 229; Kari Jefford from Local 229 and Tullio DiPonti from Local 2458 who present-

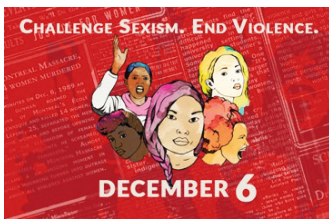
ed his first financial report to Council as Secretary-Treasurer.

The Ontario section of the Health Care Council also met in advance of Council to discuss an ambitious Action Plan for the coming year. The delegate unanimously adopted the plan, which includes strong commitments to action campaigns in support of collective bargaining and members’ rights. The Action Plan is now posted to: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/unio_n_healthcare_council_action_plan_proposal.12082015.pdf

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Unifor commemorates December 6th



In the short span of one month, Unifor commemorated three events of vital importance in the campaign to end violence against women. November 12, 2015 was commemorated as

the 10th anniversary of the brutal workplace murder of registered nurse, Lori Dupont at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Windsor. November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The December 6th National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women commemoration within Unifor took many forms this year including Jerry Dias, National President of Unifor comments on the fight against sexism in Canada while remembering the École Polytechnique Massacre December 6, 1989 posted to YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7H7szlQpXw&feature=share

About 3,300 women in Canada escape their homes on any given night due to domestic violence, according to the Canadian Women's Foundation. The overwhelming majority (71%) of Canadian companies polled in recent Conference Board of Canada survey say they had to protect an employee who's a victim of domestic violence and abuse.

The violence experienced by women clearly extends to the workplace as data from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in Ontario reveals health and community workers - predominately women, were the victims of 639 approved lost-time injury claims in 2014 compared to 10 workers in construction. As health care workers, we need to collectively challenge a workplace culture that widely views violence to be an expected or normal part of our work.



Local 302 commemorates December 6th

Unifor Local 8300 joins with Ontario Health Coalition rally in Trenton



A strong contingent of Unifor Local 8300 activists and retirees joined more than 600 other health workers and local residents at a rally organized by the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) and local hospital advocacy group, 'Our TMH' to protest cuts to health care. Hundreds came from across central and eastern Ontario to descend on Centennial Park in Trenton in support of Trenton Memorial Hospital (TMH) on a blustery November 13th as one in a series of OHC rallies held across the province this fall.

Quinte Health Care (QHC) has proposed cutting 162 positions to deal with a provincial funding cut of \$11.5 million in the 2016-2017 operating budget. Quoted in the local media after the rally, Unifor Local 8300 president Jake Gibson said he was surprised by the degree of the cuts to his membership. "Members are devastated," Gibson said, adding QHC offered counselling to workers.

While QHC has pledged to offer severance packages, he said, "We're still losing jobs." Gibson said he'll meet with QHC in early December and try to help workers, and will continue to press the corporation about the relatively few cuts to management.

"Small and rural hospitals like TMH cannot survive another two more years of cuts. Hospitals in small towns are teetering on the brink of disaster," said OHC executive director Natalie Mehra, drawing an angry response from the crowd of "no more cuts."

Welcoming new members to our family



A warm festive welcome to members working at Chartwell Retirement in Orangeville carrying on business as **Montgomery Village Retirement Residence** who voted to join Unifor on November 26, 2015. And welcome to the 46 new members of Unifor working at **Seasons Retirement Communities** in Strathroy who voted in October to join Unifor. The recently constructed retirement home is only two blocks from Strathmere Lodge.

And a belated welcome to the 15 members working with **H.I.A. Harmony in Action** located at 3335 Woodward Boulevard in Windsor Harmony In Action provides day, evening and weekend activities and services to adults living with developmental and/or physical challenges in Windsor.



Successful Nova Scotia Federation of Labour convention

Unifor delegates attending the Nova Scotia Federation convention including Atlantic Region Director Lana Payne pose for a group photo. About 300 union members and supporters from across the province gathered to set the agenda for the provincial labour movement over the next two years.

Delegates empowered the incoming executive to mobilize against Stephen McNeil's austerity government and to commit resources towards educating members and the public about the value of public sector jobs and the positive impact they have on the economy, communities and families. Delegates vowed to oppose concession bargaining and any legislative measures that might restrict the right to strike, and to work together to combat the McNeil government's attack on free collective bargaining.

Congratulations to Unifor members including Areas Director Linda MacNeil as newly-elected Vice-President-at-Large and both Angela Downey and Koren Beaman, elected as General Vice Presidents.

Unifor leads OFL Convention 2015 into new era



Nancy Hutchison and Shawn Rouse at OFL convention panel

In Ontario, long-time labour activist and Unifor National Representative Chris Buckley was acclaimed as president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, replacing outgoing OFL president Sid Ryan.

Buckley was the president of Local 222 in Oshawa, and chair of the GM Master Bargaining Committee, where he led negotiations for four rounds of talks before being appointed to Unifor National staff. Chris was a member of the committee that oversaw the formation of Unifor and he played a pivotal role in the transition to the new union.

Buckley pledged to work with affiliates, activists, labour councils and equity seeking groups to build a strong OFL and a stronger labour movement in Ontario. Also elected were Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) and Ahmad Gaied from United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) who both ran on a slate with Buckley endorsed by Unifor.

Unifor Health Care Council president Shawn Rouse (Local 1106) and out-going OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison also appeared on a panel at convention seeking to broaden traditional understandings of workplace health and safety to include harassment, intimidation and workplace violence. Both speakers told compelling stories about gender-based violence and domestic violence that are too often allowed to follow women to their workplaces. They shared that the top cause of workplace fatalities for women is in fact homicide and spoke to the OFL plan to make violence-free workplaces an employer obligation under provincial health and safety law.

Sault Area paramedics welcome reinvestment



Steve Olsen [pictured] vice-president of Unifor Local 1359 and a paramedic with the Sault Ste Marie City Fire Department appeared before City Council on October 26th to speak on municipal realignment. Council was considering a proposal to reduce the firefighter complement by 20 positions through retirement while increasing paramedic staffing by twelve.

Refusing to be drawn into the argument around fire service cutbacks, Olsen stuck to advocating for investment in paramedic services.

After City Council adopted the proposal, the District Social Service administration board (DSSAB) announced their decision not to renew the contract for EMS/Paramedic services with the Fire Department, preferring to operate as a stand-alone paramedic service as of September of 2016.

For a journalists' context around the paramedic service in Sault Ste Marie, check out the recently published story at <http://northernhoot.com/invisible-heroes-sault-ste-maries-oft-forgotten-paramedics/>



Kara Lawrence, EMS student, pictured with SSM paramedics Jake Thomas (centre) and Joe Valente

RPNs with Unifor gather in London



Unifor Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) gathered in London in advance of the RPNAO Annual Conference & AGM held on October 28th -30th. The RPNs were meeting face-to-face for the first time as the Unifor Ontario RPN working

group. The working group were provided presentations by the College of Nurses and RPNAO Executive Director Diane Martin on RPN scope of practice issues.

The working group was recently formed and consists of RPN nominated by their Locals to further the work of Unifor around a RPN public education campaign and building further advocacy of their profession through lobbying at the workplace and provincial levels. The group is jointly supported by the National Union and the Health Care Council in their work.

The Unifor RPN display was again prominent at the conference and well received by participants. The Unifor Health Care Council is a Gold Sponsor of the annual RPNAO conference. Unifor RPN's were also active at the various workshops at the conference.

And a hearty congratulation goes out to Stephen Massaro, a Unifor RPN member from Local 229 at City of Thunder Bay homes Pioneer Ridge who was awarded the RPNAO Excellence in Care of Older Ontarian Award: The Martha Award.



Addressing the Changing Workplace Review

Unifor has proposed sweeping reform to Ontario employment standards and labour laws to better reflect the reality of modern work in an era of precarious, low-paying part-time jobs, and to give more workers a fair chance to join a union. More info including the Unifor submission to the Changing Workplace Review is available at: <http://www.unifor.org/en/take-action/campaigns/workplace-changes>

Unifor members from across Ontario were at Queen's Park on December 7th and 8th, meeting with MPPs at the Legislature to garner their support for labour law and employment standards changes to address the increasingly precarious nature of work.

Unifor activists gather at Health Action Assembly and Conference



Local health coalition activists and retirees from Unifor gathered in a strong contingent at the annual Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) General Assembly

held on November 21st at the Church of the Holy Trinity in downtown Toronto. The General Assembly provided an opportunity for activity reports from across the province and debate on the proposed Action Plan.

The next day the OHC sponsored a Conference at Metro Hall in Toronto with guest speakers including Miriam Laugesen; a policy expert on democratic reform in hospitals from New Zealand; Dr. Ray Dawes, a family doctor and advocate for rural health care and former chair of the Ontario Medical Association's rural practice section and the legendary Harry Leslie Smith; a 92-year old activist, campaigner and YouTube sensation for his eloquent defense of public health care.

The finalized Action Plan will soon be posted to <http://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/>



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