



Ontario Regional Council photos >>
page 4

Also inside: A mother's anguish
>> page 5



VOLUME 1, NO.7

WWW.UNIFOR.ORG

DECEMBER 12, 2013

uniforum



Conservative Senator Hugh Segal spoke to Ontario Council last weekend about the importance of unions in Canada.

Canada needs unions: Segal

Active unions and free collective bargaining are essential to building a prosperous Canada and a stable middle class, Conservative Senator Hugh Segal told Unifor's Ontario Regional Council.

"My Canada is one

>> continued on page 3

Toyota changes pensions

Toyota Canada has made it clear, it can change the pension for its workers whenever, however it wants - and it did just that.

In a recent meeting, workers were told those hired after January 1, 2014

>> continued on page 2

Unifor doing things differently

Three months after it was founded on Labour Day weekend, Unifor is already changing the debate in Canada, National President Jerry Dias told the Unifor Ontario Regional Council.

"We are going to change things. We are

going to build the kind of Canada that our members want," Dias said. "Unifor wasn't born to maintain the status quo."

Speaking on December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, Dias said Unifor was founded with a commitment to work on behalf of all working people, unionized or not, and to take on the critical issues facing our communities such as youth violence and violence against women.

>> continued on page 3

#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion


@CherylFull Hugh Segal tells @UniforTheUnion that he & many others will stand up to defend Rand Formula #onpoli #canlab

Where Did Our Rights Come From? The Rand Formula & the Struggle for Union Security:<http://t.co/aSPq58f8WT> via @UniforTheUnion #canlab

In brief


FTQ delegates support Silicium workers

The delegation representing locked-out Silicium workers was treated to a display of generosity by dozens of local unions going to the mic at the recent Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec meeting to announce financial assistance in support of Unifor Local 184's struggle.

More than \$95,000 was raised. 

Fish report criticized


Fish, Food and Allied Workers President Earle McCurdy called on the federal government to reject recommendations from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) to list cod and other species of fish as endangered.

McCurdy called the recommendation "dated, unnecessary and poorly thought out." 

Deal reached at DHL

Unifor reached a tentative deal at 2am December 5 for a new contract for its members at DHL Express across Canada, two hours into a strike.

Ratifications votes will be set up in numerous locations.

Unifor represents more than 600 DHL workers in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. 

Unifor the voice of working people

The labour movement will face many challenges in the coming years, and Unifor will be at the forefront of ensuring the rights of working people are not diminished, Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier told the founding Ontario Regional Council meeting.

"It's our top priority, it has to be," Fortier said. "A better Ontario is possible."

Unifor represents workers across the Ontario economy, so is uniquely able to speak on behalf of all working people, Fortier said, and cannot be shy about speaking out on their behalf.

"Corporations have a political voice, a pretty loud one," Fortier said.

Noting that Ontario Conservative Leader Tim Hudak wants to get rid of the Rand Formula, which sets out that all workers in a unionized workplace pay dues even if they choose to not join the unions, Fortier said Unifor needs to be active in the next provincial election, expected in the coming year.

"If Hudak gets elected and gets rid of the Rand Formula, Ontario will never be the same," Fortier said.

"This is going to be the fight of our lives, sisters and brothers, and Ontario will be ground zero."


But it is not enough to simply protect existing rights, Fortier said, and Unifor is committed to

improving the lives of all Canadians. As part of that effort, Fortier noted that one of Unifor's first acts was to recommend that the Ontario minimum wage be raised to \$14 an hour.

The current minimum wage of \$10.50 an hour puts a worker at 20 per cent below the poverty line, and that's just not good enough, Fortier said.

"A job should lift a person out of poverty," Fortier said.

Ontario is still suffering through the after effects of the financial meltdown, and conservatives are trying to make unions the scapegoat for the problems we face.

"At what point do we say enough is enough?" 

>> Continued from
"Toyota change pensions"
on page 1

will get a less secure defined contribution pension plan while those working full time now - the last hire was in July - get a better paying defined benefit plan.

The move led to a spike in Toyota workers signing Unifor membership cards as part of an organizing drive going on at the company's plants in Cambridge and Woodstock in Ontario.

A defined contribution plan does not guarantee what it will pay on retirement, only what is paid into it. A defined




Workers from Toyota attended Unifor's Ontario Council to update delegates on the organizing drive.

benefit plan states exactly what a worker will get.

Unifor pensions cannot be changed without workers agreeing to it.

Toyota's new two-tiered pension plan, and a bonus offer of up to \$500 to be paid in January, has ignited

heated discussion among Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada workers, who took to social media to speak out.

"Two-tier pension is their warning. Two-tier wages is next. I'm ready to vote," said one worker. 

>> Continued from
"Unifor doing things differently" on page 1

"Ending violence against women is our responsibility," Dias said.

"Sisters, that is our commitment to you."

Dias said Unifor is working with communities in crisis and with young people, the unemployed


and those with precarious jobs

"We are going to build all these movements," Dias said, adding that Unifor's unique community chapters program is a big part of those efforts.

Dias said he has seen more and more Canadians turning to the labour movement to help them

improve their lives, and Unifor will be there for them. Young people, in particular, are realizing that they cannot build their lives on unpaid internships and precarious work, and are looking to Unifor to help.

"Young people are paying attention because they've been betrayed, and their parents know that

they are being betrayed," Dias said. "Young people today are not moving on with their lives, they are moving back home." 



Canada needs Good Jobs Summit



The Unifor Good Jobs Summit will be one of the defining events in the union's first year, Unifor

economist Jim Stanford told the Ontario Regional Council.

"Canada needs the Good Jobs Summit," Stanford said. "There aren't enough jobs, and the jobs we do have are getting worse."

Delegates unanimously endorsed a recommendation that all locals in Ontario commit to taking part in the summit, to be held October 4-5, 2014, in Toronto, and commit to sponsoring pre-summit forums and other


events in their communities.

Noting the fast growth of precarious work in Canada, and a recent United Way study that found that half of all jobs in the Toronto and Hamilton areas are precarious in some way, Stanford said. Unifor is putting the summit together because governments have not.

There will be months of events across Canada leading up to the summit, building support for the event and talking to

Canadians about how to build an economy that offers young people something better than precarious employment and an uncertain future.

"This won't just be a two-day conference in Toronto," Stanford said.

Putting the unemployed back to work will help lift the economy, since it will mean people will have money to spend and will be paying taxes so governments can fund the programs Canadians want, Stanford said. 

>> Continued from
"Canada needs unions: Segal" on page 1

where trade unions and free collective bargaining make Canada a better place to live," Segal said in an unconventional address by a high-profile Conservative to a union gathering.

Earlier this year, Segal led Senate efforts to amend the Harper government's anti-union Bill 377.

"It was bad law, it was unconstitutional," Segal said, adding that he will continue to oppose the bill if the Harper government attempts to revive it.

"As I stand before you today, I will stand in the Senate and oppose it again."

Unifor National President Jerry Dias said the union appreciates the support that Segal has shown for organized labour, despite his Conservative Party's anti-union policies.

"Senator Segal understands the vital role unions play in our society," he said. "He has shown that he is a man of principle, and that's what Canada needs today."


Segal pointed out that Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A Macdonald, also a Conservative, supported strong labour laws for Canada, believing that collective bargaining was essential to building Canada into a prosperous

nation.

"My friends, that's the kind of conservative you have standing in front of you this morning," Segal said.

Segal also pledged to oppose any attempt to get rid of the Rand Formula,

which sets out that all workers in a unionized workplace shall pay dues, even if they choose to not join the union.

To see Segal's speech, please go to : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGV5wbeiSwM> 



Conservative Senator Hugh Segal's comments on labour rights were welcomed by delegates to Ontario Council.

Photo spotlight: Ontario Council



SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS TO COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG



UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

More than 700 delegates, staff and observers attended Ontario Council.



UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

Delegates heard from several great speakers over the weekend.



UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

The first two Community Chapters charters were handed out, to freelance writers and United Church ministers.



UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

Unifor youth worker Chase Robinson, Local 247, made an appeal for donations to Operation Christmas Cheer.



UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

Workers from Toyota working on the organizing campaign there attended Ontario Council.



UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

Media Council chair Randy Kitt listens as Local 723M vice-president Angelo Catarin outlines the impact of Rogers cuts to OMNI TV.

Mother reaches out to her son's killers

In a moving address to Unifor's Ontario Regional Council, Symone Walters said she worries about the two young gunmen who killed her son last summer, and what they must have gone through in their lives that they could commit murder at such a young age.

"These two children need to see that they, too, are still loved," Walters told a silent crowd of more than 700 delegates and staff.

Walters' 15-year-old son Tahj Loor-Walters was shot last July 28 as he rode his bike in a neighbourhood plaza. He died in hospital on August 13.

Walters spoke about how difficult it has been to live without Tahj, her youngest child, and thanked Unifor Local 112 for its support since his death.

"We came together to find a way to make sure no other child is killed, and no other parent feels this anguish," she said. "They have given me the strength to go forward."

Tahj's grandfather Victor Loor is a member of Local 112, which organized a community barbeque in September to raise money to help end youth violence in the Jane/Finch neighbourhood where Tahj was killed. Delegates of the Ontario Regional Council voted to donate \$5,000 to




Symone Walters gave an emotional address about the shooting death of her son, Tahj Loor-Walters.

a fund in Tahj's name to address youth violence.

"No child should have to fear where they live or fear riding their bike in the neighbourhood where they grew up," Walters said, adding that the work to end youth violence needs to start immediately.

"If we don't start today,

it will never end."

To donate to the Tahj Fund, make cheques payable to "Unifor Local 112" with "Tahj Fund" in the memo line. Cheques can be mailed to the attention of Scott McIlmoyle, Local 112 Financial Secretary, 30 Tangiers Road, Toronto, Ontario, M3J 2B2. 

Domestic violence in the workplace

Delegates at Unifor's first Ontario Regional Council meeting unanimously supported a resolution to support a new research project looking in to the impacts of domestic violence in the workplace.

Western University and the labour movement in Canada have joined forces to launch a survey on the impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

Barb MacQuarrie, community director of the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children at Western University, addressed delegates at Unifor's Ontario Regional Council.

After reading a letter from Barb Dupont, mother

of Laurie Dupont, a nurse who was murdered by her former partner while at work at a hospital in Windsor in 2005, MacQuarrie presented some of the startling statistics on violence against women and its impact in the workplace.

American research studies have shown that a quarter of employees have experienced domestic violence, and 70 per cent of those experiencing domestic violence have had it follow them in to their workplace, she told delegates.

"It is not apathy, and it is not a lack of compassion that keeps us from offering support, it is a lack of awareness."

To fill out the anonymous survey, visit www.fluidsurveys.com/s/DVatWork

For more information on Unifor's Women's Advocate Program visit: www.unifor.org/women

Keep Getting Uniforum

Very soon we will stop mailing out copies of Uniforum to anyone who has not told us they want to keep receiving the print version of the newsletter by mail.

If that's you, and you want to keep getting a copy of the newsletter in the mail, you need to let us know. If you don't, you will soon be dropped from the mailing list. Simply email the Unifor Communications department at communications@unifor.org, call 1-800-268-5763, ext 3771, or send us a note to Unifor Communications, 205 Placer Court, Toronto, ON M2H 3H9.

Sign up for the email Uniforum at <http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/subscribe>.

Where did our rights come from?

Unifor local unions and activists have been at the forefront of winning union rights through the decades, Research Director Bill Murnighan told the Ontario Regional Council in a presentation about the Rand Formula.

At the Ontario Regional Council, two historic local unions were in attendance. Unifor Local 591G is home to Canada's oldest union,

the Toronto Typographical Union, which went on strike in 1872 for a nine-hour work day.

Unifor Local 200 held a 99-day blockade in 1945 at Ford Motor Company in Windsor to win union security, which led to the development of the Rand Formula. A number of other local unions and Unifor-represented workplaces have been central to the

introduction of union security provisions into law right across the country.

"We share a history and we should also remember that movements have a history," Murnighan said on December 7. "None of this just happened. When our very existence is being challenged, it's vital that we know where our rights came from."

Murnighan called the

Rand Formula, part of an arbitrated settlement that ended the 99-day Ford strike, the "bedrock" of our current labour relations model.

To learn more about the history of labour rights go to: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/documents/document/full_booklet_-_english.pdf 

Bill C-4 a threat to labour-management relations

It is inappropriate for the Harper government to bring in sweeping labour law changes through an omnibus budget implementation bill, making proper consultation and consideration much more difficult, Unifor told the federal Standing Committee on Finance at hearings into Bill C-4.

"It is risky to undertake ad hoc changes for partisan or ideological reasons. Doing so risks serious and long-lasting damage to labour-management relations in the federal public service," the union said in a submission by Unifor Director of



Unifor Local 2182 President Chad Stroud speaks before the federal Standing Committee on Finance.

Transportation Ron Smith and Unifor Local 2182 President Chad Stroud.

Unifor represents such affected workers as Coast Guard Radio Operations employees, Printing Services Group Non-


Supervisory employees and Transport Canada Air Traffic Control employees.

Unifor also represents House of Commons Technical Group staff, governed by the Parliamentary Employees

Staff Relations Act.

Smith and Stroud said C-4 that will allow the employer to unilaterally declare work an essential service, rather than through negotiations with its unions.

Smith and Stroud also took issue with changes that Bill C-4 would make to the arbitration process for affected employees.

To read the full submission, go to: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/finance_committee_bill_c-4_labour_law_brief.pdf 

PotashCorp layoffs a shock

Layoffs at PotashCorp will be felt in communities across central Saskatchewan, says Unifor, the union representing many of the workers at the mine in Lanigan, Saskatchewan.

Unifor Local 922 met with company officials to discuss details of the layoff and to finalize the list of those affected. In all, 440

jobs are being cut in Saskatchewan, including about 212 of the layoffs at Lanigan who are members of Unifor.

Many of those workers live outside Lanigan, just east of Saskatoon, and commute to work. That means the layoffs, effective immediately and announced just three weeks before Christmas,

will affect several small communities in rural Saskatchewan, Local 922 President Rick Suchy said.

"This is quite a shock. I got a call at 5am to meet with the company to get the news," Suchy said.

Workers at the mine were told shortly after as they arrived to start their shifts, with many told to go home immediately. Laid off

workers will receive 8 weeks' severance pay for a permanent layoff.

"The timing of this layoff will make for a very difficult Christmas for many families," said Scott Doherty Unifor Western Director.

Local 922 represents 450 workers at PotashCorp. 

Ontario Regional Council executive elected

Forest move applauded



Delegates to Ontario Regional Council elected their first executive.

Unifor Ontario Regional Council elected its first executive and members of seven committees on December 6 in Toronto.

Executive Board

Chair: Dino Chiodo, President Local 444
Vice-Chair: Candace Lavalley, President Local 7-O
Secretary-Treasurer: Tullio DiPonti, Secretary-Treasurer, Local 2458
Members at Large: Jim Reid, President Local 27 ; Kari Jefford, President Local 229 ; Wayne Gates, President Local 199 ; Anne Marie MacInnis, President Local 598 ; Mark Mathewson, President Local 848 ; Debbie Montgomery, President

local 4268 ; Ka Hung Wong, Secretary Treasurer Local 87-M; Maggie Harbert, President Local 35-O

Two committees were elected by the entire Council meeting.

Political Action Committee

Chris Taylor, Local 200; Jacqueline McIntosh, Local 79-M ; Willie Lambert, Local 1256.

Health & Safety and Environment

Stephanie Brownlee, Local 26 ; Jamie Wright, Local 88 ; Scott McIlmoyle, Local 112.

The Council's five equity-seeking committees were elected at caucus meetings of their peers.


Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender:

Kellie Scanlan, Local 414 ; Sue Slean, Local 975 ; Steve Olsen, Local 1359.

Aboriginal & Racialized Workers:

Sharon Davis, Local 414 ; Carl Cywink, Local 2163 ; Bobby Pearsall, Local 6008.
Workers with Disabilities: Sam Snyders, Local 1996 ; Denise Viau, Local 444 ; Derek MacLeod, Local 6004 .

Women's Committee: Pearl Almeida, Local 6006 ; Gwen Campbell, Local 1285 ; Susan MacKinnon, Local 444.

Young Worker's Committee: Allison Buckler, Local 2002 ; Liam Howes, Local 25 ; DJ Lacey, Local 2098. 

Emerging from the Rendez-Vous de la Forêt Québécoise organized by the Quebec government, Unifor praised the commitments made by elected officials to workers in the forest industry.


"We've been waiting for these measures for a long time," said Unifor Quebec Assistant Director Renaud Gagné.

"Nonetheless, we have pledged to remain vigilant in the coming months to ensure that their words are converted into concrete action," Gagné promised.

Unifor members have been warning for years that Quebec's new forestry regime would have a catastrophic effect on working conditions and pay in the forestry industry unless changes were made.

Today, more than eight months after the regime came into force, the situation is even grimmer than anticipated by Unifor, with the disappearance of 30 per cent of unionized jobs and a 15-25 per cent decline in working conditions.

That is why Unifor organized a demonstration that brought together nearly 200 Unifor forestry workers and militants at the start of the Nov 21-22 Rendez-Vous de la Forêt. Minister of Natural Resources Martine Ouellet stepped outside to address the protesters, with a promise to resolve these issues.

Premier Pauline Marois also made a clear commitment to rectify the situation before the start of the next logging season. 

Featured campaign

Getting on Board

Unifor is calling for an overhaul of Canada's passenger rail system, including setting up high speed rail service.

Years of government

funding cuts at Via Rail have led to service and job reductions - and a corresponding decline in ridership. Unifor is calling for a new vision for passenger rail in Canada.

Better use of passenger

trains would be good for the environment, reduce traffic congestion and stimulate manufacturing.

To read Unifor's report on Via Rail, go to: www.unifor.org/passengerrail 

TO PROMOTE A CAMPAIGN IN YOUR LOCAL OR REGION, CONTACT COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG



Season's Greetings!

This is a time of year not just to celebrate, but to reflect on our relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and communities.

While we take time to celebrate, let us remember those who need a helping hand and redouble our efforts to improve the lives of all.

While the holiday season comes just once a year, our commitment to work towards a decent standard of living and hope for the future for all is year-round.

Have a safe, happy holiday season!



unifor
theUnion | le syndicat