



Rally in Halifax >> page 2

Also inside: Toyota campaign >> page 4



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Unifor members rallied in Halifax April 4 to protest anti-worker legislation targeting health care workers, passed by the Nova Scotia government just hours before.

Toyota workers rally to celebrate important milestone

Toyota team members and their supporters rallied with a renewed sense of purpose on Friday, April 5, celebrating a new phase in the campaign to organize a >> Continued on page 3

Action needed for young workers

Unifor is calling on the federal government to take strong action to help young people facing an increasingly difficult job market that offers them little more than part-time and precarious work.

"More young workers today find themselves in

low-wage jobs than they did a generation ago," Unifor researcher Angelo DiCaro said in a presentation April 2 to the federal Standing Committee on Finance.

Making matters worse, he said, young people are also facing higher housing and tuition costs than previous generations, and taking on larger debt levels to pay for their education. The average student debt in Canada now stands at \$37,000.


But taking on that debt to get an education is no

>> Continued on page 3

Atlantic members called to action

On the same day that Bill 37 passed in Nova Scotia, Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne addressed the delegates assembled at the Atlantic Regional Council and emphasized the importance of taking action to fight for rights in

>> Continued on page 3

#unifor 

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@Tony_Tracy Fantastic day with amazing @UniforTheUnion Sisters & Brothers at #UniforARC in #Halifax today! | #Unifor #canlab #1u pic.twitter.com/jeX9aS1Svj

@Billyoneill @UniforToyota "you owe it to your health, your family and your co-workers to vote yes" #unifor #toyota #teammember m.guelphmercury.com/opinion-story/...

Ratifications

Local 598 Mansour Mining

Unifor 598 members at Mansour Mining Technology Inc. in Sudbury have ratified a three-year deal with wage increases of 1.5, 1.5 and 2 per cent.

There was also a pension increase, benefit improvements, improved skilled trade language, improved vacation and other contract language improvements, and a \$500 signing bonus.

The contract was ratified on March 31. 

Local 1285 Brampton Hydro

Unifor Local 1285 members at Brampton Hydro have ratified a new collective agreement that gives them 2.5 per cent wage increases in each of three years.

The deal also includes vacation, bereavement and shift premium improvements, plus current Ontario Dental Association fees.

The new contract was ratified on April 5. 

Photo spotlight: Atlantic Council

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PHOTO BY: SHELLEY BURGOWNE

Cheryl Maloney of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Centre spoke about missing and murdered indigenous women.



PHOTO BY: SHELLEY BURGOWNE

Local 4600 President Susan Gill told a rally April 4 about health care workers' dedication.

Anti-worker legislation protest in Halifax


More than 100 Unifor members marched in Halifax recently to protest an anti-worker bill passed by the Nova Scotia government earlier that morning.

Legislators pushed through Bill 37, which will remove collective bargaining rights for some 40,000 health care

workers in the province.

"Unifor is here today to tell Premier MacNeil that we will not be silent," Unifor National President Jerry Dias told the rally April 4. "He can be sure that we will fight with everything we've got to support our health care workers."

Unifor Local 4600 President Susan Gill, a health care worker in Cape Breton, spoke about the dedication of her fellow health care workers.

"But don't forget that we are workers, too. We have rights and we can't stand by while the government takes those rights away." 

Atlantic executive elected

Unifor Atlantic Council elected its first executive and standing committee members at the Atlantic Regional Assembly. They are as follows:

Executive Board

Chair: Penny Fawcett, Local 2289

Vice-Chair: Patrick Murray, Local 4000

Secretary-Treasurer: Judy Day, Local 597

Members at Large: Susan Gill, Local 4600; Ian Hutchison, Local 601N; Roy Langdon, Local 2121; Bobby MacDonald, Local 401; Darlene McIvor, Local 2215; Tammy Moore, Local 2002; Keith Sullivan, Local 2005

Two committees were elected by the entire Council meeting:

Political Action Committee

Dwayne Hancock, Local 181; Roch LeBlanc, Local 506; Shauna Wilcox, Local 4600

Health & Safety Committee

Jennifer Benoit, Local 2107; Richard Fournier, Local 29; Darlene Parrott, Local 597

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

LGBT Committee

Kevin Banfield, Local 4606; Catherine Butler, Local

4600; Kelly LeBlanc, Local 2215

Aboriginal and Racialized Workers Committee

Christina Ashe, Local 4606; Brian Mazerolle, Local 875; Dave Ladouceur, Local 1


Workers with Disabilities Committee

Leigh Derry, Local 2289; Jeanne Doiron, Local 2107; Eric Leukert, Local 2182

Women's Committee

Koren Beaman, Local 1; Lisa Martin, Local 506; Mildred Skinner, Unifor-FFAW

Young Workers Committee

Suzanne MacNeil, Local 2040; Luke Woodworth, Local 4005; Amanda Young, Local 2121. 

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS - KATIE ARNUP, SARAH BLACKSTOCK, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOWNE, SHANNON DEVINE, MARIE-ANDRÉE L'HEUREUX, STUART LAIDLAW, AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

>> Continued from
"Story headline here"
on page 1

guarantee of a job, with half of young people employed in either the retail/wholesale sector or hospitality – both of which are characterized by low-paying part-time and precarious work.

"A generation ago, 21 per cent of young workers held a part-time job. Today, that number has jumped to 48 per cent," DiCaro told the committee.

To read the submission, go to: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/submission_youth_employment_study_to_standing_committee_on_finance.pdf

>> Continued from
"Atlantic members called to action"
on page 1

the workplace.


"Sisters and brothers, this bill is a reminder to all of us how very fragile workers' rights are," said Lana Payne, Atlantic Regional Director at Unifor in her address to the delegates.

She continued by

emphasizing the importance of the Rights at Work campaign. She explained that the motivation is not just about wages, but also about greater economic justice, safer workplaces, and changing the possibilities for our members and all Canadians.

"We have to be very clear to any government: you take these actions at

your own peril," Payne said. "They may be able to – for now – legislate away our rights, but they cannot take away our anger, our determination or our solidarity."

Payne reflected on the formation of Unifor and said the union was born to change the politics of the country. We start taking back our country, she said, one act at a time. 



Delegates to Atlantic Council elected their first executive and committee members. For the complete list of those elected, see Page 2.

>> Continued from
"Toyota workers rally to celebrate..."
on page 1

union in their workplace.

Roughly 100 Toyota team members and Unifor supporters flocked to the Toyota sites in Cambridge and Woodstock to wave flags and circulate a new leaflet about the benefits of a collective agreement.

Rainy weather did not dampen spirits, and supporters huddled under bright red Unifor umbrellas. There was a steady stream of fellow Toyota team members driving home who honked their horns in support of the union drive.

The rallies signify a new energy the campaign, thanks in part to a visit from Unifor National President Jerry Dias on April 3.

"There is nothing

stronger than the resolve of workers who have decided to fight for their rights and a secure a bright future—and that is what we have here at Toyota," said Dias at a press conference to kick off the next phase of the union drive.

After filing more than 3,000 signed cards with the Ontario Labour Relations Board on March 31, the team members learned that they fell just short of the number required after the company released their startlingly high employment numbers.

While Unifor could have chosen to engage in a lengthy legal battle contesting the numbers, team members are more interested in building support and getting more cards signed so a vote can take place sooner and with confidence.




Toyota team members listen to the announcement of Unifor's bid to unionize workers at the company.

Ken Cleveland, a maintenance team leader at Toyota's Cambridge facility, spoke at the April 3 press conference and emphasized the growing sense of determination among his fellow team members who want to have a vote.

"With the growing list of workplace issues ranging from pension security to line-speed, I can't wait to get back to signing more

cards. Our concerns aren't being addressed and it's time for us to have a say at work. Democracy is clearly coming to Toyota," said Cleveland.

Despite a message from the Toyota President saying he wants a vote, the company filed a 54-page objection to holding the vote. There are growing frustrations amongst team members that remain unaddressed. 



Toyota team members made signs, to be shared on social media, giving their personal reasons for supporting Unifor.

Toyota no longer following the Toyota Way

The following column by Toyota team member Ken Cleveland appeared in the Waterloo Region Record on April 4, 2014.

By Ken Cleveland

Much of what attracted me to a job at Toyota 17 years ago — besides good pay, benefits and a pension, of course — was that the company had a reputation for listening to its employees and working with them on issues facing the plant.

It was known as the Toyota Way, the company's unique system of production in which all employees were encouraged to look for efficiencies and cost savings that would benefit the company.

All companies say they believe in that sort of thing, but Toyota seemed to put real meat behind it by giving all workers the right to slow or even stop production to present one of their ideas. That was proof that our voices were recognized and our contributions were respected, and it meant a lot.

We aren't even called workers or employees, but team members. Being called a team member



means something to me, even though the team approach has been missing for a long time.

When I started, we could make simple changes and improvements, and if we made a mistake nobody ever blamed you — you were just trying to do your job. That attitude encouraged innovation and original thinking, things that have made Toyota so successful.

Now, if something goes wrong, there is an atmosphere of who to blame, and we are not even allowed to make even basic changes without getting approval from management — most of whom have less knowledge and experience than we do.

Toyota has boosted production speeds, increased the cost of health benefits, increased the length of time it takes for contract workers to reach the top pay rate, and killed the defined benefit pension

plan for new hires, to mention just a few of the changes that have been made.

I am voting for Unifor to give me and my co-workers back a voice in the workplace and to preserve the best parts of the Toyota Way.

In that way, then, because the Toyota Way has been a big part of the company's success, having a union at Toyota will ultimately benefit the company.

I have been part of this union organizing drive since nearly the beginning. I am excited about joining because it shares the same values of creating a positive and productive workplace.

To achieve that, Toyota team members need a say in our working conditions — particularly around health and safety, hours of work and work rules. Currently this is dictated entirely by Toyota.

Toyota team members have concerns that are not being addressed. Team members are looking for fairness and a voice at work. It's not a question of salary — it's about being able to negotiate a contract that meets the needs of team members. As Unifor members, all team members will have a say in

what our collective agreement includes, and all of us will get to vote on whether to accept it.

Recent comments by company spokesperson Greig Mordue show just how far the company has strayed from the Toyota Way. He questions, for instance, why we'd want to pay dues, saying this would just take money out of our pockets. In fact, joining Unifor will give us our much-needed voice and a collective agreement setting out the rules of work so the company can no longer arbitrarily take things away.

Cutting the pension for new hires, boosting benefits costs, and the lower pay and no benefits for contract workers have taken much more out of the pockets of Toyota team members. Union dues are a good investment to protect against any further cuts and improve on what we have.

It's no coincidence that the first union cards were printed by team members themselves on the back of Toyota's human resources bulletins about the latest arbitrary change.

The message was clear: We need a voice again. We need a union. 