

your voice

United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401 - Vol. 102 - Jan. - Mar. 2014



The Government of Alberta's Ten
Biggest Bully Moments of 2013

**Protecting Your Rights.
401 and The Supreme Court.**

Recognizing our
Stewards



your voice

United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401 - Vol. 102 - Jan.-Mar. 2014



Calgary

out of town members call collect

Ph: (403) 291 1047 Fx: (403) 250 3412 #102, 2635 37 Avenue N.E. Calgary, AB T1Y 5Z6

Edmonton

Ph: (780) 452 0362 Fx: (780) 451 3099 14040 128 Avenue Edmonton, AB T5L 4M8

Lethbridge

Ph: (403) 328 4245 Fx: (403) 320 9288 1510 2nd Avenue S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0G1

Brooks

Ph: (403) 501 8486 Fx: (403) 501 5144 P.O. Box 1148, 631 - A Sutherland Dr. E. Brooks, AB T1R 1B9

Fort McMurray

Ph: (780) 743 4190 Fx: (780) 743 8312 #205, 9914 Morrison Street Fort McMurray, AB T9H 4A4

Toll Free: 1 800 252 7975

E-mail: ufcw@ufcw401.ab.ca

Website: www.ufcw401.ca

Facebook: facebook.com/ufcw401

Twitter: twitter.com/ufcw401

WEBCAMPUS info here: www.ufcw.ca/webcampus

Union Savings info here: www.unionsavings.ca

Contributors:

Douglas O'Halloran, Theresa McLaren, Tom Hesse, Chris O'Halloran, Christine McMeckan, Cori Torres, Scott Payne, Stephen Reed, Joe Irving, Archie Duckworth, Clayton Herriot, Cam Sherk, Rick Schneider.

This quarterly magazine is designed, written, and printed union.

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Welcome to the second edition *Your Voice*, our quarterly magazine that aims to keep Local 401 members up to date on the issues affecting them. January's magazine focuses on providing you with a year in review of the Local's activities.

As you read through the various articles, we hope you'll take pride in hearing about how active your union has been! And if you didn't join us in our various activities this year, we hope we'll see you in 2014!

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Working Together To Achieve Great Things in 2013

Written by Theresa McLaren, Secretary Treasurer



With another year coming to a close, I'm happy to say that we can be extremely proud of what we've accomplished together. We rarely have slow years at UFCW Local 401, but 2013 has been particularly hectic as we've lived up to our promise to be a voice for working Alberta.

Our members at Superstores and Liquorstores across Alberta staged one of the largest retail protests in the province's history. The strength and solidarity demonstrated by those members as they formed picket lines in front of every single Superstore and Liquorstore location in Alberta was inspiring.

Loblaw also took note of their employees' determination to fight for a fair contract. With overwhelming public support, picket lines had been up for only 28 hours before a tentative agreement was reached with the employer. Given that the bargaining committee had been negotiating unsuccessfully for a full year, I think it's fair to say that the victories won by our members were a direct result of their commitment to standing together for what's right.

Of course, Superstore and Liquorstore weren't the only workplaces at which we saw victories this year. New contracts were negotiated for members at fourteen different workplaces, including: Cott Beverages, Burnbrae Farms, Kinosis Lodge, and Compass Group. Each of these negotiations saw improvements to the workers' contracts that both enhanced their workplace experience and raised industry standards.

The union itself also grew and developed a great deal in 2013. We've had a number of talented new people join our staff to help us achieve our goal of being the most effective union we can for

our members. In particular, our Communications Department has grown by leaps and bounds as we step up our efforts to engage both our members and the general public about the issues we are addressing.

Our organizing team has been busy engaging workers who are not members of the Local and showing them how the union advantage can improve their lives. And our own members have been engaging the political process to make a difference in the lives of all Albertans. That political activity is particularly important as we grapple with the strong-arm tactics of Alison Redford's bully government.

"...we can be extremely proud of what we've accomplished together."

As you read through this issue of Your Voice, you will see that there has been a lot going on. But regardless of whether we're talking about the Superstore strike, contract negotiations, organizing, or becoming more politically active, one thing remains clear: **by working together we've been able to achieve great things in 2013.**

I look forward to continuing that work with you in 2014.

Sincerely,

Theresa McLaren
Secretary Treasurer
UFCW Local 401

Politics: Working People Can Make The Difference

Written by Chris O'Halloran, Assistant to the President

"The personal is political," was a rallying cry for the 1960s "second wave" of feminism that succeeded in transforming many of our commonly held misbeliefs about gender and equality (though, of course, there remains much work to be done). The simplified idea behind the phrase is to note that politics is not practiced in some separate sphere from the common activities of our everyday lives. Politics, properly understood, permeates every aspect of our lives.

In 2012, UFCW 401 saw a clear need to become more actively engaged in the political process. As Alex Shevalier, President of Calgary and District Labour Council, notes, "Politics affects every aspect of our lives, whether at home or at work and we ignore it to our detriment and peril."

It is with that reality in mind that UFCW Local 401 has also worked to encourage its members to become more active in the political process over the past year. Those efforts have yielded substantial results as union members have helped to make a difference at both the municipal and the provincial levels.

"I loved every minute of it," said Edmonton Sobey's member Darcy Theissen of

his experience helping out on the most recent round of municipal elections. "The excitement in a campaign office and the sense of camaraderie built between team members – it's intoxicating."

Theissen was among a number of UFCW Local 401 members who worked with local labour councils to raise awareness about Alberta's 2013 municipal elections.

"I didn't work for a particular candidate, but I think the kind of member to member campaign we ran is going to become more relevant in the future. As a Local, we have over 7,500 members in Edmonton alone.

In this last election we got over 17,000 endorsement cards to members of ours and other unions affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress and Edmonton District Labour Council. 17,000 is a colossal number of votes and can make a huge difference in any election."

One of the particular benefits of having union members participate in political campaigns is the connection they have to the communities that will feel the direct impacts of those elections. Data constantly points to the fact that political messages are best delivered



by people who voters know, preferably personally, in a familiar and informal setting.

By activating UFCW members in their own communities, they have the unparalleled capacity to connect with other working families in the community to talk about relevant issues, both sincerely and with authority.

Canadian Labour Congress Regional Representative Amanda Friestadt, who helped to coordinate union members' participation in the municipal elections in Northern Alberta, points to benefits that extend beyond single elections.

"Not only does the work of UFCW members translate directly into electing city councils

successful campaigns for newcomer Deron Bilous (MLA for Beverly-Clearview) and returning MLA David Eggen (Edmonton-Calder) to the Legislature.

Reflecting on her experience working on Deron Bilous' 2012 campaign, PTI Conklin Lodge member Juanita O'Reilly notes, "It was my first experience working on a campaign and it couldn't have been better. Deron was a phenomenal candidate who worked his heart out. I met many wonderful volunteers who I now consider close friends. My communication skills improved and I felt like I was making a difference!"

Acknowledging that UFCW members were a deciding factor in some of the Party's

the Convention to discuss vital issues facing Alberta's working families and supported a series of motions submitted by Local 401.

The great Indian activist and leader Mahatma Gandhi once said, "You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results."

The history of our union and the labour movement is a story about people coming together to do what often seemed impossible at the time. Paid maternity leave; employment and safety standards; vacation and sick time – these things that Canadians take for granted were all, at one time, hard fought victories at bargaining tables. We enjoy these

"You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results." – Mahatma Gandhi

which reflect our values, it also translates into more capacity at the local level," says Friestadt. "UFCW members live, work and play right in our communities – and this means that they are trained, ready, and able to help with other actions that benefit working people."

The local capacity of UFCW Local 401 members was on full display during the 2012 Alberta election that saw a doubling of the seats held by the NDP in the province's Legislature. In addition to re-electing Edmonton-Strathcona MLA Rachel Notley and party leader and Edmonton Highlands-Norwood MLA Brian Mason, union members played a pivotal role in generating

most important races, Alberta NDP leader Brian Mason notes, "Without the hard work of UFCW members on David Eggen and Deron Bilous' campaigns, who knows whether we would have seen the results that we saw for them! They were both hard-fought races, and having your members in those offices every day helped us ensure that we got David and Deron in the Legislature to raise the issue of working families in Alberta."

Union members also moved to strengthen the ties between the Alberta NDP and the province's labour movement at the Party's most recent Convention in Lethbridge on November 2 and 3. Sixty delegates attended

benefits as part of our working lives because working people before us refused to do nothing, even when the results of their actions weren't immediately clear.

We must be equally dogged in the political arena. Not all of the campaigns in which we engage will end the way we want them to. But increasingly, UFCW Local 401 members are learning that when we come together, we really can have an impact on the politics of our province, and build a better Alberta for all working families.

Recognizing our Stewards

Shop Stewards are the **eyes**, **ears**, and often times the **voice** of the union in their work places



Written by Douglas O'Halloran, Union President

Ask any Union Representative and they will tell you without hesitation that **Shop Stewards are the life blood of what labour unions do**. It's impossible for Reps to be at every worksite, speaking to every member, at all times. Yet, as a union, it is our job to make sure all of those members are well represented and that issues at every workplace in which we have members are being addressed.

And that is why Shop Stewards are so valuable.

More than just liaisons and intermediaries between union staff and the members, Shop Stewards are the eyes, ears, and often times the voice of the union in their work places. They not only keep an eye out for and report any issues to Union Representatives, but they take an active role in enforcing the union contract. And key to building unity in the workplace, they also look out for and build upon their relationships with fellow employees to ensure everyone gets a fair shake.

UFCW Local 401 has members literally all across the province of Alberta. So we know precisely how important our Shop Stewards are

to us. Which is why on April 6, 2013, we recognized the outstanding work of some of our most dedicated Stewards with a dinner and award ceremony.

The dinner coincided with a conference that the union put on to identify and discuss relevant and emerging issues facing workers in the area of health and safety. All conference participants were invited to attend the dinner where the efforts of outstanding Stewards in areas such as work place leadership, community involvement, educational initiative, campaign engagement and implementation, and political activity were applauded.

Over the course of the dinner, each Steward was recognized individually and presented with a plaque of appreciation from the union. Pictures of the presentations can be found on the union's Facebook page (<http://facebook.com/ufcw401>).



Additionally, participants in the Health and Safety Conference heard from speakers ranging from Al Bieksa, a training

officer for the Ontario Federation of Labour's Occupational Disability Response Team (ODRT); representatives from Alberta Occupational Health and Safety; and union representatives about how workers can empower themselves to address safety issues at work and create safer work places for everyone.

Moving forward, the union will be recognizing the work of its exceptional Shop Stewards on an annual basis in conjunction with a conference exploring a different facet of members' working lives.

Finally, thank you to all our activists and Shop Stewards. With your talents and dedication, UFCW 401 will continue to grow and be a catalyst for positive change in the lives of working Albertans!

Shop Stewards whose willingness to go above and beyond was recognized included:

Jeffery Ible
Samantha Fortin
Barbara Roy
Rod Mielnichuk
Juanita O'Reilly
Christian Nielsen
Eugene Dumont
Lucien Pascal Paulin
Carmelo Cabacungan
Charmaine St. Germaine
Beverly Waege
Margaret Unger
Michelle McLuckie
Margaret Foth
Catherine Darker
Troy Smidtas
Tom Cantley

Jeffery Ible
accepting
his award
from Theresa
McLaren,
Secretary
Treasurer



community noun
the community: po
lace, people, citi
public; residents;
citizens. 2 a monast
brotherhood, frater
3 a communit

Strong Unions Help Build STRONG COMMUNITIES

Written by Scott Payne, Communications Representative

Your union

has always believed strongly in the importance of community involvement. Unions don't exist apart from the communities in which they are located. Rather, they are made up of those very communities.

More often than not, our members are strong pillars in their community. They are the sorts of people who can't help but give back and work tirelessly to make good things happen.

So it is with a genuine sense of responsibility that UFCW Local 401 not only seeks to support the community involvement of its members, but also strives to be an organizational leader in building greater community within Alberta. And, of course, it doesn't hurt that getting involved in your community is always fun!

Such was certainly the case over the last year as your union engaged in a host of community events across the province.

On June 8 and September 1, UFCW Local 401 was proud to stand with working Albertans of all stripes by participating in the 2013 Edmonton and Calgary Pride Parades respectively. The union had a strong presence in both parades, including a beautifully decorated float, a live DJ playing music, and more than 50 members walking Parade routes lined with waving UFCW Local 401 flags.

Your union was particularly proud to support the 2013 Parades, as they were the most successful Pride events that each city had seen to date.

"It's great to see how big the Parades have gotten," said UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren. "UFCW Local 401 has long believed that sexual orientation is a human right that must be protected both inside and outside of the workplace."

Also occurring on June 8 was UFCW Local 401's annual charity golf tournament. The union has

hosted a golf tournament in Southern Alberta raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Societies of Canada for the past 26 years. The Tournament started at the Magrath Golf Course, but has since moved to the picturesque Paradise Canyon course in Lethbridge.

Many people may not know that nationally, UFCW is the single largest fundraiser for leukemia research in Canada! We are proud to be a part of this important project, which helps thousands of men, women and children every year.

This year, the Tournament saw more participants than ever and raised nearly \$15,000 for the Societies.



① UFCW Local 401 group photo before Calgary Pride Parade.

② Alex, Ashley and Chantel dancing on float Calgary Parade.

③ Douglas O'Halloran, President Edmonton Pride Parade.



The union's Women's Committee has a long-standing commitment to giving back to the community and providing assistance to those who might be in need. On June 14, the Committee's dedication was in full force as it spent the afternoon volunteering at the Hope Mission care facility in Edmonton.

Eight passionate union members helped serve lunch to over 400 homeless people. The members also prepared 1,000 sandwiches and snacks for the following day.

In late June, the entire country's attention turned to Southern Alberta as our province experience the worst flooding in its history. Thousands of Albertans were evacuated from their homes, with the rising waters ravaging communities and the entire city of High River.

The days and weeks following the flooding captured Canadians' imagination as much as the flooding itself when Southern Albertans came together to repair and rebuild their cities and towns. On June 28, MLA for Edmonton-Calder David Eggen made the

Union members joined Eggen on June 28 and 29, going to where help was needed, pitching in, and talking to affected Calgarians. Additionally, UFCW Local 401 representatives were active helping fellow members and their neighbours wherever possible.

From August 16 – 25, Calgary's premier fireworks exhibition, Globalfest, showcased talent and cultural diversity from all over the world. This year, UFCW Local 401 participated in all five evenings of the Festival, bringing the union's unique perspective to the 2013 theme: **Women's, Gender, and Identity Issues.**

Union representatives assisted with a citizenship ceremony held at the Festival, ushering new Canadians and their families to their seats. On the other nights, UFCW Local 401 set up a tent at the Festival with PSAC and CUPE to engage festival-goers on labour-related issues. The unions operated a raffle, in which members of the public could be entered after answering a skill-testing question from the Employment Standards Code.

Labour Council (EDLC) Labour Day BBQs. This year, it is estimated that more than 1,700 people attended the Calgary and Edmonton BBQs respectively.

"The Edmonton and Calgary Labour Day BBQs are a tradition in which UFCW Local 401 is happy to participate," noted UFCW Local 401 President Doug O'Halloran.

"Labour Day is an opportunity for us to reflect on the benefits that the labour movement has worked to provide to all Albertans. These BBQs serve to remind us of that work, which we often take for granted."

NDP MLAs Deron Bilous and David Eggen volunteered at the Edmonton BBQ in a show of support with Alberta's working families. Bilous also attended the Calgary BBQ.

Needless to say, it has been a busy year of community involvement for the union and one in which we could not have engaged without the help and dedication of our outstanding members.

"...it has been a busy year of community involvement for the union and one in which we could not have engaged without the help and dedication of our outstanding members."

trek to Calgary with his wife and daughter to help out with flood clean up efforts.

"I just needed to be here," said Eggen, "I needed to be in these communities and actually see what took place. We're going to be living with the impacts of these events in the Legislature for the next few years and I needed to be able to say that I was there to lend a hand."

Over all, the Festival was a resounding success as representatives spoke with several thousand people about important issues and the line up for our tent persisted throughout the entirety of the Festival.

Finally, UFCW Local 401 was proud to once again participate in the Calgary and District Labour Council (CDLC) and Edmonton and District

UFCW Local 401 knows that the foundations of a healthy province are strong and healthy communities. And we don't get those communities without strong unions and happy and healthy workers who are active and able to contribute to their neighbourhoods.

We look forward to working with our members to continue building strong communities and a better province for all Albertans moving forward.

Local 401 has a committee for you! Whether you are into safety, politics, community engagement, Women's issues or you're a young worker wanting to make a difference! Ask your Union representative on how you can contribute and be heard.

*Whether in politics, the Union or your family life,
Women's voices matter, make yours heard.*



GET INVOLVED
with the Womens Committee



Youth

Committee

**We need your thoughts and ideas
to lead us into the future!**

*If you are 28 years old or younger and
interested in joining UFCW Local 401's
Youth Committee please contact
Theresa at 403.291.1047
Outside of Calgary please call collect*

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1
youth**





Working Through The Issues at Safeway-Sobeys

Written by Theresa McLaren, Secretary Treasurer

While there remain many questions up in the air with regard to pending contract negotiations and the sale of Canada Safeway to Sobeys Inc., your union is working diligently to ensure that we get all the answers our members need. At the end of the day, regardless of the employer, we will do whatever it takes to ensure that our members' hard work is recognized and they get the contract improvements that they deserve.

The most recent news on Safeway-Sobeys is the announcement around three Safeway stores in Alberta that will be affected by the sale. On October 22, Sobeys Inc. announced that it will be looking to sell three Safeway stores (one in Fort McMurray, one in Taber, and one in Edmonton) due to a ruling from the Federal Competition Bureau.

The Bureau indicated that it would only approve Sobeys Inc. purchase of Canada Safeway if 23 stores included in that purchase were in turn sold to other grocers as viable grocery stores. The purpose of the sales is to ensure adequate competition in affected markets is maintained.

As a result of that decision, Safeway-Sobeys stated its belief that any such sale would need to include the employees working at those stores and the current union contract. Immediately following the announcement, the union communicated its belief that employees at the affected stores (Store 888 and Store 805) should be allowed to use their company seniority to "bump" into another Safeway store in their city (or bargaining unit) with the maintenance of their current contracts. Store 2346 is a stand-alone store and is its own sole bargaining unit.

While no sale for the stores is currently in place, the union has its legal council working on the issue so that we can ensure that the best interests of our members are well represented.

In addition to this development, your union is working on proposal surveys to send to members who would like to provide their input on new contract improvements via mail. The surveys will also be available on the Local's

website and Safeway members are encouraged to take a few moments to fill the survey out and provide their input.

Proposal meetings will also be held across the province in the early part of January 2014. Watch your union bulletin boards and the Local's website for exact dates.

It is clear now that the employer with whom we will be negotiating is Sobeys Inc. While this will be a new employer for our Safeway members, Sobeys is an employer with whom UFCW Local 401 has experience. As previously mentioned, UFCW Local 401 represents members at the Forest Lawn Sobeys in Calgary and the Sobeys Warehouse in Edmonton, where we were successful in negotiating decent collective agreements in 2013.

As per the timelines provided by the Collective Agreement, we will be notifying the company to bargain. The union will then look securing dates to commence the bargaining process.

As always, we will approach these negotiations with a positive outlook and work to secure a fair deal that will benefit our members and help the employer to implement a successful and sustainable business model. However, with everything surrounding these negotiations, the Local also knows that it needs to be prepared for any and all eventualities.

As we move forward, UFCW Local 401 will continue working to address the various issues around the sale of Canada Safeway to Sobeys Inc. and provide members with the information they need in order to **bargain strong together.**

JBS Lakeside Employees Are Ready To Negotiate!

Food Workers Union Provides A Strong Voice For Workers At The Brooks Plant

Written by Douglas O'Halloran, Union President

UFCW Local 401 union leaders are gearing up for another round of contract negotiations with employees of the massive packinghouse operation at Lakeside JBS in Brooks, Alberta.

Bargaining brings with it some complex issues. The beef industry is always subject to changing economics and dynamics. Trade relationships and agreements, evolving consumer tastes, government policy and things like food safety issues form the background against which UFCW Local 401 fights for the interests of employees from the Lakeside plant.

Lakeside employees have some real concerns as their union works with them to get ready for negotiations. In a way, these negotiations will be another “first” for the Lakeside workers. Those workers fought for a “first” union contract with Tyson Foods. Then they fought for a “first” union contract with XL Beef. Now they will fight for a “first” union contract with another new employer – JBS. The battle to make sure that packinghouse workers are treated fairly is a never-ending one.

Sometimes we hear the phrase, “the more things change the more they stay the same”. New ownership has not changed the nature of the problems that workers face at the Brooks plant. Has the employer invested in the plant to make sure that it is successful and that workers’ jobs are secure? Are production requirements and line speeds too hard on the workers? Is there proper training? Are bosses respectful to the employees? What about health and safety? Is management taking proper steps to protect the health and safety of the employees? When workers are injured, are there ways to make sure that employees are properly compensated while they are off work and returned to work in a sensible way when it is time? Has JBS corrected the problems that gave rise to the largest beef recall in Canadian history? What about wages and benefits? Is JBS ready and willing to bring them to new and higher standards?



Additionally, there are other important matters of concern that Lakeside workers need to see addressed at the plant. Employees want their union to have an enhanced voice and visibility in the workplace. Will JBS cooperate? And what about new Canadians and temporary foreign workers? Don't they need special protections so that they can feel secure at work and access a reasonable path to residency in this country?

These themes and others will be core issues for discussion at union negotiations with JBS. And bargaining will be tricky as these issues need to be dealt with in the context of an evolving industry.

Public perception is going to matter. We are the Food Workers Union. That means, obviously, that we care about workers in food industries. But it also means that we care about the public. Food safety is always a serious concern. The public must have confidence in the JBS product and cannot be put at risk. Also, how can a worker feel good about their job if they are not able to produce a high quality product? How can a worker at a packinghouse feel their job is secure if the consuming public is apprehensive about the safety of the beef?

There is considerable uncertainty about how bargaining a union contract with JBS will evolve. The company has not pro-actively reached out to seek union involvement in things like press conferences and public promotions of JBS. We are not asked or given a heads up about events with which we should be involved. Conversely, we have been very proactive with the media about our support for JBS' purchase of the Lakeside Plant. So the company's failure in this regard is disturbing. JBS should know that UFCW Local 401 is not afraid to expose plant deficiencies to public scrutiny.

We have been a major force on food safety in Canadian society, lobbying for our members and food processing workers generally. Recently, the Canadian government removed the matter of federal food inspection from the Department of Agriculture and brought it under the purview of matters that relate to health. But more needs to be done. The system is still too dependent on self-regulation. The fox, as they say, should not be minding the henhouse. Also, a new union contract needs special food safety language in the form of whistleblower protection so workers can bring attention to issues without penalty and a system to reduce and regulate line speeds so that worker health and safety and food safety are not lost in the endless quest for more production and profit.

I have written a lot here about questions. Lakeside JBS workers want their questions answered. They want their problems solved.

It is my job and our union's job to work with Lakeside JBS union members to answer those questions and solve those problems. Workers matter and the consuming public matters. All voices need to be heard for an agreement to be concluded with JBS.



Superstore & Liquorstore Workers

WE DID IT TOGETHER!

Written by Christine McMeckan,
Communications Representative &
Tom Hesse, Executive Assistant to
the President

For everyone at Local 401 and Alberta's Superstore & Liquorstores, 2013 will be a year to look back and reflect on as an exceptional and history-making year. Not only did Loblaw workers fight for a better Union Contract, they also waged an epic battle with a massive corporation that included a province-wide strike, (albeit a short one – just shy of 3 days). The strike was the largest of its kind in Alberta's history and set a higher standard for all retail workers across the province.

Across Alberta, approximately 8,500 Superstore & Liquorstore workers had reached a breaking point. After a long and frustrating year of negotiating with their employer, employees were presented with an offer that was truly insulting. Remember, Loblaw employees had just seen Galen Weston Jr. buy Shoppers Drug Mart for \$12.4 billion and hundreds of workers died while making clothing for Loblaw. Despite resoundingly strong strike votes province-wide and repeated indications from workers about what it would take to get a deal, Loblaw's first offer was sharply short of the target. Full of takeaways, the proposed deal sought to relegate the overwhelmingly part-time workforce to the ranks of the working poor. Loblaw's greed really showed. They had plenty of money to buy Shoppers Drug Mart, had no apparent difficulty with paying Bangladesh workers 20 cents an hour and were

ready to claw back the wages and benefits of their hardworking Canadian employees struggling to make ends meet in the richest province in the country.

Loblaw was seeking to pay newly hired employees at rates of pay that would be 30% - 40% less than those hired before the ratification of their proposal – something that the employees knew would only serve to divide their workforce and create resentment among workers over the years that would follow. Also, it was clear that this “cheaper” workforce would encourage over-hiring and provide incentive for the employer to schedule more hours for that group of workers, thus further watering down valuable available hours for existing employees.

In their first offer, Loblaw also refused to give wage increases in each year of the new contract, opting in some years for lump-sum payments

and shockingly, refused to put any increases on the wages scales in an attempt to further degrade those wage scales over the years. They refused to address the need for improved and well-funded benefit plans and refused to offer a modest sick-pay plan for their part-time workforce.

Frustratingly, in a business where food safety is paramount, they even refused to agree to whistleblower protection for employees who spot problems and report them to management in good faith. No employee should suffer any repercussions for reporting violations relating to food safety and food handling practices. However, in a disturbingly cynical move, the company's bargaining committee disagreed.

After months of difficult bargaining and with the collective strength of the union membership, (which

was unparalleled in the retail food industry), the workers decided they had been ignored and unappreciated for too long. Loblaw's concessionary offer was overwhelmingly rejected across the province (98% in both Edmonton and area and Calgary and area and 96% in a pooled vote that included Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Camrose, Red Deer, Lloydminster, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat). With a strike deadline looming and after several days of marathon bargaining, workers hit the picket lines on October 6th at 12:01 a.m., ready to stand up to their bully employer.

In an unprecedented show of strength and solidarity, Superstore & Liquorstore workers numbering in the thousands stood on picket lines in front of every single store across the province. Turning away delivery trucks and customers alike, the public sympathy for the workers was powerful.

Full page newspaper ad asking Galen Weston Jr. to do the right thing and treat his employees properly.

WE ARE ASKING LOBLAW TO DO THE RIGHT THING

As for scabs, statistically there weren't any. Sure a very small handful of people crossed picket lines. But every beautiful forest has to have a few creepy little bugs in it.

One thing the company did not bank on was the massive outpouring of public support for their workers. Consumers were clearly offended by Loblaw's greed and they were prepared to show their disgust by refusing to shop at all Loblaw stores. In fact, letters and emails from concerned Canadians flooded in from across the country even before the strike began, who all said they would support the workers in their bid for a much-improved offer of settlement. And many of those people also wrote to Loblaw CEO, Galen Weston Jr. to voice their distaste at his greed.

In fact, Local 401 did the very same thing on behalf of the hardworking employees of the Superstores & Liquorstores. But we did it in virtually every major newspaper in the country! Spending almost a half million dollars, Local 401 plead the case of its members passionately and effectively in full page newspaper ads asking Galen Weston Jr. to do the right thing and treat his employees properly.

This was not a campaign that happened by accident. When it becomes apparent that a fight with a giant like Loblaw is inevitable, preparation is key. UFCW Local 401 executives and staff worked tirelessly for more than a year before the strike actually happened, ensuring that Superstore & Liquorstore workers were informed every step of the way. Whether it was special

individual store meetings to talk to employees about the evolving bargaining process, Superstore & Liquorstore specific pocket calendars or specially designed buttons and bracelets for employees to wear at work to get their message to their customers, we ensured that no stone was left unturned in our communications strategy. Spreading our message far and wide to the public was also an important part of the overall campaign and this was done in a variety of ways.

Websites, ads in community publications and outreach through a very large web of labour activists within the labour community, the use of social media like Facebook and Twitter, special meetings for individual stores and the use of many other tools were all part of a vigorous communications strategy aimed at informing the membership and the public of the troubling issues. Because we expected that Loblaw would come to the bargaining table looking for devastating concessions, union officials and representatives took a very proactive approach that culminated in one of the biggest

Dear Galen Weston Jr.,

We are your employees working in most of your stores in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We're writing to you because we want to believe that Loblaw is the outstanding company that you say it is.

It goes without saying that you and Loblaw are leaders in Canadian business. You are the largest grocery chain in the country. You regularly win "best employer" awards and promote President's Choice children's charities. Your annual reports talk about, "exceeding customer expectations" and making your stores, "a great place to work."

Many days we like our jobs because we get to work with good people. We want to believe that you are a good man.

The last number of months have been a shocking time for us.

We are proud people. All we really want is to work hard and make a decent living. We want to be the "colleagues" you so often refer to us as and help your business to succeed.

We can't understand why you're trying to stop us at every turn.

We were very depressed when we saw our beloved Loblaw exposed as being one of the manufacturers of clothing at the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh. Our hours of work have been slashed. We can't make a living and we certainly cannot "exceed customer expectations". Stores are a mess and food safety is an issue.

You tell our customers that Loblaw can help them, "live life well". But in current labour negotiations you're telling us to roll our wage system back by 30-40%. How can working people make any sort of life for themselves with demands like that?

We understand that Canada's retail market is competitive. But we're facing fewer hours and a push for wage rollbacks at the same time that you've spent more than **\$12 billion dollars** buying Shoppers Drug Mart.

A recent US study showed that low wages and insufficient hours were forcing many Walmart workers to rely on programs like food stamps to get by. The impact of this reality has substantially tarnished Walmart's reputation and hurt its sales. We're worried that Loblaw is headed in the same direction. It seems more than a little hypocritical that you ask us to contribute to children's charities when you seem to be more than willing to contribute to the expansion of the ranks of the working poor and child poverty in Canada.

But it doesn't need to be that way.

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba Loblaw employees have voted overwhelmingly to strike. No one wants to risk their jobs and forego their regular income but we simply cannot accept your approach. We do not even feel like we are being treated as people. We are reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement. When Dr. King was assassinated, he was on his way to join a strike where African American sanitation workers were carrying signs that said, "I am a man". If there is a strike it will be one of the largest private sector disputes in Canadian history. We'll be asking Canadians to support us by staying out of your stores.

Like all leaders, you undoubtedly have choices to make. We are appealing to you to do the right thing. We are asking you to talk to us and to find a way to bridge any differences we might have.

We are asking you to be a true leader. We are asking you to be a true Canadian leader that embraces Canadian values of fairness, equity and a responsible balanced approach towards your workers.

Sincerely,

Your Loblaw employees in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

For more information, please go to: www.gounion.ca

bargaining successes to date.

We even developed and engaged in our very first flash mob. Our purple balloon event is now famous and you can find a short video about it on You Tube by searching "Fairness Day at Superstore".

In the end, the employer relented and removed the troublesome concessions they had originally proposed. The new offer contained significant improvements over its predecessor. Among the most significant victories was the elimination of the lower wage scale for new hires. The thorny issue of securing more hours for part-time



workers, which the employer flat out refused to remedy throughout negotiations, was finally addressed through

several different

means, including restrictions on management and outside vendors stocking product and improperly doing union members' jobs. The employer's outright refusal to appropriately fund the full-time and part-time benefit plans was reversed and new money now flows into those plans to keep them healthy and viable. And for the first time ever a part-time employee sick-pay plan has been introduced! This will be a trusted benefit plan. That means that the employer doesn't control it. Union and company trustees have already met and the terms of the plan are being finalized with an independent consultant that specializes in the construction of such benefit.

The much sought after "whistleblower" protection was also secured. A good wage offer was included that did away with lump-sum payments and gave employees actual wage increases including increases to the wage scales. All full-time jobs were guaranteed for the term of the Agreement, adding much needed job security for those workers. And the list goes on and on.

When it was all said and done, this was a campaign that the Superstore & Liquorstore workers could be

proud of. They took to the picket lines with a vigour and passion for change that has rarely been seen before among retail workers in Alberta and for that, they should be proud. But in many respects, the hard work starts now.

Union contracts are only as good as their enforcement. You can write the best laws to govern your society and keep people safe; but unless you enforce those laws, they are meaningless. The same is true of union contracts. The rules within that document must be followed and when they are not, it is up to the workers to expose the company.

The most important rule is; know your contract! We must know the rules of the game. If management is breaking the rules, members must let their Shop Steward or Union Representative know. It is imperative that violations are reported. We need details including who was involved, when the infraction happened, and what exactly occurred? These need to be reported to the union immediately so that we can take steps to correct the situation.

With the need for enforcement comes the need for local "police". Many of you stood up and showed your strength and passion during the short lived strike. It's now your time

to follow through and shine. Shop Stewards are needed more now than ever. We invite and welcome all dedicated and thoughtful Superstore & Liquorstore workers to step up and become Stewards. Without people on the shop floor keeping a watchful eye on the "criminals" there is little chance that the rules you've fought so hard to get will be enforced. Those who are interested should their Union Representative. You may be selected to get paid time off for training!

Unless we are enforcing these rules on a daily basis, these new rules are worthless. But together, we can make improvements every day and be truly proud of what has been accomplished. **We did it together... and together change will continue to happen.**



Find your new union contract at:

Superstoreunioncontract.ca

Liquorstoreunioncontract.ca



Edmonton: 780.452.0362
Calgary: 403.291.1047
Lethbridge: 403.328.4245
Fort McMurray: 780.743.4190

The Government of Alberta's Ten Biggest Bully Moments of 2013



Written by
Douglas O'Halloran, Union President

It goes without saying that 2013 has not been a good year for Alberta's conservative government.

Alison Redford and her colleagues have been dogged by scandals and missteps from basically start to finish.

Though, looking at things from a different perspective, if you're the kind of person who roots for the bad guy in movies, 2013 has been a great year! While not popular with the media and a majority of Albertans, our bully government has trampled and pushed its way through a veritable mountain of issues, regardless of the damage its actions have inflicted upon the province.

In fact, our bully government's disregard for the opinions and interests of the folks who elected them is so overwhelming that it can be hard to keep up with everything they've done over the course of the year.

To help you out, UFCW Local 401 has put together a year in review of the Government of Alberta's Biggest Bully Moments of 2013. We'll go through the ways in which Alison Redford and her fellow juggernauts have stomped all over Albertans month-by-month throughout the year.

January:

Tobacco-gate Conflict of Interest Investigation

1 Bullies often like to present an image that is much different from their actions. True to form, the Government of Alberta likes to talk a lot about accountability and its commitment to serving the people of Alberta. But fresh out of the gates in 2013, their hypocrisy became clear as the province's Ethics Commissioner announced he was launching an investigation involving Premier Redford.

It seemed that Redford was involved in a potential conflict of interest when as Minister of Justice she handpicked a group of law firms that included the firm owned and operated by her ex-husband to represent the province in a \$10 million lawsuit against tobacco companies. The charges were dropped, but many still feel that Redford's actions represented a significant breach of trust with both the Legislature and the voting public.

February:

Coercing Alberta's Teachers

2 Bullies and teachers go together about as well as oil and water. So it came as no great surprise that just one month later, Alberta's bully government attempted to short-change the province's teachers during contract negotiations. Teachers had not been receiving much in the way of satisfaction from their attempts to find a fair deal with the province. In February, workload issues remained unresolved and pay increases were the stuff of fairy tales.

To add insult to injury, Minister of Education Jeff Johnson attempted to coerce teachers into taking the province's latest deal by threatening to cut their salaries if they didn't acquiesce. Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) President Carol Henderson reminded the Minister that, "Teachers do not respond well to ultimatums."

But you know who likes to give ultimatums? Bullies.

March:

The Budget, Education Cuts, and Closing Michener Centre

3 March was a whopper of a month for our bully government what with the release of the province's austerity budget scheduled for early in the month. Few sectors escaped unscathed, but post-secondary institutions took a sizeable chunk of the abuse, fielding a \$100 million cut. Elementary and secondary schools were also hit with a \$20 million funding cut.

The impacts of those cuts were hardly academic. Universities across the province reduced offerings in, or outright suspended entire programs. At the elementary and secondary level, the Alberta Teachers' Association estimated that the cuts would force more than 11,000 students to enter classrooms without sufficient resources to support their learning.

As if that wasn't more than enough, our bully government also announced that it would be closing the Michener Centre in Red Deer later that month. The Michener Centre provides a home to individuals who have serious developmental issues and has been a valuable resource to many in the province.

The government's decision to close the Centre came with absolutely no consultation and ran against the express wishes of the Centre's residents and their families and guardians.

April:

Edmonton Remand Centre Walkout

4

In April, our bully government had what was perhaps its biggest and most public tussle of the year with Alberta's working families.

For months, security guards at Edmonton's Remand Centre had been raising concern about safety issues in their workplace and the lack of action on addressing those concerns. When representatives of the guards were reprimanded for their continued efforts, the guards had had enough and walked off the job, exercising their right to refuse unsafe work and bringing public attention to the situation.

The tactic worked, with overwhelming attention paid to the issue and the public largely siding with the Guards. But angry that its disregard for worker safety had been revealed, the government continued punishing the Guards for doing the right thing after the dispute was settled – handing down exorbitant fines, threatening to withhold resources and deduct union dues for remittance to their union, and even firing some guards to set an example.

Why seek resolution when you can extract retribution?

May:

Bully Government and Teachers – Round 2

5

In politics, summer months can often be slow, as vacation plans set in for elected officials and voters alike. But as the school year came to a close, things between Alberta's government and the province's teachers began to heat back up. Back in February, the Minister of Education had told teachers to accept the province's contract offer or else face salary cuts. The Alberta Teachers' Association Executive had rejected the offer in protest. Eventually, negotiations resumed and a tentative deal was finally struck.

However, some school boards (Calgary) and bargaining units (St. Albert) felt that the deal did not serve anyone's interests and elected to reject it. While unanimous consent was not a requirement to pass the deal, Alberta's bully government decided it was time to take their draconian bullying to a new level.

Education Minister Jeff Johnson took the jaw-dropping step of introducing legislation that forced dissenting teachers and boards to accept the offer. No other jurisdiction in Canada has ever seen a government official with the gall to overrule a duly elected body like a school board so blatantly, setting a new record for political abuse in Alberta.

June:

Bully Government Beats Up On Nurses

6

If there were one group of workers you might have thought were safe from unfair treatment, it would be nurses. Who doesn't like nurses? Alberta's bully government – that's who.

In June, nurses in Alberta began sounding alarm bells over Alberta Health Services' (AHS) and the government's efforts to remove skilled nursing jobs and replace them with less expensive, less rigorously trained, and non-unionized workers. The United Nurses of Alberta

estimated that close to 200 jobs had been lost by nurses to date, which was difficult to reconcile given the AHS' posted surplus of \$106 million in 2012.

"You slowly pick away at these things and hope nobody notices because you're just doing a few at a time, but they add up and have a greater impact on the services that Albertans are receiving," said UNA's Jane Sustrik.

But, when was the last time a bully actually cared about the impacts of their actions?

July:

Homecare Workers' Trampled

7

This summer was not a good one for Alberta's health care system. After waging its quiet war on nurses, the Government of Alberta decided it was time to punish home care workers.

Home care workers and Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) members at Extendicare facilities across the province had been in difficult negotiations with their employer for some time over a number of issues. In particular, massive concession demands from the employer around sick time stood to place patients at risk if workers felt compelled to come to work while unwell.

Negotiations had come to an impasse and AUPE had served 72-hour strike notice. But instead of letting the dispute run its legally entitled course, our bully government intervened and forced the home care workers into arbitration by appointing a Disputes Inquiry Board.

Not surprisingly, stripping workers of their ability to effectively bargain meant that they were not only forced to take the employer's original concessions, but also lost more ground in the process.

However, this incident does go to show that bullies will look out for someone else on occasion: other bullies.

[

"Alberta is the only province in Canada not to provide farm and agricultural workers with basic employment rights like OHS."

August:

Farm Workers Remain Without Basic Rights

8

August was a special month for Alberta's bully government. During her campaign to become Premier, Alison Redford promised to extend basic rights to farm workers, like inclusion in the province's Occupational Health and Safety and Employment Codes. The race ended in 2011 and Redford won, but farm workers are still without those basic rights.

Alberta is the only province in Canada not to provide farm and agricultural workers with basic employment rights like OHS. Couple that with the fact that statistically farm workers are the most likely of any worker in the province to get injured on the job and Redford's callous failure to live up to her word is down right reprehensible.

September:

Minimum Wage; Still Sucks and Attack On Pensions

9

As September rolled around, our bully government had particular surprises in store for public sector workers and minimum wage earners returning to the bustle of fall.

On the face of it, an increase in Alberta's minimum wage was a "good news" announcement. And, of course, enabling lower-wage earners the opportunity to place a few more coins in their pocket is a good thing.

Fairness is not a word that stands out very prominently in a bully's vocabulary

But as the Alberta Federation of Labour pointed out, even with an increase, Alberta's minimum wage remains the lowest in the entire country.

"A terrible wage that keeps up with inflation will remain a terrible wage," said Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan. "How can it be that the richest province is the stingiest? Alberta has a booming economy, a high cost of living, but even with this increase, we have the lowest minimum wage in the country?"

Fairness is not a word that stands out very prominently in a bully's vocabulary, Gil.

As for public employees, well they weren't making minimum wage, but it was high time to address the "golden plated" pensions that ensured them an exorbitant retirement income of \$12,414 per year.

Epitomizing a solution in search of a problem mentality, Finance Minister Doug Horner acknowledged that the plans were not actually unsustainable and that there was no evidence to suggest that a review or any changes were in fact necessary. Nonetheless, Horner and our bully government have since introduced proposed changes to strip public workers in Alberta of some of their hard-earned retirement security.

But, you know, when was the last time a bully needed reasons and evidence to steal your lunch money?

"A terrible wage that keeps up with inflation will remain a terrible wage,"

said **Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan.**

As for November and December, the deadline for this article fell prior to either of those months. But we feel confident that something will come up based on experience and the exceptionally busy year our bully government has had to date.

See you next year!

October: *Thy Name Is Privatization*

10

October presented twin efforts by our bully government to ram their agenda of privatization down Albertans' throats with no consultation or concern.

A memo leaked to the NDP and the AUPE outlined the government's plan to award a \$3 billion contract for the vast majority of the province's medical lab services to a single private, for-profit company. The contract aimed to centralize the services and cut costs, but the companies who were being considered are on record as having issues with over-billing and price disputes. Thankfully, the plan has since been scrapped due to public outrage and concerted efforts by AUPE and the NDP.

In another privatization effort, the Redford government is looking at turning the operations of the province's Land and Titles Office over to a private company.

In this particular instance, the office in question actually turns a small profit for the province, which would be forfeited were it run by a private contractor. And far from cutting costs, in addition to handing over the modest profit, the deal would still leave the province on the hook for any compensation required due to errors by the contractor.

Neither of these proposals make a lot of sense for Albertans. But far be it for Alberta's bully government to let annoying things like facts get in the way of ideology when it comes to decision-making.

The UFCW 401's Communications "Machine"



Written by Theresa McLaren, Secretary Treasurer

For many years now, UFCW 401 has strived to make sure that members felt not only connected to their union, but also in the loop on the many issues affecting their day-to-day lives. This is no easy task. With members working all over the province, many in remote locations, effective communications strategies continue to be a challenge for all unions and social justice organizations.

One of the challenges we face is how to meet the needs and preferences of our membership in how they receive information and news. With busy schedules and limited free time, many of us view picking up a magazine or a book as a luxury and may prefer a quick newsletter. Some of us like to kick our heels up on a quiet day off and catch up on all our news over coffee. Others prefer our newsfeeds through social media like Facebook or Twitter. And there are some who want the message delivered right to our lunchrooms at work in bite sized pieces as they pass the time on a break.

Most of us are visual and enjoy something with relatable imagery and a succinct message to think about. But ultimately, we all

have our particular preferences and there is no "one size fits all" solution.

With this in mind and after years of trying it all, Local 401 has recently developed a diverse communications strategy that includes a variety of ways to talk to the membership and keep you informed. Whether it's through our main website or the many campaign specific websites, emails, social media pages, newsletters, union bulletin boards, or schools and seminars, we are always looking for new and innovative ways to stay connected.

Most recently, we have experimented with the use of telephone town hall meetings. During the Superstore & Liquorstore campaign we were able to connect with thousands of workers around the province to not only pass along critical information involving their difficult negotiations with Loblaw, but also to exchange ideas and take questions from those who participated. Participants were able to ask questions directly and also vote via polling questions designed to help union officials understand how people felt on specific issues. It was an

Reaching Out To Members & The Public Alike

extraordinary communications tool that was immensely helpful in creating a productive dialogue with those members.

Another form of communication we are experimenting with more and more is the use of mass emailing. Over the last year, we have been diligently gathering email addresses from the membership in order to send out important communications to thousands of dues paying members with the click of a button. Keeping people in the loop on the many different matters affecting them is a critical part of our mandate and our developing email lists are a vital part of this overall communications strategy. If you're not receiving emails from us, please contact your local union office and ask them to put you on the list so you are sure to get up to the minute information about

important matters affecting you and your workplace.



Also, in keeping with 401's continuing

efforts to reach out to the broader community, our President, Douglas O'Halloran, recently started blogging with the Huffington

Post Alberta. You can now find Doug talking about a variety of different issues affecting all Albertans at huffingtonpost.ca/doug-oahalloran/.

It's important for all of us to remember that the gains that unions make not only benefit their membership, they create laws and better standards of living for all people. Laws governing workers, whether unionized or not, are a direct result of the hard work of unions and the members of those unions pushing for a better system. Lobbying governments and encouraging values consistent with average working Canadians within those governments has always been an essential part of our mandate. Reaching out to our communities through major news publications is a part of utilizing available resources to achieve these goals.

While we've worked closely with design companies over recent years, in 2011 the Local hired a full-time graphic designer. With over 17 years experience, Cori Torres has a background in Design and Illustration, creative direction, project and budget management, and supplier outsource research. Cori is a welcome addition to our staff and provides expertise in designing eye-catching materials used every day by Union Representatives and members alike.

Cori is responsible for the upkeep of the various websites and developing new materials for the many campaigns in which Local 401 is involved. In addition to that work, Cori is also responsible for the design of our websites, collective agreements, calendars, project logos, and various posters, which you see on your lunchroom bulletin boards.

A position for a full-time Communications Representative was also created in 2012. Christine McMeckan was moved from servicing to this new role and is responsible in part for maintaining the Local's website content, creative messaging within the various union publications, media relations, and course facilitation as needed.

We have also enlisted the creativity of Scott Payne, who works on contract out

of the Calgary office. With a background in political organizing, strategic communications, and new media, Scott helps to round out the strategies utilized by the union. Whether he's writing articles for the website or creating infographics and videos to share through our web of electronic media sources, Scott is a valuable addition to the Communications Department.

UFCW Local 401 is always working on ways to make sure you are kept up to date on matters that affect you. Whether it's something affecting your workplace directly or something affecting your community, we strive to ensure you are connected. It's not enough that you know how to reach your union... your union **MUST** know how to reach out to you. And we will continue to develop new and better ways to make that happen.



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2013 has been a busy year, not only because of the many things we've accomplished and continue to work on, but also because of staff coming and going. We want to take a moment to acknowledge our retirees and welcome, with open arms, our newest staff.

It's often been said that working for a union is not as much a "job" as it is a way of life. At UFCW 401, there are no shortage of battles and campaigns. We are not only involved in day-to-day issues in dozens of different workplaces, but are also engaged in a tremendous amount of community work and social justice work affecting all Albertans. It is commonplace to see Local 401 staff at community functions outside of regular office hours.

Whether it's visiting workplaces or fighting it out for members in hearing rooms, raising money for leukemia research or taking part in Pride Week festivals and parades, the staff at Local 401 are not often in short supply of things to keep us busy.

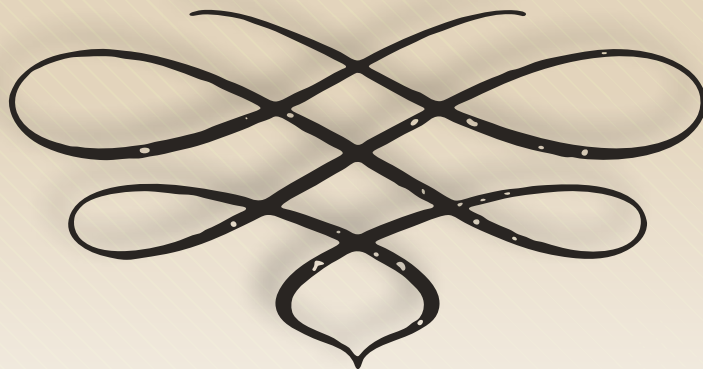
We'd like to take a moment to recognize our retiring staff from 2013, as well as the new staff that have come aboard.

Rick Vermette recently retired on October 1st after 10 years at the Local. Rick brought a world of expertise to the membership as one of our full-time WCB advocates. When members had difficulty navigating their compensation claims, Rick was a dedicated and worthy advocate to have in their corner.


A Moment To Say



To Those Who Serve UFCW 401 Members



Rick has a long history in the trade union movement as a dedicated member of the Carpenter's union. Over the ensuing years, Rick not only served the members of his union, but also Alberta workers more generally as a Vice President of the Alberta Federation of Labour. It was through his activism within the AFL that Rick was recruited by the WCB to serve on a task force whose mandate was to review WCB policy regarding long-term injured workers. Seeing what a great handle he had on the issues facing these workers, Rick was asked by the Appeals Commission to serve as its Chairman.



Rick plans to spend his retirement enjoying the company of his lovely wife, Linda, and their friends with a focus on traveling to some of their favourite places both locally and around the world.

UFCW Local 401 and its members thank Rick for his work on their behalf — he will be sorely missed.

Another retiring Representative is Lou Craig. Lou first became a member of UFCW Local 373A when she was hired in March of 1977 as a full-time meat wrapper for Canada Safeway. Lou quickly became an active member of Local 373A and was elected to its Executive Board as a unit Vice President in the early 80's.

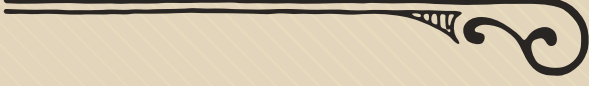
In 1986, Lou was recruited as a relief rep and was subsequently hired full-time in February of 1987. Lou went on to become Secretary Treasurer of Local 373A. In addition to those duties, Lou also serviced a number of stores and negotiated union contracts within Southern Alberta.

In 2007, the membership of Local 373A voted to merge with Local 401 and Lou became the Executive Assistant to the Secretary Treasurer, in addition to servicing various newly merged units.

During her years at both Local 373A and Local 401, Lou has been a Trustee to several benefit plans, including the Alberta Retail Meat Dental Plan, the National Defense Fund and the Safeway Part-Time Benefit Trust. Lou will remain involved with some of those plans after her retirement. Finally, Lou was 1st Vice President of the United Council of Food and Commercial Workers until resigning from that position in September of 2013 in anticipation of her retirement.

We thank you, Lou, for your many years of dedicated service. You will be missed by all who worked with you over the years.

We also welcome several new faces to Local 401 this year. Each person adds a great new dynamic to our growing Local.



In 2008, Joe Irving became a Local 401 member when he was hired by the Real Canadian Superstore at the Signal Hill store in Calgary after moving to Alberta from Windsor, Ontario.

Joe quickly saw the importance in becoming a Shop Steward and got more involved with the union through courses offered by Local 401, such as the facilitator and organizing courses. In 2011, Joe enrolled in UFCW National Office's Youth Internship Program (YIP) and flourished in Local 401's Special Projects Union Representative (SPUR) program, which gave him the hands-on experience of full-time organizing.

In January 2013, Joe was hired by Local 401 on full-time basis. Joe currently works around the province talking to Alberta workers about the benefits of joining Local 401 and enjoying the backing of a union contract.

Tammy is a long time member who started with Canada Safeway in 1986 in the deli department. No matter what store she has worked in over the years, Tammy always enjoyed interacting with customers.

An active picketer during the 1997 Safeway strike, and a single mom at the time, Tammy often found the rewards of standing up for herself far outweighed the difficulties she faced. Tammy's union activities eventually lead to her providing assistance in the Calgary Office and in the opportunity to begin working full-time with the Local.

Tammy will tell you that belonging to the union afforded her many educational advantages over the years, as well as better pay, benefits and having "someone in her corner". When asked about her impression of her new workplace, Tammy says, "In the short time I have worked for UFCW Local 401, I have witnessed the Representatives help so many people with their work issues and their lives in general. It reminds me of how proud I am to be part of Local 401, and how lucky I am to work with such dedicated individuals."



Rick Schneider has been an active member for many years and began working as a relief rep in 2011 until he was hired as a full-time Union Representative earlier this year. Rick has been a member since 1980 when he began working at Canada Safeway, predominantly working grocery night crew at several different locations over the years. With all these years of service, it is rare for Rick to walk into any Safeway store and not know at least a few of the members or management personnel.

Rick was appointed as a Shop Steward in 1993 by his Union Representative at the time, Bruce Dean.

In 2001, Rick took part in an organizing campaign at Lakeside Packers in Brooks, which he describes as “a very eye opening experience”. Rick was shocked to hear how poorly the workers were being treated at that time and it inspired him to want to do more work with the union.

Rick began working on many different political campaigns in 2013. Whether civic, provincial or federal in focus, Rick found a passion for politics that continues to this day.

Ricks’ activism in the union has ranged from being elected to Local 401’s Executive Board to being appointed to sit on the union’s bargaining committee for Safeway negotiations.

When he’s not working on campaigns and representing his members in Edmonton and Lloydminster, Rick says he unwinds with sports, reading and being with friends and family. But what Rick says he most enjoys is the feeling of knowing that in some way, he gets to help workers and make a difference in their lives.

Another talented addition to our stellar group of clerical staff is Tammy Robichaud, who works in the Fort McMurray office. Hired May 7th of this year, Tammy enjoys being part of the Fort McMurray family.

Originally from Moncton, NB, Tammy, like a lot of people back East, came to Alberta for its

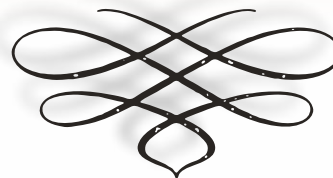
wonderful opportunities and has now made Alberta her home.

Tammy feels that since commencing her employment with the UFCW Local 401, she has gained a greater understanding of the labour movement and in particular, Local 401’s commitment to their members. “I may be one of thousands, however, being on staff at 401 in Fort McMurray, I have never felt more unique and more valuable each and every day”, she says.

Another newly hired Union Representative, Clayton Herriot, was born and raised in Calgary. Previous to his employment with Local 401, Clayton was an active member working at Old Dutch Foods for 18 years and acting as Chief Shop Steward for a little over 16 of those years. Sitting as a member of several different bargaining committees, as well as serving as one of the Vice Presidents on the executive boards of both Local 373A prior to the merger and with Local 401 after, he brings a wealth of knowledge and spirit to the union.

Over the last 18 years, Clayton says he has not only joined a strong and supportive union family, he has created his own. With 4 children and a loving and supportive wife, Clayton and his family have found a place within the Local 401 family. “I can say that with each destination reached, the road is always full of adventure with UFCW Local 401.”

We welcome all the great new people and look forward to many successes with all they bring to the table. And we also wish our departing valued retirees all the best in their travels and adventures. People may come and go over the years, but the impact and their unique contributions deserve recognition and celebration. From the members and staff of UFCW Local 401, we say thank you to all who have taken the time to make a difference in the lives of Alberta’s workers.





There Are Unionized Casinos In Alberta! *Let's Talk About Tips...*

Gaming is a controversial industry. But if it's "your thing", you can do your thing and support working people. Put your chips on the right table. You might win and you might lose but you can at least know that you are supporting a unionized business where workers have a voice and there is a system in place to make sure that fairness is part of the employment deal.

The employees at the Palace Casino in West Edmonton Mall, and at the Baccarat Casino in downtown Edmonton are unionized with UFCW Local 401.

Negotiations are coming up for the Palace Casino. We anticipate that Baccarat employees will "end up" moving to a new downtown complex linked to the Edmonton Oilers' new arena facility.

As in every set of union negotiations, there will be a number of issues on the table in Palace bargaining. One of them will undoubtedly relate to the issue of tips. Unfortunately, in the service industries a union negotiator cannot sit there every time a hard working employee provides outstanding service. At those moments – hopefully – patrons are generous with tipping. Put another way,

employees do not have the benefit of a professional union negotiator sitting with them every time a customer gives them a tip. If your union was there, we would ask for more. But we can't be. When tips are not fairly distributed and they aren't high enough, what can the union do?

We are not fond of any remuneration system that is tip dependant. Workers should be paid fairly by the company for which they work. It's plain and simple. A tip is something extra. You can't get a mortgage depending on tip income. You never know whether tips will be there or not. In Palace Casino negotiations, and in all negotiations, Local 401 pursues fair wages and proper benefits. Tip based remuneration, unfortunately, is something employers promote to avoid their economic responsibilities toward workers.

Our union's way of dealing with tips is to refuse to accept a debate that is based on them. The debate should be about fair and proper wages and benefits. In gaming, the Alberta government gets rich and private businesses enjoy the seemingly endless flow of money. Gamblers often lose more than they win. We are all told that it is "entertainment".

At the end of the day, you can ask, "what matters to my union?" The answer is straightforward: we fight along side workers for fairness at work. Seniority matters. Representation matters. Wages and benefits matter.

Unionized workers would like to give non-union workers a "tip". Get a union! If you know of anyone working in the gaming industry, encourage them to call us about bringing the benefit of unionization to their casino. This is an under-represented industry and the need for a strong union presence is key to making positive changes for these hard working people.

And next time you are in the Palace Casino or the Baccarat Casino, say hello to your fellow union members. And do give them a good tip. While being unionized has made a real difference there, there is much work left to do. Tipping is still part of the system and when you tip well you can feel good that you are helping to support and celebrate the fact that the employees in those workplaces fight to improve the rights of all working people through unionization.

Protecting Your Rights Takes

UFCW 401 All The Way

To The Supreme Court

Written by Christine McMeckan, Communications Representative



Christine McMeckan, Thomas Hesse, Katrina Piechotta, in front of the Supreme Court the day of the hearing.

What seems like a lifetime ago, there was a lengthy strike at UFCW Local 401. It was a battle of epic proportion involving what was then our newest group of members who worked at the Palace Casino in West Edmonton Mall. Back then, Gateway Casinos was very opposed to their workers merging their staff association with Local 401. Obviously, they knew that joining a real union with real strength to take them on was going to put a wrinkle in their plan to continue ignoring their workers' many concerns.

After a very acrimonious and highly employer-opposed organizing campaign, the workers became members of the union in 2005 and bargaining began to achieve a first UFCW union contract. As one could imagine, local Palace Casino management did everything they could to avoid reaching a first contract with their workers and their new union, and a strike commenced in September 2006. Lasting 10 months, the Palace Casino strike was the longest in the Local's history. But in the end, the workers won many improvements, some of which the employer said would never happen. But with this strike came another fight, one that we did not anticipate, and one that has been a long and winding road and could affect unionized workers across the country.

Early in the strike, Local 401 set up a website dedicated to casting a light on and shaming people who crossed the picket line. To be clear, anyone who crosses a picket line is NOT neutral. Those who cross a picket line have sided with the employer. That action is aiding the employer in their fight against the striking or locked out workers. It may be a "choice" but it is in no sense "neutral". Just as choosing to not cross a picket line means you are choosing to support the picketers.

Casinoscabs.ca was launched as one of the many tools available to us to stop people from – or at least get them to think twice about – crossing the picket line and doing business with the casino during the strike. Large signs were positioned in highly visible places near the main entrance of the casino warning people that if they crossed the picket line, they may find their picture on casinoscabs.ca. It created a lot of interest and discussion among passers-by and allowed us an opportunity to talk to people and tell them why we were on strike and why they needed to support the workers. There was no secrecy; we were very open with people about our intent should they decide to support the employer and do business with them during the strike. Giving people the choice with all the information was key. After all, we didn't want to simply post people's pictures on the website secretly. We actually wanted to deter people crossing the picket line in the first place. Not surprisingly, the employer objected to this and several individuals filed complaints with the Information and Privacy Commission of Alberta. None of these people had their pictures posted on the website; they objected to picketers taking their pictures at all. This was particularly interesting to

us because not only was the employer taking our pictures with cameras and video, this was a picket line in West Edmonton Mall, which contains hundreds, if not thousands of surveillance cameras. Additionally, the Casino itself has surveillance cameras covering nearly every square inch of the public areas. With all of these cameras, the expectation of privacy was extremely low, but they pressed on with their complaints. The three complaints that proceeded to hearing before a delegate of the Information and Privacy Commissioner were those of the manager of the Casino, Howard Worrell, along with an employee who scabbed during the strike, and a retired lawyer who thought his right to cross the picket line to get his \$2.95 breakfast once a week meant we couldn't post his image on our website.

What became apparent was the privacy legislation governing Alberta, the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) was far too broad and prohibited unions from exercising their constitutional rights while engaged in lawful picket line activity. We discovered that PIPA is so unduly restrictive that it actually prevented the union and its members from even describing an incident on the picket line involving a conversation or altercation with the company's President, would be customers, or other employees! Effectively, Alberta's privacy legislation makes no distinction between a member of an organization secretly viewing someone's private medical information, and observing someone in public and talking about it. Seems a bit of a stretch to view these two things in the same light, but the current PIPA legislation does this.

"...we knew that PIPA violated The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in that it restricts freedom of speech and we sought vigorously to fix that."

Based on the way Alberta's privacy law is written, the delegate of the Information and Privacy Commissioner had no choice but to rule against the union. Therefore, she determined that we were not allowed to collect images at all, and most certainly not use websites to post pictures of those who crossed our picket lines. Never a union that shies away from a fight, we knew that PIPA violated The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in that it restricts freedom of speech and we sought vigorously to fix that. We were left with no alternative but to take the issue to the Courts because this ruling not only affected us, but stood to affect every other member of every other union in Alberta and have far reaching and damaging effects on the efficacy of picket line activity and freedom of speech across the province.

We brought a constitutional challenge to PIPA to the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench and argued that PIPA infringed on our protected rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Justice Goss of the Court of Queen's Bench agreed and stated in her decision that the right to freedom of expression encompasses informing union members and the public about the strike; dissuading

people from crossing the picket line; deterring violence and threats; promoting resolution of the dispute; creating a training and educational tool; and supporting morale.

The Attorney General of Alberta (essentially the Alberta Government) appealed the decision to the Alberta Court of Appeal. That Court also agreed that PIPA violated the Charter. While the Court of Appeal did not strike down PIPA, they ruled that PIPA was unconstitutional in this case. They ruled that in fact it was perfectly lawful for us to videotape and photograph our picket lines in the manner we were.

The Attorney General of Alberta and Alberta's Information and Privacy Commissioner applied for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Their applications were eventually granted and UFCW Local 401 was off to the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) to defend our win. Getting to the Supreme Court depends on whether the matter is of national significance or considered important enough to warrant a decision by the Court. According to their website, of the approximately 600 applications reviewed by the SCC (by a panel of 3 judges) each year, only roughly 80 applications for leave to appeal are granted. That's a pretty small percentage of cases to be heard given the number of applicants.

The issue of collecting images on picket lines encompasses within it issues of freedom of expression and the right to participate in lawful union activity, rights enjoyed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which forms part of Canada's Constitution. Given its impact on

Continued on page 29

FAIRNESS WORKS

C'EST BON D'ÊTRE JUSTE

This year, the Canadian Labour Congress embarked on one of our biggest projects in history. While we know the value of unions to all Canadians, we want to make sure that this message is spread far and wide - so all working families can stand up together for fairness for everyone.

When workers get together and stand up for fairness they get results. Together working people have won decent wages, safer workplaces, fair treatment and benefits like paid vacation time, job training and insurance coverage for things like glasses, dental care and medicine things that keep them healthy and productive.

We didn't stop there. What we got at work, we got for everyone by standing together and demanding more from the people we elected to boards, councils and legislatures. That's how we all got some of the things most of us take for granted today – minimum wages, statutory holidays, paid vacation time, public health insurance, public pensions weekends, etc.

What great accomplishments for all of Canada! That's why the CLC and all our affiliate unions are taking action.

You've likely seen an commercial on TV lately that features the labour movement. It's set to a remake of the 1966 classic "Sunny" by Bobby Hebb and features regular working people enjoying regular life events – like a vacation or day on the job. They are holding up a popsicle which depicts a benefit that all working people enjoy. The ad ends with the tagline "The labour movement is not just about decent jobs. It's about a better life for everyone."

Many people have been sharing their thoughts on the commercial – and they love it! We've been seeing members and non-members alike tweet, email, and post their reactions on Facebook since it came out. In fact, at the end of October, Todd Humber of *HR Reporter* wrote an article depicting the charm of the labour movement and talking about how great the ads are.

We'd really like to know what YOU think... Check it out at www.canadianlabour.ca and tweet us your thoughts using the hashtag #fairnessworks.

FAIRNESS WORKS – www.fairnessworks.ca – Amanda Freistadt, CLC Regional Representative



picketing, Alberta's privacy act is at risk of being deemed too restrictive in light of the Charter. This was a matter the SCC felt it needed to consider. The Supreme Court granted leave to appeal and heard our case in June of this year. The Court has yet to give its decision.

While we wait for the decision, we continue to celebrate our success at the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench and the Alberta Court of Appeal and we are very hopeful that the Supreme Court will uphold the decisions of these courts. UFCW 401 is no stranger to taking on matters affecting all workers across the country and we have found ourselves shaping and maturing Canadian law. Freedom of expression and the right as union members to get our message out to the public are priorities that we will always fight for.

The Alberta Labour Relations Code states clearly that the purpose of picketing is "to persuade or endeavour to persuade anyone not to (a) enter the employer's place of business, operations or employment; (b) deal in or handle the products of the employer; or (c) do business with the employer." Beyond that, in our view, the purpose of picketing is also not limited to the

particular dispute at hand. Unions have always been part of a broader social movement and picketing itself constitutes political expression. In persuading the public to support their cause, workers are also drawing the public's attention to social and political issues and the plight of workers generally. Various courts have recognised this valuable contribution to our democratic system. Justice La Forest noted that unions "play a role in shaping the political, economic and social context within which particular Collective Agreements and labour relations disputes will be negotiated or resolved."

Our freedoms and rights as a group of people who shape law in this country are at stake in this important battle. And we are hopeful that the highest court in the land will agree with us.

Stay tuned! We will update you once the Supreme Court gives its decision. No matter which way it goes, you can be sure that UFCW Local 401 will always be at the forefront of the battle for workers' rights, freedom of expression and speech and nurturing a healthy democracy in which we can all grow and flourish.

BREAKING NEWS - RULING HANDED DOWN!

On November 15, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision dismissing the Alberta Government's and Alberta Privacy Commissioner's appeals. The Court agreed with the union that the legislation's restriction on the union's freedom of expression is unconstitutional because it does not allow us to collect, use and disclose personal information for the purpose of advancing our interests in a labour dispute. The Court noted the fundamental importance of freedom of expression during labour disputes and that picketing is a CRUCIAL form of expression with strong historical roots. By restricting a union's ability to communicate about a strike and persuade the public to support its cause, the legislation impairs unions' and striking workers' use of one of the most effective bargaining strategies. While the legislation serves a legitimate, pressing and substantial objective, they said, in the context of a labour dispute it has a disproportionately negative impact on a union's freedom of expression and therefore breaches the Charter. The Court declared the legislation to be unconstitutional, and has given the Alberta government 12 months to amend the legislation to make it constitutionally compliant.

This is an amazing win for workers across the country and a significant win for Local 401 members! Stay tuned for the next edition of Your Voice for more on this victory and its implications.



A Voice For All Working Albertans

Written by Joe Irving, Union Representative, Clayton Herriot, Union Representative, and Archie Duckworth, Union Representative



In addition to representing the almost 30,000 members we have across the province, UFCW Local 401 is constantly looking to engage non-member workers in various industries to see how we can improve the conditions in their workplaces. Our motto is, "A voice for working Albertans." And that means a voice for all working Albertans, both members and non-members.

As in most areas, it's been a busy year of organizing for the union, full of both victories and challenges. Northern Alberta has seen a great deal of action as workers at various campsites are seeking a better workplace experience through collective action.

UFCW Local 401 has successfully organized new members of the PTI group at Anzac lodge, Devon Sites, as well as McKay River. Despite the tremendous physical distances between these workers and the challenges those distances present, PTI workers have been opting for the union advantage to make sure they and their co-workers are provided the hard-earned recognition they deserve.

Additionally, at the Nexen Long Lake Site, the union was successful in liberating 125 workers from the Christians Labour Association of Canada, a fake labour union that purports to represent workers best interests, but regularly negotiates contracts that only benefit

employers. The workers were dissatisfied with the representation they had been receiving from CLAC and wanted to join a union that would fight for their dignity and respect in the workplace.

The Local sat down with the workers to show them what a real union could do for them and

Throughout the year, UFCW Local 401 members have consistently voiced their support and enthusiasm for improving the lives of all workers in Alberta.

convinced them that UFCW was the union best suited to address their needs. As well, the case that UFCW Local 401 presented was so compelling that the Alberta Labour Relations Board elected to fine Aramark for colluding with CLAC around its misrepresentation and unfair labour practices.

The primary issues facing home care workers at Balwin Villa and Grand Manor in Edmonton were a lack of overtime, an inability to receive full-time status, and near constant confusion over how to qualify for raises. The workers knew they were entitled to these things, but felt like the company was only ever paying their concerns lip service.

The Local was able to show these workers how bargaining strong together would enable them to get the answers they sought and the action they needed. After a short education campaign, Balwin Villa and Grand Manor workers took the opportunity to voice their support for UFCW Local 401, turning out in record numbers and voting 91% in favour of joining the union at both locations.

Since the vote to join UFCW, all of the workers at both locations have been contacted to reaffirm their commitment to membership and contract negotiations are being scheduled for the earliest dates possible.

At the Lucerne Milk Plant in Edmonton, Lab Technicians had been excluded from the benefits enjoyed by their co-workers for far too long. When the rest of the Plant's workers entered contract negotiations, everyone saw the opportunity and worked with the UFCW Local 401 organizing team to seek a modification to the bargaining unit's certificate that would finally resolve this outstanding issue.

Not only did the move stand to benefit the Lab

Technicians, who would finally be protected by a union contract and gain access to the benefits of that contract, but it also stood to benefit the rest of the workers by strengthening their bargaining position. When the votes were counted, the Lab Technicians unanimously elected to join the bargaining unit and avail themselves of the victories won over the course of negotiations, including a substantial increase in wages.

None of these important victories would be possible without the support of our members. Throughout the year, UFCW Local 401 members have consistently voiced their support and enthusiasm for improving the lives of all workers in Alberta. Some of our members have worked directly on these organizing campaigns and, of course, the organizing resources that come in the form of dues that members contribute are vital to fulfilling the union's goals.

We look forward to another year of organizing in 2014 and working to build a better province for working families throughout Alberta.

Changes To Occupational Health and Safety In Alberta

Written by Cam Sherk, Education Representative

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act of Alberta is provincial legislation that aims to achieve a goal we all share: creating and maintaining safe workplaces.

At any work site, safety has to be the top priority. It doesn't matter how profitable or efficient a company might be, if their operations place workers in harm's way, they have a problem.

The OHS Act sets out the legal requirements by which employers are bound to provide their employees with safe work environments. The Act looks at a broad cross-section of safety factors, including: equipment, hours, training, manpower, and many other things. Provincial legislation provides unions representatives and workers with a basis for holding employers accountable on the issue of safety.

However, even with provincial legislation in place, the task of enforcement can be challenging. Having rules makes little difference if those rules aren't enforced and if there are not consequences for breaking the rules.

OHS officers have a number of tools at their disposal when it comes to enforcement of the Act. However, in an effort to step up compliance with existing requirements, officers will be able to issue tickets to both workers and employers who break the rules beginning in January 2014.

While ticketing will be primarily aimed at irresponsible employers, it is important for workers to be familiar with the requirements at their work site. This is true both to ensure workers are contributing positively to the safety of their workplace, but also to ensure that an accidental infraction does not result in an expensive ticket.

Ticketable infractions range from workers failing to utilize available safety equipment to irresponsible

behavior (riding on top of a load that is moving) and are specific to different types of work sites. Tickets will range from \$100 - \$500 depending the type and severity of the infraction.

OHS officers will also have the ability to issue administrative penalties for chronic infractions and repeat offenders. Administrative penalties may be set as high as \$10,000, depending on the severity of the infraction and the history of offence at the work site.

For more information on both ticketable offences and administrative penalties, you can visit Alberta Human Services' website at: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/working-in-alberta/ticketing-and-administrative-penalties.html>

At the end of the day, we all want to create and maintain safe workplaces, because safe workplaces are productive and profitable workplaces. No matter your position, you must take responsibility for contributing to safety at your work site.

Make sure you take a few moments to read up on the new provisions available to OHS officers that might impact your workplace. And if you see infractions of those provisions, contact your Union Representative immediately so that the situation can be addressed.



PTI/Buffalo Metis Catering Bargaining About to Commence – Are They “Camps” Or Are They “Lodges”?

As the years have passed, have you noticed that many people have started referring to temporary housing in the north as “lodge accommodation”, as opposed to “camp accommodation”?

In our view, this can be interpreted, at least in part, as an attempt to convince workers that life and working conditions in these areas has improved significantly. The word “camps” suggests that you are roughing it in a less than desirable circumstance. You are living “in the wild”. The word “lodges” suggests a privileged, almost vacation-like experience.

It is nice to use the word “lodge”, but UFCW Local 401 believes that a lot of work needs to be done in the Buffalo Metis/PTI locations to improve terms and conditions of employment and the working environment.

Union members have been working with Local 401 Representatives to take their problems and concerns to the bargaining table with PTI management. Our members have many concerns and their voices must be heard.



A preliminary review of the issues and the feeling of employees reveal that workers are feeling more and more like a number and less and less like people. The feeling of being a human being is being eroded. Workers report that both physically and psychologically they are “unable to breathe”.

Workers feel like cattle at times, as they are “herded” in and out of the camps. Extended hours and production requirements wear employees down. The feeling of isolation and separation from loved ones, combined with these other factors, magnifies the negative experience for many. The structures in which you live and work, no matter how dressed up they are, can be problematic. Most time is spent indoors and these structures can “choke” you. They are interconnected boxes with poor ventilation. They are at risk for mould. Workspaces and housing spaces create an augmented sense of being “closed in”. Some workplace rules are very strict and PTI and big oil companies use security forces to keep a watchful eye. Yet those security forces are deprived of their right to have a union themselves.



That is not to say that the outside does not come into the web of stitched together trailers where PTI employees must work and live. Thousands of workers from multiple industrial sites bring dust, chemicals, and all that is associated with the tar sands and its industrial and environmental trappings into the temporary boxes where UFCW 401 members work and live. Interpersonal problems with other workers can bring stress as well, as there is no “escaping” the “terrarium” in which you are “trapped”. Throw a bad boss or an arrogant and disrespectful chef into the mix and the situation can become impossible. What may otherwise be a small issue, becomes magnified in the intense environment where you can never escape the tensions that emerge after working more than 10 hours per day for 21 days at a time.

Few outsiders appreciate the sacrifices that Local 401 members make to ensure that Alberta achieves its oil production goals. Most say that the pay and benefits are so good that workers should simply “suck it up”.

From Local 401’s point of view that is NO answer! Frankly, the pay and benefits aren’t good enough and they need to improve. If it weren’t for the hard work of Local 401 members in these workplaces, the wealth of the oil patch would not be created for anyone. Workers are subject to layoffs as the viability of these work camps becomes linked to the wishes of big oil companies. There has to be a more humane way to run this business.

Historically, PTI has been relatively sensitive to the needs of its employees. In recent times; however, we worry that their success and their proximity to Big Oil is distancing them from the needs of their hardworking staff.

We are proud of our many achievements in improving the working lives of Local 401 members at Buffalo Metis Catering operations. But we face new challenges, many of which have been set out here. We are not quite ready to call these workplaces “lodges” yet. Employees are still feeling like they are in work camps with little sense of respect for their human needs. They are losing their feeling of being a human being. They feel as though they cannot breathe.

PTI/Buffalo Metis Catering employees are strong and are excited about UFCW Local 401 union negotiations. We hope PTI is ready to listen and ready to make real change.

All of us would like to call these workplaces “lodges” with a straight face and with a smile. In the meantime, workers feel like they are choking and that is something that needs to change.





2013 Negotiations – A Year In Review

Written by Christine McMeekan, Communications Representative

Local 401 is a diverse union with a very diverse membership. That fact is not surprising given we represent nearly 30,000 workers in every corner of the province and in a variety of different sectors. Representing workers in retail food, meatpacking and poultry facilities, food processing and manufacturing, oil and gas, warehousing, distilleries, gaming, and even in the trade union movement itself comes with a great deal of responsibility and presents unique organizational challenges.

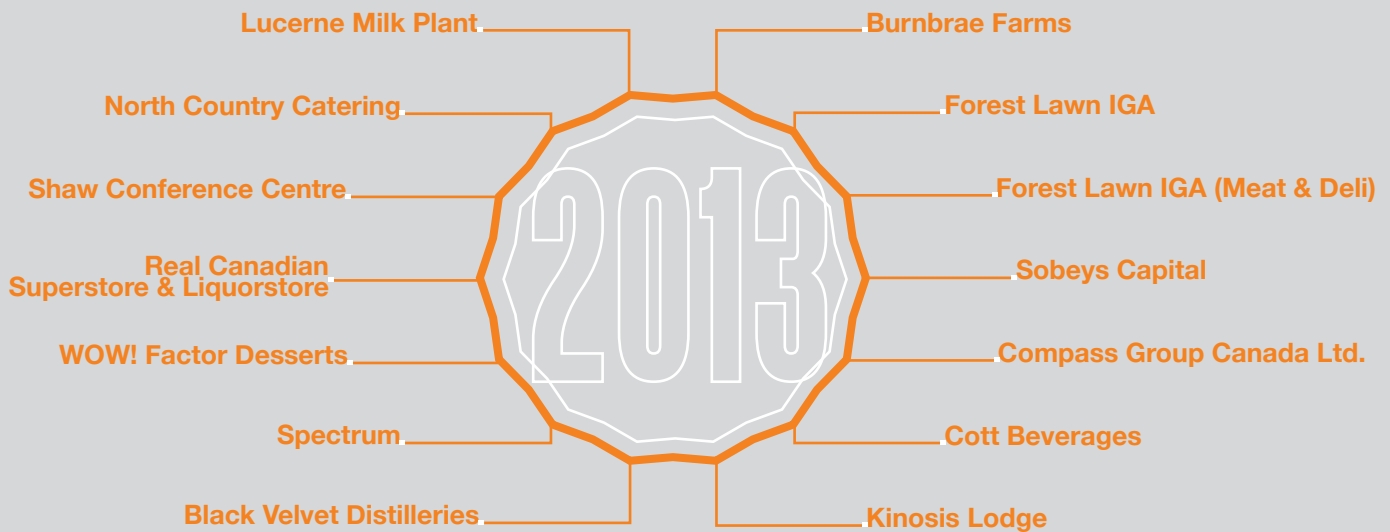
Overseeing dozens of Union Contracts, (or Collective Agreements) can be mindboggling for those of us outside the very busy Negotiations Department. In addition to contract language, legislation can also dictate what must happen and when, and a close eye must be kept on all these details for numerous individual union contracts. While most are under provincial legislation, there are a few that fall under federal legislation, each with unique requirements and obligations.

Some of these contracts have a very long history and have evolved over time to become industry leaders regarding rights and benefits. Others are in their infancy, if the workplace has only recently been unionized, for example.

Each of the dozens of different workplaces under contract with UFCW Local 401 has a unique relationship with the union, both in terms of the workers who make up the membership and the management of the company. As one can well imagine, this dynamic makes each set of negotiations unique, which can make for very interesting relations between the parties at times.

The Negotiations Department has 2 full-time Negotiators. Al Olinek and Lee Clarke oversee the day-to-day maintenance of the many soon to be expiring union contracts. Al and Lee are experienced Union Representatives who lead the process of negotiating these contracts, along with committees made up of workers within the specific workplaces. Both Al and Lee must have an intimate understanding of the law governing contract negotiations and the inner-workings and history of each workplace.

**Newly negotiated
union contracts
this year include:**



In addition to Al and Lee, the Executive Staff of Local 401 often negotiate contracts. The Executive Staff includes UFCW Local 401 President, Douglas O'Halloran, Secretary Treasurer, Theresa McLaren, Assistant to the President, Thomas Hesse and Assistant to the Secretary Treasurer, Lou Craig. Needless to say, your union has evolved into a very sophisticated organization based on the needs of our members and this department has become extremely adept and proficient at its job.

There are many improvements within these Agreements that continue to raise industry standards. Whether it's improved health benefits like those at the Lucerne Milk Plant and the Safeway Warehouse or vast improvements to quality of life and family leave at Wow! Factor Desserts and the Garrison at the Canadian Forces Base, hard fought improvements to union contracts are a key part of the process.

Sometimes negotiations lead to strikes and lockouts, and this year included one of the biggest strikes the Local has ever seen. Workers at the Real Canadian Superstores & Liquorstores went on strike to fight off devastating concessions proposed by their employer, and their fight back led to a vastly improved offer. This improved offer included wage increases, retro pay, improved health benefits for both full-time and part-time employees – including the addition of a brand new part-time sick-pay plan – and vastly improved representational rights and job security provisions. Not bad for a strike that lasted less than 48 hours!

The Negotiations Department at Local 401 could very well be considered the lifeblood of the union and there is no shortage of hard working people and expertise within it. This year has been an extremely productive and rewarding one for all those involved and special congratulations are in order.

While we celebrate the successes we've cultivated, much work continues to be done and we are ready for all the challenges ahead in 2014.

UFCW National: Setting a new standard for worker engagement on Facebook



Over the past year, your national union, UFCW Canada, has set the standard for engaging union members and yet-to-be organized workers through their favourite social media websites, especially Facebook, where the UFCW is once again leading the way.

In the last few months, UFCW Canada's national Facebook page has broken the more than a million views mark on a number of different occasions: making it by far the most visited and visible Facebook page of any labour union in Canada (facebook.com/ufcwcanada). In fact, UFCW Canada's Facebook efforts earned more than 1.3 million views in October 2013 alone – as the digital reach of Canada's leading and most progressive union continues to grow.

Propelling the October wave was a series of UFCW Canada infographics that took aim at Stephen Harper, his corrupt regime, and the web of deceit surrounding the "Duffygate" senate scandal. One of the humorous memes, called "*Harper's Growing Scandal*", reached, engaged and entertained more than 430,000 Facebook users with its parody of Boss Harper sprouting as Pinocchio.

Altogether, this series of pointed memes hit the target – not only by capturing hundreds of thousands of views – but also by generating more than 10,000 shares, likes, and comments; as well as driving thousands of visitors back to the main UFCW Canada main web site (ufcw.ca) for additional news, content, and downloads.

The dynamic resonance between the UFCW Canada Facebook page and the UFCW Canada web site has also earned international acclaim. In October, ufcw.ca was awarded the *Best Content Award* by the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA). A UFCW Facebook infographic, "*Dear Prime Minister Harper, the Public Purse is Not Your War Chest!*" which went viral and earned more than 1,000,000 views, also received an ILCA Award in the category of *Best Visual Communications*.

Plus, your national union also earned tremendous support from Facebook users this past March on International Women's Day when UFCW Canada published an infographic to expose Harper's attack on equality and women's rights that – again – went viral with more than 6,000 shares.



To join UFCW Canada's growing network of Digital Union Activists, visit and Like the UFCW Canada Facebook page today at facebook.com/ufcwcanada!

401 EVENTS CALENDAR

january

1	New Year's Day
8 – 10	Union Education Course – Health and Safety – Edmonton
20 – 21	Bargaining Dates – ADM Milling Co.
21 – 23	Union Course – Health and Safety – Calgary
26 – 28	Union Education Course – Health and Safety – Fort McMurray
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
30	Union General Membership Meeting – Red Deer
30	Union General Membership Meeting – Grand Prairie
30 – 31	Union Education Course – Health and Safety – Fort McMurray
31	Chinese New Year

february

1	Union Education Course – Health and Safety – Fort McMurray
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Lethbridge
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Banff
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Camrose
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Fort McMurray
4	World Cancer Day
5	Union General Membership Meeting – Medicine Hat
5	Union General Membership Meeting – Canmore
5	Union General Membership Meetings (9am and 6pm) – Conklin Lodge
6	Union General Membership Meeting – Taber
6 – 7	Bargaining Dates – ADM Milling Co.
10	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Beaver River Executive Lodge
11	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Athabasca Lodge
11	Union General Membership Meeting – Brooks
14	Valentine's Day
17	Family Day
18	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Henday Lodge
19 – 21	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Refresher – Calgary
20	World Day of Social Justice
21	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Wapasu West
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Hinton
24	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Wapasu Main/East
25 – 28	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Course – Calgary
28	International Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day

401 EVENTS CALENDAR

march

5 – 6	Union Education Course – Bullying and Violence – Edmonton
7	Union Education Course – WCB – Edmonton
8	International Women's Day
9	Daylight Savings Time Begins
10	Union Education Course – WCB – Calgary
11 – 12	Union Education Course – Bullying and Violence – Calgary
17	St. Patrick's Day
18 – 21	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Course – Edmonton
21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22	World Water Day
25	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
26	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
26 – 27	Union Education Course – Cultural Comfort – Edmonton
27	Union General Membership Meeting – Red Deer
27	Union General Membership Meeting – Grand Prairie

april

1	Union General Membership Meeting – Camrose
1	Union General Membership Meeting – Fort McMurray
2	Union General Membership Meeting – Lloydminster
2	Union General Membership Meeting – Medicine Hat
2	Union General Membership Meetings (9am and 6pm) – Conklin Lodge
7	World Health Day
7	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Beaver River Executive Lodge
8	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Athabasca Lodge
9 – 11	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Refresher – Edmonton
14	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Henday Lodge
15	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Wapasu West
17	Equality Day
18	Good Friday
20	Easter Sunday
21	Easter Monday
22	Earth Day
22	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Wapasu Main/East
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Athabasca
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Hinton
28	National Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job
29 – May 2	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Course – Calgary

401 EVENTS CALENDAR

may

April 29 – 2	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Course – Calgary
3	World Press Freedom Day
11	Mothers' Day
12 – 14	Union Education Course – Public Speaking – Calgary
15	International Day of Families
15 – 16	Union Education Course – Cultural Comfort – Calgary
19	Victoria Day
21 – 23	Union Education Course – Public Speaking – Edmonton
27	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
27	Union General Membership Meeting – Lethbridge
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Taber
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Red Deer
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Grand Prairie

Don't forget to check your Union Bulletin Board or ufcw401.ca for updates or changes to 401 Events

june

2	Union General Membership Meeting – Banff
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Camrose
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Fort McMurray
3 – 6	Union Education Course – Shop Steward Course – Edmonton
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Medicine Hat
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Canmore
4	Union General Membership Meetings (9am and 6pm) – Conklin Lodge
5	World Environment Day
7	Pride Parade in Edmonton
9	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Beaver River Executive Lodge
9	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Athabasca Lodge
10	Union General Membership Meeting – Brooks
12	World Day Against Child Labour
15	Fathers' Day
16	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Henday Lodge
17	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Wapasu West
20	Union General Membership Meetings (1pm and 8pm) – Wapasu Main/East
21	National Aboriginal Day
23	Union General Membership Meeting – Hinton
26	Union General Membership Meeting – Athabasca

Bad Boss?

Over Worked?

Under Paid?

We have all been overworked, under paid and had a bad boss. When this happens workers are left with a number of options. They can quit and find another job, they can accept the treatment, or they can do something about it. Confidentially contacting the Union is the first step in doing something about your working conditions.

Statistics show the unionized workers have higher wages, better benefits and retirement plans. Your employer will never know that you have contacted the Union, let us show you the Union advantage.

1.877.468.6466

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Alberta's New Democrats

Because Alberta Belongs To You

Dear brothers and sisters,

We'd like to offer you our congratulations on winning your fight for a fair contract for Superstore workers.

Every New Democrat MLA and many of our members joined you on the picket lines. Your determined action and solidarity is an inspiration for us.



Brian Mason, MLA
Leader of Alberta's NDP



www.albertaNDP.ca
or call 780-474-2415

Unions:

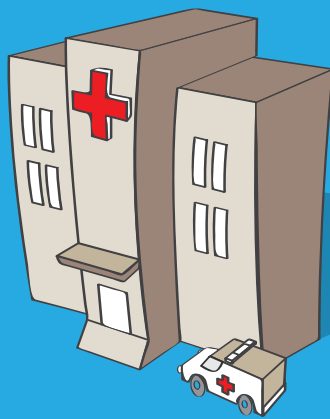
Bringing you a Canadian standard of living.



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in the Workplace**



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Medicare**



**Workplace
Health & Safety**



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