

your voice



United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401
Vol. 104 - Oct. - Dec. 2014



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OUR UNION'S YEAR IN REVIEW

A Fresh Start for Alberta?

Safeway/Sobeys Negotiations:
The Storm Is Upon Us

UFCW 401's New Website Launch

UFCW Local 401 Breaks Ground on
Landmark Calgary Building

your voice

United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401 - Vol. 104 - Oct. - Dec. 2014



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Building on Our Successes



Every time I think we've set a new bar as a local union, we seem to find a way of exceeding our previous achievements and going even further. As tremendously successful as we were in 2013, I can't help but look at all we've accomplished in 2014 and conclude that we really have built on our successes.

While it started a number of years ago, it was in 2014 that we learned of the true impact that our challenge to the province's privacy laws would have on workers' rights to organize not just in Alberta, but across the country. Our court challenge went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada – and we won!

Over the summer, we organized a successful Members' Conference in beautiful Kananaskis. More than 200 UFCW 401 members from across the province attended the Conference, building the personal relationships that underlie the success of our local union and discussing how those relationships will help us build a better future for all workers.

We also built on our successes at Superstore by organizing a Stewards' Conference. The language won in our landmark strike against the employer demanded that we engage and empower those members to assist in maintaining our victories. The Conference provided an avenue for greater involvement in the work of the local union amongst Superstore members and will serve as a model for other members across the province.

Speaking of which, Safeway members have had their hands more than full between the sale of Canada Safeway to Sobeys and the beginning of negotiations with the new employer. While negotiations seemed to get off to a good start, the storm we feared on the horizon is now upon us as Safeway workers aim to fight back against Sobeys' concessionary demands.

The creation of the Community Action Network (CAN) Committee has resulted in an explosion of community involvement by our local union. Whether fundraising for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada, participating in Pride Parades, or getting involved in local events like ReggaeFest, GlobalFest, and the Temporary Foreign Workers' Appreciation BBQ, UFCW Local 401 continues to show how much it values the communities in which our members live and work.

As if all of that weren't enough, we also broke ground on our new building in Calgary, took on CLAC to ensure Save-On Foods workers in Alberta know what a real union can do for them, had even more of our members get involved in the political process and boost the success of the NDP in Alberta, continued our tradition of negotiating strong contracts for our members, and we're launching a new website!

As always, we wouldn't have been able to do any of it without the energy and enthusiasm of our members. The successes of the local union are your successes because – you are the union!

In closing, let me wish everyone a wonderful end to 2014. We've worked hard and I hope that everyone will have at least a small opportunity to rest and appreciate all that we've accomplished.

I'll see you all in 2015 for another successful year!

Sincerely and In Solidarity,

Theresa McLaren
Secretary Treasurer
UFCW Local 401

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2014 has been a wild ride for workers in the province of Alberta. It seems like every time you open a newspaper or surf the web for some local news, you're reading about one scandal or another, whether within the province or across the country. However, what is unique about our readership is that belonging to a union provides a heightened level of protection and ensures they have a strong voice to use with their employer. This fact is becoming more and more prevalent around the world - that the biggest counterbalance available to workers in fighting back against corporate greed and government corruption is to stand up collectively with their union and push back. You need only to look to Alberta's healthcare workers and Walmart workers across the U.S. to see the benefits of this collective action and strength.

In this issue of *Your Voice* you will find stories that focus on the past year and some of the major events that Local 401 members and staff participated in as well as new and exciting things that are on the horizon for 2015. No stranger to diving into matters of significance, our union is proud to not only continue to represent the interests of our nearly 30,000 members across Alberta but also to find new and innovative ways of doing so. Being the largest private sector union in a province that is a major player in North American economics carries with it massive responsibility and we take that responsibility seriously. We sincerely hope you enjoy the stories contained within this issue as much as we have enjoyed writing them to share with you.

We hope you are having a wonderful and safe holiday season and we wish all the best to you and yours in 2015!

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UFCW Local 401 Breaks Ground On Landmark Calgary Building

Written by Lama Alsafi, Communications
and Education Representative



It is a new start for labour organizations in the city of Calgary as UFCW Local 401 broke ground on the construction of a landmark building that will serve as the Local 401's head office in Calgary, as well as house the offices of other innovative allies in the city.

Members of the UFCW Local 401 community, including the Local 401 Executive Board, gathered in Calgary for the occasion on a sunny Monday, October 6, 2014. High profile personalities in attendance were UFCW Local 401 President Doug O'Halloran, Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren, Alberta NDP Leader and MLA, Rachley Notley and Leonard Bastien with the Piikani Nation who opened the ground-breaking ceremony with a traditional blessing.

Mr. Bastien, of the Blackfoot Confederacy, honoured the 401 community in attendance by offering blessings for safety during construction and for the best possible outcomes in the use of the new building to benefit local families and communities under the protection of UFCW Local 401. In the customary Piikani blessing ceremony, Mr. Bastien prayed to the Creator and Mother Earth for the overall success of the project and the work of UFCW Local 401 to bring needed services and opportunities to local families and communities.

The new two-story building will be located on McKnight Boulevard in

Calgary's North East, just a few blocks from the current location of the union office. Construction of the building, which has been in the works since the 2001 purchase of the land, is an accomplishment for Local 401 in more ways than one considering the current hostile political climate in this province that challenges the very existence of unions today. As expressed by UFCW Local 401 President O'Halloran, the new space will finally give Alberta's House of Labour the strong presence it deserves in Calgary at a time when unions in this province are facing attacks by parties such as the Conservatives and Wildrose.

"As workers look to build a prosperous future for themselves and their families, they know that unions are a key partner in helping them secure their goals. Our new building will give them the place to find that help," said President O'Halloran.

NDP Leader Rachel Notley further noted that despite the recent political efforts to delegitimize the presence of unions, **"unions like UFCW Local 401 are thriving, adding new members, and helping to build a modern and more progressive Alberta."** UFCW Local 401 will soon have a new home fit to represent the true scale and influence of the organization as Alberta's largest private sector union and leading progressive voice of working people in this province.



The new facility, set for completion by late 2015, will strengthen the presence of Labour in Alberta and will be a house for the members of Local 401. The new cutting-edge headquarters will also be a place where our growth as an organization is unfettered by the constraints of the current Calgary office location. It will also help Local 401 search for new and improved ways to provide services to our members, their families and the communities in which they live. UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren noted the modern features of the new location will allow the union to increase the range of services we can deliver to our members. **"We're constantly working to raise the bar on the services we're able to provide our members,"** said McLaren.

The new structure will feature state of the art educational facilities and upgraded technical capabilities giving members an overall improved learning experience and an opportunity to update their life and job skills in a comfortable large or small group education environment. Among the building's many features will also be a 25-foot digital billboard, counselling and meeting rooms, enlarged office space as well as an open atrium lobby to welcome members and guests.

Safeway/Sobeys Negotiations: The Storm Is Upon Us

By September,
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Written by
Theresa McLaren,
Secretary Treasurer

From the outset of negotiations with Safeway/Sobeys, we were concerned that there might be a storm coming.

Negotiating with a new employer is challenging for everyone involved and the Safeway members' negotiating committee didn't know whether it was walking into meetings with Safeway or Sobeys. Each employer has their own style of negotiating and the committee was unanimous that it preferred dealing with Safeway.

To begin with, it looked like the negotiating committee was going to get its wish. Negotiations started swiftly and with a great deal of progress. The negotiating committee was able to move through more than half of the non-monetary proposals it brought to the table in the first three sets of negotiations.

That sort of progress set a new bar for what the local had ever been able to achieve in a three-week period with Safeway.

However, the committee's optimism was short lived. By September, the employer had begun to put the brakes on negotiations in a substantial fashion and storm clouds seemed to be gathering on the horizon.

Over the course of negotiations from September 29 – October 3, the committee managed to deal with approximately 20 non-monetary items on the table. Despite that tremendous work, the employer remained unsatisfied.

In fact, after acting as the primary impediment to successful negotiations, Safeway/Sobeys had the gall to come to one of our meetings and express disappointment over the lack of progress achieved. This kind of two-faced behavior is simply unacceptable and the negotiating committee let the company know that in no uncertain terms.



It has now become clear that we are dealing with Sobeys at the negotiating table and not Safeway. That is unfortunate, because while we have had our ups and downs with Safeway, the union has always eventually been able to find some common ground with the company through productive negotiations.

Sobeys is a different story.

Despite Sobeys' purchase of Canada Safeway, which marked the company's major entrance into the western Canadian grocery market, UFCW Local 401 and Sobeys are not without some history. And that history tells us that Sobeys is often not friendly to the interests of our members.

Now, the storm is upon us and we know that Sobeys is looking to secure substantial concessions from negotiations. While there are a number of concessions they have placed on the table, the two big issues are the removal of department managers from the union and giving suppliers the ability to stock shelves.

Removing department managers from the union is a lose-lose proposition. Department managers would lose the strength they enjoy from union representation and their increased workloads would take much-needed hours from the remaining bargaining unit members. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of department managers are opposed to this move.

Allowing suppliers to stock shelves in stores would further erode hours currently allotted to Safeway members. One can only imagine that Safeway/Sobeys would look to allow the largest suppliers in to do stocking, which would result in substantial reductions in scheduled hours for bargaining unit members.

Needless to say, the negotiating committee and the union stand firmly opposed to these concessions. Through them, the employer is attempting to erode the quality of the Safeway members' contract, which is unacceptable.

UFCW Local 401's goal in negotiations is not simply to stand our ground on our members' contracts, but to improve them every time we go to the table. Our members are rarely afraid to fight for what they

Our members are rarely afraid to fight for what they deserve, and as their union we are never afraid to back them up – no matter how big the employer.

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If Sobeys thinks that UFCW 401 members will roll over on their concessionary demands without a fight, they should go talk to Loblaw's to find out how that strategy worked

out for them. We have advised Safeway/Sobeys that if they are not prepared to move on their concessionary issues, we will be applying for mediation.

There is a strong possibility that we will have to take a strike vote to ensure Safeway/Sobeys know that we are serious about not lowering the Safeway contract to Sobeys' level. And we are confident that Safeway members are prepared to send the employer a strong message.

Safeway members know that if we do not stand up to Safeway/Sobeys now, things will only get worse. This time they are after hours. Next time they will more than likely be coming after our benefits and we can't allow the company to take away the long standing benefits we have earned and deserve!

If you are a Safeway worker, please stay up to date on negotiations by visiting **gounion.ca** and clicking on the special section just for Safeway members on the home page. Visit this web site regularly for updates, and ensure we have your up to date contact information at **gounion.ca/stayconnected** so you can receive regular email updates regarding negotiations as they develop.

If you are not a Safeway worker, but would like to show your support for the fight your brothers and sisters are gearing up to have with their employer, contact your full-time Union Representative to discuss the best way of doing so.

We can and will beat back Sobeys' attempts to erode the Safeway contract in Alberta and weather this storm by sticking together. The workers united will never be defeated!

Cott Beverages West Ltd.

Written by Lama Alsafi, Communications and Education Representative

While the Teamsters represent all other Cott Beverages plants across Canada, there is one unique plant in Calgary represented by UFCW Local 401 that is near and dear to the hearts of many here at the union. Maybe the reason so many of us are sweet on Cott is because they seem to exhibit a collective strength that is admirable for a relatively small unit of less than one hundred employees. For UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer, Theresa McLaren, the affection is personal, as the Secretary Treasurer had personally serviced Cott Beverages as part of her former duties as a Union Representative.

When asked what makes Cott Beverages so special, Secretary Treasurer McLaren said, "they are a tight knit group and are pretty union friendly, even the workers who did not welcome us at first now see the benefit of the union. Union members working at Cott, such as Jason Parrell and Ben Salenius are also particularly active in the activities of the union and in the community," said McLaren.

Secretary Treasurer McLaren reports that bargaining in 2013 succeeded in giving workers of Cott a new and improved Collective Agreement despite that the actual business at the time was not their best in the industry. Further, she also notes that workers at Cott achieved a good contract at a time when other people weren't so fortunate.

Today, we can see workers at Cott continue to experience success as they effectively implement their 2013 Collective Agreement and reap its

negotiated benefits, won for them by the members of their bargaining committee. It's exactly this sense of community that Secretary Treasurer McLaren describes that has allowed Cott workers to win a better quality union contract whose benefits and protection they now enjoy, including:

- Wage increases in each year of a four year deal;
- Six weeks of vacation time granted after 20 years of service (whereas before this was given at 25 years of service);
- The ability to carry over unused banked over time to a maximum of 80 hours;
- Major introduction of a prescription drug card and para-medical benefits;
- Five per cent increase in the amount covered by the employer for drugs;
- Improved vision care and dental coverage;
- Scaled increases in safety boot allowance;

The benefits enjoyed by Cott workers might not exist today were it not for the dedication of all the Shop Stewards at Cott and of all the members of the bargaining team, according to Secretary Treasurer McLaren. She goes on to thank in particular, Stewards Brian Feser, Ken Hamilton and Ben Salenius for their devoted efforts. "Cott Beverages is a highlight in UFCW 401 negotiations, she continued, "because



it goes to show that though all other facilities are represented by another union, we can still achieve what we want and in some circumstances achieve even more than expected. Of course, we can't do it without an active membership that stands firmly behind us as Cott members did, giving us strength in our position at the negotiating table."

In her message to other smaller sized units around the province similar to Cott that are represented by UFCW Local 401, Secretary Treasurer McLaren said, "this union strongly feels that each worker is as important as the next and that no one is above the other. We are a measuredly diversified union and are not just about Superstore or Safeway – big or small, all union members will be represented equitably and that is our commitment to the members."

UFCW Local 401 members are encouraged to attend an upcoming general membership meeting in their area and see how they can become more active in their union. Ask questions and have your voice heard by those such as Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren, who can often be found attending one of these meetings across Alberta. Please check the calendar of events on our website at gounion.ca for more information on the next Union General Meeting in your area.

"this union strongly feels that each worker is as important as the next and that no one is above the other."

A Busy Year for UFCW Local 401 in the Community!

To say that it has been a busy year for UFCW Local 401 when it comes to community events would be an understatement. In recent years, the Local has recognized a renewed importance around being active in and supporting the communities in which its members live.

About a year ago, the Local union launched its CAN (Community Action Network) committee. The purposes of CAN is to engage members who are already active in their communities and give them a way to also represent UFCW 401 in those activities.

The success of the CAN speaks for itself:

The End of Immigration? Film Screening

On March 8, 2014, UFCW Local 401 presented a screening of the film *The End of Immigration?* in conjunction with *Migrante Alberta*. The film focuses on the growing practice among Canadian companies of bringing temporary foreign workers into the country with empty (and usually broken) promises to perform work in often-unacceptable conditions and at criminally and immorally low wages.

Turn out for the event was fantastic and included an opportunity to discuss issues in greater depth with two temporary foreign workers featured in the film, Malcolm Guy (one of the film's directors), and immigration advocate and expert Yessy Byl.

As well, NDP Leader, MLA, and Labour Critic Rachel Notley stopped by the screening to speak with participants about why the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is such an important issue in Alberta and what the Alberta NDP is doing to address ongoing problems with the Program.

"The Temporary Foreign Worker Program has been problematic almost from the start," said Notley. "Workers are given empty promises about citizenship that never materialize and employer abuse is not uncommon. What we need to do is explore legitimate pathways to permanent residency for foreign workers that also enhance Alberta's economy."

UFCW Local 401 looks forward to organizing future events to bring further awareness to the issues facing temporary foreign and other migrant workers in Alberta.

Youth Committee Blood Drive

April 11 was Global Youth Service Day and the Edmonton Youth Committee wanted to do something special to give back to their community, so they decided to organize a blood drive.

Given UFCW's involvement around Leukemia and Lymphoma fundraising, the Youth Committee was surprised to discover that it takes seven blood donors to provide enough blood to sustain a patient suffering from Leukemia each week. Understanding that money cannot buy blood, the Youth Committee came to know the importance of blood donation through their participation in the event. Even youth members who were not able to donate blood still came out to support the rest of the Committee, and learned a lot in the process.

Additionally, Local 401 has signed up to participate in the Partners for Life Program. The Program gives our union a group specific number that tracks the amount of blood our members donate annually.

"I understand that it's easy for people to forget about donating blood, even with the advertisements," explains Joe Irving. "Life gets busy and there is lots to do. But every little bit helps someone in need a great deal. The reward you get for doing your part to provide that help is overwhelming."

If you wish to donate blood and add to the local's Partners for Life count, feel free to book an appointment online at blood.ca using our specific number UNIT401831 at the clinic.

Taste of Jamaica

On April 19, The Jamaican Canadian Association of Calgary hosted its annual Tastes of Jamaica event. This event features live music, food, and vendors serving the best of the Jamaica to the Calgary.

Local 401 activist Sydonne Wright and her sister Evadne, a member of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, set up an information booth for UFCW Local 401. The booth was well received by all the people who attended, with particular interest in the information on temporary foreign workers and knowing your rights at work.

Fairy Tales Film Festival

For the second year in a row, UFCW Local 401 sponsored the Fairy Tales Film Festival in Calgary. Starting out more than 15 years ago as a two-day event, the Festival has blossomed into an eight-day international affair that highlights the best in queer filmmaking and features three community events.

This year was the Festival's "Sweet Sixteen", marking 16 years of presenting groundbreaking cinema aimed at telling the varied and compelling stories of queer people from all walks of life.

"UFCW Local 401 is proud to be a silver sponsor of such an important and successful event," noted Union President Doug O'Halloran. "Our union staunchly believes that queer rights are human rights and need not only to be protected and defended, but celebrated both inside our workplaces and within our society."

"Our mission is to be a voice for working Albertans and we take that job very seriously,"

Golf Tournament

On June 21, 2014, UFCW Local 401 hosted its annual golf tournament to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada. Each year, 401 organizes a tournament and invites members and allies to come play an exciting game of golf for a good cause. The proceeds go directly to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada, with last year's tournament raising nearly \$15,000.

While heavy rain left our golf course half under water, the Tournament went ahead with great turn out from registered participants. Everyone enjoyed a prime rib dinner and prizes. Participants were also given a gift certificate from Paradise Valley Golf Course in lieu of actually being able to play the course and an additional 40% off all purchases in the Pro Shop.

The event was successful in raising approximately \$17,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada. Our 2015 Tournament will take place on June 20 at 1p.m.

Food Bank Donation

On August 8, UFCW Locals 1118 and 401 donated over \$2,000 in food to the Calgary Food Bank as a result of a campaign that the unions jointly ran.

The donation assisted more than 30 Calgary families in need.

From June 16 to August 1, UFCW organizers engaged Alberta Save-On Foods workers about the benefits that joining a real union could provide them. Those workers are in the midst of an "open period" with their current representative association, the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), during which they can legally consider changing their representation. Over the course of that engagement, organizers purchased food from various Save-On Foods locations, which the Locals then donated to the Food Bank.

"Our mission is to be a voice for working Albertans and we take that job very seriously," said UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren. "We work every day to get our members the best contracts possible and we're equally happy to support working Calgarians who might be struggling to make ends meet with this donation."

"In the course of speaking with those workers, we purchased a lot of food," added UFCW Local 1118 President Albert Johnson. "We're glad that we can turn around and give that food to an organization like the Calgary Food Bank."

The donation came at a vital time with organizations like the Calgary Food Bank experiencing a sharp increase in usage for the month of June.



Reggae Fest

From August 14 – 16, UFCW Local 401 attended and staffed an information table at the Calgary International Reggae Festival. This award-winning Festival is committed to the promotion of local, regional and national awareness of Reggae Music in Canada and provides the union with an opportunity to engage a broad cross-section of music lovers in Calgary.

Member and union activist Sydonne Wright staffed the union's table, handing out information and chatting about a variety of issues with Festival attendees. 2014 was Local 401's first year participating in the Festival, but between the friendly interactions, meaningful conversations, and enjoyable music, it won't be our last!

GlobalFest

GlobalFest is Calgary's premier fireworks exhibition, showcasing talent and cultural diversity from all over the world. This year, UFCW Local 401 joined UFCW Local 1118 and the Public Service Alliance of Canada in sponsoring panel discussion focusing on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and featuring Local 1118 President Albert Johnson and Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan at the Festival's Human Rights Forum.

Speaking at the Forum, McGowan noted, "This program has been used — especially in the low-wage sector — to drive down wages," a vital point that UFCW has consistently sought to make about the many flaws with the Program.

Additionally, UFCW and PSAC staffed a booth at the Festival, running a raffle with a grand prize of a coffee maker. Over all, the Festival was a resounding success with volunteers speaking to several thousand people about important labour issues.



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Pride Parades – Edmonton, Lethbridge, and Calgary

UFCW Local 401 participated in yet another year of successful Pride Parades in Calgary and Edmonton, as well as adding Lethbridge to its roster.

As a long-standing participant in the Parades, UFCW Local 401 continued its support for queer rights and its commitment to addressing the specific challenges that queer workers face in their workplaces. More than 40 activists marched with the union's float and handed out UFCW Local 401 flags to Parade observers in Edmonton and Calgary. As a first time participant in the Lethbridge Parade, the representatives from the Local, including President Doug O'Halloran, marched with allies holding the UFCW 401 banner.

"As a union, we firmly believe that queer rights are human rights," said UFCW 401 President Doug O'Halloran. "We must all come together to ensure that our queer brothers and sisters are treated with dignity and respect in their workplaces and in society. Plus, the Pride Parade is such a wonderful celebration; it's hard not to have a great time!"

Union activists happily engaged and danced with Parade observers. It didn't take long before the Parade routes were lined with UFCW 401 flags.



"As a union, we firmly believe that queer rights are human rights,"



Labour Day BBQs

Once again, UFCW 401 was proud to act as a sponsor of the Calgary and District Labour Council (CDLC) and Edmonton and District Labour Council (EDLC) Labour Day BBQs. UFCW activists filled downtown Calgary's Olympic Plaza and Edmonton's Giovanni Caboto Park (along with other labour activists) to set up, cook, and serve barbequed hamburgers and hotdogs.

More than 1,000 people attended each of the respective BBQs, which featured booths and tables set up by community organizations to engage attendees on a variety of issues. In Calgary, participants were able to cool off from the hot day in Olympic Plaza's water park and enjoy some entertainment from local musicians Jackie Drew and the Crew.

BBQ attendees were appreciative of the food that UFCW 401 and other unions provided and the chance to enjoy a bite outside on beautiful days in both Calgary and Edmonton. Each "thanks" was greeted with a hearty, "You're welcome. Happy Labour Day!" by Local 401 activists to remind BBQ goers of the important role that the labour movement continues to play in Albertan's lives.

Temporary Foreign Workers Appreciation Day BBQ

Also on Labour Day, UFCW Local 401 members attended and supported the Temporary Foreign Workers Appreciation Day BBQ organized by the Temporary Foreign Workers Support Coalition. The Coalition, which is new to Edmonton, is supported by groups like Migrante Alberta. Migrante is an international Filipino migrant workers rights group and an ally of the union.

The BBQ was held in support and in appreciation of the workers in Alberta who are here under the Temporary Foreign Worker program. Despite their contributions to our economy and our society, temporary foreign workers are denied the same rights as Canadian immigrants and placed in vulnerable positions due to the connection of their status with their continued employment.

Local 401 member and union activist Garry Pucci spoke about the work in which UFCW is involved around foreign workers, including fighting for terminated TFW staff at an ongoing organizing drive. He also spoke about Local 1118's negotiation of contract language, which requires employers to support any temporary foreign workers they employ to become residents as quickly as possible.



“temporary foreign workers are denied the same rights as Canadian immigrants”

Light Up The Night

It is no secret that UFCW Canada and Local 401 are strong supporters of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada (LLSC). Every year, UFCW members raise millions of dollars for the Society to support and progress research and provide relief to those affected by blood cancers such as Leukemia and Lymphoma.

In 2014, the Local became enthusiastically involved in the Light The Night Walk as a major sponsor of the Calgary and Edmonton events. Walk participants gather together with lanterns and participate in a 5km walk beginning at sundown to show their solidarity and raise funds for Leukemia and Lymphoma. Nationally, these Walks have raised nearly \$3.2M for LLSC by local teams and communities.

Local 401 volunteer teams participating in Edmonton and Calgary this year were made up of members and their families who worked tirelessly to raise funds. In acknowledgement of their efforts, the Local 401 Executive Board generously agreed to sponsor each team with a \$1000 donation.

Local 401 member volunteers shone at both Light The Night events, showcasing the strength that a union brings when standing in solidarity with a good cause. In particular, the efforts of Maria Sarmiento and Jason Parrell in Calgary and Jim Sherlock in Edmonton made the union's participation an amazing success.

If you would like to get involved with the UFCW Local 401 CAN Committee or suggest a community event in which the local should participate, please contact Union Representative Ricardo de Menezes at rdemenezes@ufcw401.ab.ca

Local 401 member volunteers shone at both Light The Night events, showcasing the strength that a union brings when standing in solidarity with a good cause.

Unions aren't static organizations. As our member's workplaces change, so too does the composition of the Local.

Written by
Douglas O'Halloran,
Union President

Over 2014 in particular, we saw a great deal of growth and UFCW Local 401 sought to better meet the various needs of our members. Firstly, the Local created Director positions to manage key areas of activity within the Union to ensure the needs of our members are met as efficiently as possible.

The Union implemented a Northern Director position to oversee the activities of Administrative and Servicing

staff in Edmonton, Grande Prairie, and eventually Fort McMurray. The Local hired Richelle Stewart to fulfill this role. Richelle comes to UFCW Local 401 with a wealth of labour experience, most recently with SEIU.

Additionally, the Union implemented a Southern Director position to manage the activities of Administrative and Servicing staff in Calgary, Lethbridge, and Brooks. To fill this position, the local requested the assistance of long-term staff member Loren Keister, who was a Union Representative for many years and the last 13 years as a full time Local 401 WCB Advocate.

To bolster the Union's organizing efforts, the Local hired three new organizers to keep up with the pace of an ever-growing membership in the North. The Local hired both Saba Mossagizi and Abdikadir (Abdi) Guled. Abdi was previously an active member with UFCW Local 401, who comes from the Aramark camps in Fort McMurray. In her previous occupation, Saba was a community organizer in Edmonton.

To assist with organizing in the Edmonton area, the Union hired Trevor Zimmerman. Trevor brings extensive

progress training

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organizing experience with AUPE to the Local, as well as a longstanding participation in progressive political activism in Alberta. The benefit of these additional organizers has already become apparent via a substantial increase in the number of organizing leads the Local is actively pursuing.

The newly merged Communications and Education Department has also received a new addition in the hiring of Lama Alsafi. Lama comes to the Local with a strong history in communications, focusing on effective uses of social media for organizations like the United Nations and Exclaim! Media.

On the servicing aspect, UFCW Local 401 has hired long-term Superstore member, Jeff Ible, as a full time Relief Union Representative in the Calgary area. Stephen Reed who previously assisted the President has been assigned to an existing Calgary route that required coverage due to Lou Craig's retirement. There is also going to be a new Edmonton-based Union Representative hired with a projected start date of January 1st, 2015.

Finally, the Union has recruited valuable talent for two of its more specialized areas of activity: WCB Advocacy and Legal Counsel. Keri Grainger joins the Local taking over as a full time WCB Advocate in Calgary, replacing Loren Keister who is now the Southern Director. Prior to being hired by the Local, Keri worked in a variety of roles for WCB for many years. In the Legal Department, the Local has hired Lawyer Robert Szollosy, who

comes to UFCW Local 401 after providing legal assistance to CAW/Unifor.

There have also been changes to the Local's Executive Board. The Executive Board is the ultimate decision-making body of the Union.

The Board is made up of UFCW Local 401 President, Doug O'Halloran, UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer, Theresa McLaren, and 18 UFCW Local 401 Vice Presidents, who are members from around the province and who are elected to their positions by the Union membership.

On the Executive Board, George Bellows from the P&H Flour Mill in Lethbridge replaced Jack James from the same plant due to Jack's retirement, Pat Rector from the ADM Flour Mill in Calgary replaced Clayton

Herriot, Margaret Macaulay from Safeway #806 in Edmonton replaced

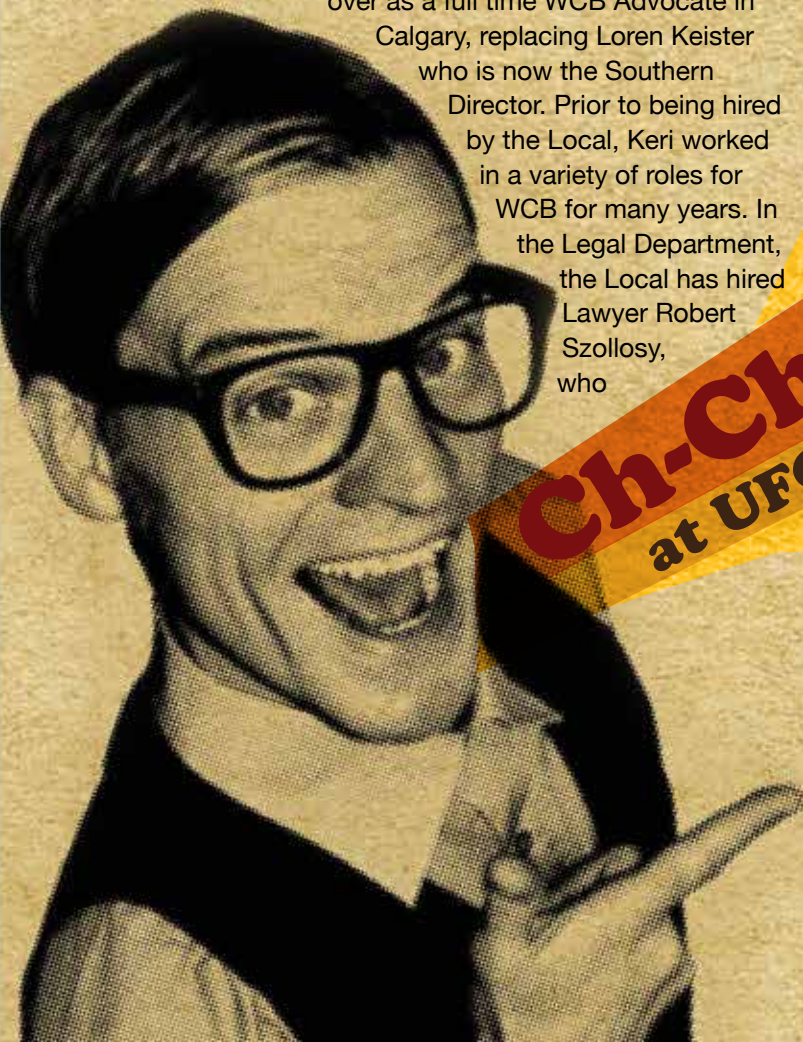
Rick Schneider and Sydonne Wright from Safeway #2211

has replaced Sandy Harmeson. Clayton, Rick and Sandy have now been hired as fulltime Union Representatives for UFCW Local 401.

Ch-Ch-Changes at UFCW Local 401!

UFCW Local 401 is Alberta's largest private sector Union and we want to ensure that our ever growing and diverse membership is receiving the Representation and Service that they deserve. We're confident that these changes will assist the Local in improving the work we do on behalf you the members, while maintaining the highest standards possible that we always strive to provide to you the membership.

GROWTH
EXPERIENCE
NEW
PROGRESSIVE
COMMUNICATIONS
ACTIVISM
PRESIDENT
ASSIGNED
MEMBERS
SECRETARY TREASURER
WCB
SERVICE
STANDARDS
LEGAL
ASSISTANCE
REPRESENTATION
PROVIDE
EXECUTIVE



UFCW Local 401 Organizing Kicks Into High Gear

2014 was another successful year for UFCW Local 401 when it comes to organizing. As a voice for working Albertans, we know that fighting for the interests of our members is only part (albeit a large part) of the work that we do. Workers who are not members of our union also need our help, and the Local does whatever it can to improve the working conditions of all workers.

Our biggest campaign in 2014 involved Save-On Foods/CLAC and the effort to show Save-On Foods workers in Alberta what a real union can do for them.

Save-On Foods workers in Alberta are represented by the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) through something called "voluntary recognition". This means that the employer has agreed to recognize CLAC as the representative of its workers without ever giving the workers an opportunity to vote on who they would like to have represent them.

When the sale of Canada Safeway to Sobeys resulted in the subsequent sale of one Safeway location (Fort McMurray) to Save-On Foods, CLAC decided to claim representation of the workers at that store without bothering to consider the successor rights of UFCW 401. This sort of behavior is unheard of by unions in Canada, but of course, CLAC isn't a real union.

UFCW Local 401 President Doug O'Halloran decided that in response to CLAC's raid, UFCW Local 401 wouldn't just defend its

landslide victory
Workplace
issues
contract joining
Support
negotiations
representation
vote
Strong action
real union

own members' rights, but also seek to educate the rest of CLAC's Save-On members about the benefits of joining a real union. For close to three months, UFCW organizers engaged Save-On Foods workers about the ways in which CLAC was undermining their interests.

The union even filed a labour relations complaint against Save-On Foods and CLAC for engaging in unfair labour practices against supportive Save-On workers. In the end, CLAC forced through a rushed vote on a substandard contract, thereby closing the open period facing its membership. But arming a few more Save-On Foods workers with the knowledge they need to look after their own interests is still a worthwhile outcome for UFCW Local 401.

After an extended hiatus, the Local also received a landslide victory in its labour relations case against I-Hotel in Red Deer. In 2013, while coordinating an organizing drive at the I-Hotel, management engaged in obstructing and intimidating behavior against supportive employees, going so far as to unlawfully terminate two employees.

After bringing a complaint about the employer's behavior to the Labour Relations Board, the Board concluded that the overwhelming evidence made it indisputable that the employer had violated

the Labour Code. UFCW 401 has resumed its organizing at the I-Hotel, meeting with employees to discuss the benefits of joining a union and how their workplace conditions can be improved.

Moving up north, G4S security guards won a great victory this year, voting strongly in favour of joining UFCW Local 401 and we have started negotiations on their first Union Contract.

The campaign to organize the guards was short and decisive given the challenges that guards were experiencing in their workplace and the union has set out to address those issues in negotiations. While negotiations began positively, it quickly became clear that the employer did not intend to act as a productive negotiating partner.

Nonetheless, the guards' negotiating committee and UFCW Local 401 remain persistent in their efforts to move things along and have advised the company that strong action will be taken to address outstanding issues if necessary.

Midway through the year, a retired member from UFCW Local 401 got in contact with his previous Rep about an organizing lead in Calgary. The issues at Hopewell Logistics (Distribution Warehouse) included: lack of consistency in wages, concerns around the disciplinary process

and lack of review, and increases to productivity expectations without consulting employees. Despite a petition circulating opposing union representation, there was enough support at the workplace to submit an application with the Alberta Labour Relations Board. A hearing is scheduled and there should be a vote before the end of the year.

Workers at the Gerard Raymond Centre (assisted living facility for mentally and developmentally challenged adults) and John McGee Employment Options (provides assistance to mentally and developmentally challenged adults to find and secure employment opportunities) voted to become members of UFCW Local 401 in 2014. Workers at Gerard Raymond and John McGee were experiencing similar issues as their co-workers at Balwin Villa and Grand Manor, who voted to become members in 2013. Issues included: lack of overtime, inability to achieve full-time status, and confusion about how to qualify for raises.

While the employer, Excel Resources Society, has been less than forthright in their representations of UFCW Local 401, members at Gerard Raymond and John McGee continue to work toward achieving their first Union Contract and addressing the issues faced in their workplaces.

Finally, the Local is currently engaged in two active organizing drives at camps in the north: Clean Harbours and Royal Camp Services. Workers at both camps have enthusiastically welcomed the support of UFCW Local 401 in addressing their working conditions and are excited about the strength that union representation will bring them.

The Labour Board, citing the need to organize all Clean Harbour camps, rejected a petition for certification at Clean Harbours. This development has only strengthened UFCW Local 401's resolve to reach out to all Clean Harbours workers in the province. And despite employer efforts to spread misinformation at Royal Camp Services, organizing efforts continue apace.

Looking forward, 2015 promises to be another busy year in "organizing the unorganized" for UFCW Local 401. Thanks, as always, to our members who provide us with the support and resources to work toward improving the working conditions for all workers in Alberta!



**WE
DID IT
TOGETHER!**

Problems Persist at Superstore But Your Union is Pushing Back Hard!



For those who currently work at Superstore or who have worked there, you know how difficult Loblaws can be on issues that impact your daily lives. Whether it's changing your hours through programs like "FLOW" and upending your family life, or trying to skimp on hours distribution to those who have been around for years trying to make ends meet; Loblaws is always finding new ways to fight with their workers, the very people who are responsible for their success. But your union is always vigilant in pushing forward with holding employers responsible for poor employment practices.

Some of the major battles we're waging involve matters like FLOW, representational rights for supervisors who are being taken advantage of and told to do your work (thus affecting your paycheque), and abuse of the MINIMUM guarantee of hours provision in your Union Contract.

UFCW 401 has been in a protracted legal battle with Loblaws over their FLOW program. FLOW is essentially a "work process" that was implemented unilaterally in the Superstores that effectively turned many of our members' lives upside down. We believe the implementation of this program violated the Alberta Labour Relations Code, in that Loblaws never came to the union to negotiate the conditions of this wholesale change in operations, and forced these changes during the sensitive period just prior to, and during, collective bargaining for a new Union Contract. Some would even argue that it contributed in varying degrees to Superstore employees' decision to vote for and commence a strike. FLOW has done little more than turn employees' lives upside down by forcing many to work midnights, or to restrict their availability when they never had to in the many years preceding its forced introduction. Some employees even resorted to quitting their job, while others got frustrated and angry! It has also created uncertainty about the type of work employees have to do during their shifts. By mandating employees to work outside of their traditional departments, there have been many problems with the distribution of hours, minimum guarantees of hours, and fair and reasonable workloads.

Hearings regarding FLOW are continuing at the Alberta Labour Relations Board. Based on the preliminary evidence we've presented the Board has agreed that the union has a case which can be determined by the Board and ordered the company to give its evidence related to the FLOW program, how it was implemented in 2012 in the so-called test stores, and how it was rolled out across the province subsequent to that. Those hearings are continuing and we will keep you updated as matters progress and unfold.

**"rest assured
that UFCW 401 is and
has always been committed to
holding Loblaw's feet to the fire
where employee rights and quality of
life issues are at stake."**

Another matter being heard by the Labour Board is that of the inclusion of supervisors in the bargaining unit. In other words, whether or not supervisors should continue to be deprived of union rights and protection and fall under the union contract for things like scheduling of hours and overtime.

Currently the company is using supervisors unfairly and in ways that not only impact them directly, but also affect current union members like you where available hours are concerned.

The company has waffled on whether they think supervisors are "regular employees" or management. We are still unclear on their position, and so the hearings on this important matter are continuing at the Labour Board. Though the hearing is ongoing, it has been marred by several delays throughout the process. Adding to this, we are having difficulties getting sufficient future dates. Despite our view that the company is doing all it can to drag out our efforts to conclude these hearings, the union feels more confident than ever that supervisors are not "management" as defined by the Labour Relations Code and are, in fact, employees just like the other union members in the stores. As a result, supervisors ought to be entitled to payment for ALL hours worked.

Another very troublesome issue, and one that we went on strike for at least in part last year, is the proper distribution of hours and the employer's persistent efforts to circumvent the Union Contract regarding the guarantee of hours.

In mid-November the union will be in front of an arbitrator arguing over the appropriate distribution of the minimum guarantee of hours and how those minimums are assigned. One of our concerns also relates to employees who are away from work for extended periods of time. For example, if an employee goes on a leave of absence, like maternity leave, and has been receiving a 28-hour minimum guarantee of hours, the company says her guarantee of those hours goes with her. In other words, for the one year while she's away, the next most senior eligible employee would not get that 28-hour guarantee, effectively eliminating one of the 28-hour guarantees in her department. Crazy but true!

In a nutshell, we believe that the company has not been assigning the minimum guarantees of hours to the appropriate employees in cases like these and we will be seeking a number of remedies on this and the overall problems with how the guarantee of hours language is applied by the company.

Further to the minimum guarantees, the union is also taking issue with "most available hours" scheduling, which deals with scheduling of part-time employee hours. We are asserting, in part, that the company is applying unfair and unjust "artificial maximums" every week in many, if not all circumstances. Meaning the employer is using the "minimum guarantee" of hours language as a "maximum" or a "cap" on hours, if you will. Your union put the company on notice in 2012 and in last year's round of bargaining, that we believed it was violating the part-time scheduling provisions of the Contract on this issue. The union also filed grievances across the province on this matter and will be sending them to arbitration in due course.

These and other important issues are being doggedly pursued on Superstore members' behalf and we will be sure to keep you updated as things move along. In the meantime, rest assured that UFCW 401 is and has always been committed to holding Loblaw's feet to the fire where employee rights and quality of life issues are at stake.

Many Superstore members will recall our enormously successful Superstore activists' , "Time to Walk the Walk Conference" in March of this year. The work is continuing with the members and their Union Representatives, and together we will work hard to shape Loblaw's into a company with a better reputation for how it treats its employees. If they don't wish to be a leader in the industry with regard to dignity and respect of their workers because it's the right thing to do, we'll continue to make every effort to create that change through other avenues. Corporations often don't do the right thing because they want to; they do it because they have to. In any case, change will come if we remain committed to seeing it through and

**continue
to walk
the walk.
Together
we can
do it!**

The 2014 Members' Conference:

A Time for Education – A Time for Rejuvenation

Cam Sherk, Education and Communications Representative

During the week of June 25-29, Local 401 held its Members' Conference in Kannanaskis. This conference, held every 4 years, moves around the province to encourage interest and participation. The hotel, nestled in the Canadian Rockies, provided a wonderful location for this conference, encouraging participants and class facilitators alike to spend the week together bonding and picking up valuable information they can all take back to their workplaces. We had just over 200 members attend from all parts of the province and from many different workplaces.

The courses offered at this year's conference were:

Relief Representative - This was a course designed to give activists an understanding of the obligations of the union in representing the nearly 30,000 members across the province. Course instructors provided a detailed guide to dealing with employers, fellow members, grievances, as well as a general understanding of why and how we do what we do.

Community Engagement - This course looked at the role that community groups play in creating positive change and how UFCW 401 members can become active in supporting that work.

Together Fairness Works - Polling shows that many Canadians believe that young workers will be worse off than their parents. This course explored what union members can do to change that shift and build a more prosperous future for everyone.

Attack on Workers - This course looked at the history of conservative attacks on workers and what union members can do to effectively fight back.

Crossing Generation Lines - This course looked at how to build greater communication lines between all workers to fight for better wages, benefits, job security, and workplaces. **An Introduction to Your Union** - This course introduced new activists to UFCW 401, Alberta's largest private sector union, and showed how the involvement of its members is vital to our growth and effectiveness.

Health and Safety - In this course participants discussed conditions in the workplace, legislative requirements, and the role of joint committees, workplace inspections and control programs.

Finance - This course encouraged participants to be proactive rather than reactive in tackling issues related to their personal finances.

WCB - This course provided an introduction to the rights and responsibilities under the WCB and gave members useful information to ensure the best result when navigating the complexities of Alberta's Workers' Compensation Board.

Grievance and Arbitration - This course provided an introduction and overview of the grievance and arbitration process so that union members can work with their Shop Stewards and Union Representatives to ensure a smooth and successful process.

Superstore Advanced Training - This course focussed and expanded on the skills learned during regular stewards' training, with a focus on scheduling, note taking, and investigations.

Organizing - This class went over the basics of identifying and engaging new members with the aim of running a successful organizing campaign and growing the membership.

The courses were delivered by a cross section of members who have had facilitator training, full-time Union Representatives, both from Local 401 and UFCW's National Office, In House Legal Counsel, WCB Advocates, and specialists from across the country. These included, in part, Marv Funk, Enver Harbans, and Michael Toal from the National Office of UFCW Canada, Carl Ariston from UFCW International, Heather Grant Drury and Debbie Jones from Local 832 in Winnipeg, Kevin Flaherty from the Workers Health Centre, Perry Garvin from the United Way, Liz Thompson from the Health Sciences Association of Alberta, and Amanda Friestadt from the Canadian Labour Congress.

During the lunch breaks we also brought in special speakers to inform participants about issues relevant to the union movement today. These speakers included Chivers Carpenter lawyer, Kara O'Halloran talking about social media issues affecting our members; Alex Shevalier speaking about the Calgary & District Labour Council; and Rachel Notley NDP MLA for Edmonton Stathcona speaking on issues affecting unions in Alberta today. Rachel also talked about her bid to be the next leader of the Alberta NDP.



Left to right:
Verna Breton, Michelle Cahill



We also had evening sessions where we had some very special speakers with us. Paul Meinema, UFCW Canada National President, spoke to us about the issues affecting union members across Canada. Marc Perrone, UFCW International Secretary-Treasurer, spoke about international issues and some of the things that the union is dealing with in the United States. And we also had Niki Ashton NDP MP from Churchill, Manitoba speak to our group on issues around poverty, gender equality and human rights, and women's issues.



Niki Ashton,
MP for Churchill

We also heard from our President Douglas O'Halloran and Theresa McLaren, Secretary-Treasurer, about the state of Local 401 and our future. Delegates were also given a special sneak peek at the new office to be built in Calgary. The presentation consisted of a video of what the building will look like and all that it will bring to the members of 401 and the broader labour movement in the province.

If you're interested in attending the next members' conference, it will be sometime in 2018. Though it's a few years down the road, it's worth making a mental note to attend. The feedback on UFCW 401 members' conferences is always stellar. These conferences serve as a great educational opportunity as well as a great energy booster to revitalize the membership for the battles ahead. We hope to see you at the next one.



Doug O'Halloran,
President, UFCW Local 401



Members engaging in
Conference workshops.



A Fresh Start For Alberta?

Fresh starts are like the golden goose in politics.

The high stakes and rapid pace of politics means that mistakes will inevitably be made. And the longer you're in the game, the faster the mistakes seem to come. Hubris and arrogance can't help but creep into your decision-making, crowding out common sense and good judgment.

But a "fresh start" can solve all of that. Mistakes are acknowledged and overcome. Lessons are learned. Past misconduct is forgiven.

For every politician in a bind because of some blunder or misdeed, there is an army of political staffers looking for a fresh start angle to their speech acknowledging the trouble – a way to play a "get of jail free" card and hit the reset button.

So it goes with Jim Prentice and the Progressive Conservatives.

It is probably not an overstatement to suggest that Alberta's PCs experienced the worst hit to their reputation as both a Party and government under Alison Redford. With attacks on workers and pensions gone awry, an endless stream of spending scandals, and a long list of unnecessary political enemies (teachers, nurses, doctors, you name it), the Tories' popularity slipped to an all time low under Redford's leadership polling at just 26% in June 2014.

But never fear, with newly minted leader Jim Prentice at the helm, all is forgiven and all is forgotten. Or, at least, that's what the Conservatives would have you believe.

Before even getting elected to the Legislature, Prentice spent the weeks following his election as leader rolling

out funding promises and reversing previous unpopular decisions made by the Party in an effort to turn the page on the Tories' recent troubles.

And Prentice isn't the only one looking to turn pages. After nearly grasping and then losing the prospect of a majority government in the 2012 election, Danielle Smith and the Wildrose have been examining their shortfalls and looking for the bridge that will bring them into government.

Reading pretty much directly out of the Tory playbook, Smith and her Wildrose colleagues are aiming to broker a bait and switch offer. Gone are the "lakes of fire" and anti-worker rhetoric of 2012. The Wildrose Party of today is a new kind of party, a kinder party, and a party of which you needn't be scared – or so they'd have you believe.

But Alberta voters aren't so easily duped. While there is certainly a hunger for change in the electorate, as demonstrated by the election of younger, forward thinking mayors and councilors in 2013's municipal elections, Albertans know all too well how easy it is to be sold a false bill of goods.

Real change only comes when we roll up our sleeves and participate!

Alison Redford's government was supposed to be a page-turning moment for the province, and we've already established how that panned out. And for all their claims to toned-down tolerance, many Albertans have a hard time seeing the Wildrose

marching in Pride Parades as anything more than political maneuvering. One can hardly blame them – fool me once shame on you, fool me twice...

Change, real change, means more than empty promises. It means more than putting on a different mask because the polls tell you to do so. And it means more than trading in one ineffective form of conservatism for a meaner, uglier variety.

Enter Rachel Notley and the NDP.

For the past decade, Alberta's New Democrats have been plugging away at the less than glamorous task of building a political party. It's the kind of building that involved slowly but steadily growing your membership, carefully and skillfully increasing your fundraising numbers, and intelligently sharpening your policy chops.

Those activities might not make for front-page headlines – at least not in the immediate future – but they do pay off considerable long-term dividends. In the 2012 election, the NDP doubled its seat count and substantially increased its vote share.

And while the province's Liberals appear more deflated as the days go by, the NDP are emerging as the only real

alternative to the tired conservatism of the PCs and the Wildrose.

Having just finished up an energetic and exciting leadership race electing Rachel Notley the Party's new leader with an impressive 70% of the vote,



Written by Chris O'Halloran, Director
Illustration by Joshua Rosen

many are watching to see how the NDP aims to carry its momentum forward into 2016. With polls showing the Party in a stronger position than ever, especially in Edmonton and Lethbridge, there may just be a great deal to watch unfolding before us.

Certainly UFCW Local 401 members increasingly see the NDP as their preferred option for making change. Numerous members have gotten involved in the Party, building constituency associations around the province, including longer-term members like Garry Pucci and newer members like Denis Sidlin. UFCW members like Angela Fiddler, Darcy Theissen, Juanita O'Reilly, Emily Shannon, and John Fata also got involved in the leadership race, working on Rachel Notley and David Eggen's campaigns.

One UFCW 401 member took his involvement a step further by becoming a candidate. Long time

member Chris Neilson recently became the NDP candidate in Edmonton Decore after spending considerable time building the riding association.

Speaking about his involvement in the political process, Chris noted, "As a Local 401 activist, I was committed to improving working conditions for hard working Albertans both union and non-union alike. Becoming a decision-maker was the next logical step to creating those improvements.

The Local's political involvement gave me the opportunity to see firsthand what it takes to create meaningful change by working on Deron Bilous' campaign. I'm now fully committed to duplicating that work and success in Edmonton Decore and all over Alberta leading up to the election in 2016. Real change only comes when we roll up our sleeves and participate!"

Leaders come and leaders go. As former NDP leader Brian Mason noted before his departure, over the course of his leadership, he addressed five different PC Premiers in the Legislature. And despite all their heady promises, little has changed in Alberta.

Despite popular belief to the contrary, it is people who ultimately drive politics, not politicians. The grassroots participation in which Chris and other members have been engaged is what truly creates long lasting changes in the political landscape of a province.

Increasingly, Albertans interested in that kind of engagement are finding a home with the NDP. Through their continued work, Alberta's fresh start may wind up being of an entirely different variety than Jim Prentice or Danielle Smith are envisioning.

Bargaining Strong Together

for Gateway Casino Employees in Edmonton

Written by Christine McMeekan, Communications Representative

Palace and Baccarat Employees Speak in Unison

Employees at the Baccarat Casino in downtown Edmonton have now commenced union negotiations with their Employer. Palace Casino employees at West Edmonton Mall have been in bargaining for a long time, struggling to conclude a Collective Agreement with Gateway Casinos.

Gateway has been very difficult to deal with at the bargaining table and continues to face charges of unfair labour practices at the Alberta Labour Relations Board.

Employees at both the Baccarat and the Palace are now considering joining the National Defense Fund (NDF). The NDF is a special multi-million dollar strike fund, sponsored by the UFCW that allows workers from across Canada access to additional strike benefits in case there is a dispute. The great thing about joining the NDF, says UFCW Executive Director of Labour Relations, Thomas Hesse, is that it can be viewed as an effective way to AVOID a strike. When employers see that employees are strong, committed and will not be walked over,

they are less likely to adopt the sort of bargaining positions that force vulnerable workers into going on strike. The history of the NDF bears out the this principle. The overwhelming majority of workers who have joined the NDF have never had a strike or a lockout. When there has been a dispute, the NDF has ensured that the workers' actions were successful and that their economic needs were met while on picket lines.

Baccarat and Palace employees are also likely headed toward taking a strike vote. Hesse says, "This is part two of the workers' message. They are anxious to tell Palace and Baccarat management that unless they are treated better, they are not afraid to threaten to withdraw their labour."

Palace and Baccarat bargaining are not joined as one in any formal way. However, as their negotiations are now taking place simultaneously, it puts Gateway at risk of facing two potential disputes at both of their Edmonton locations. "Workers from both locations have similar issues and concerns," says Hesse. "They both work for the same company."

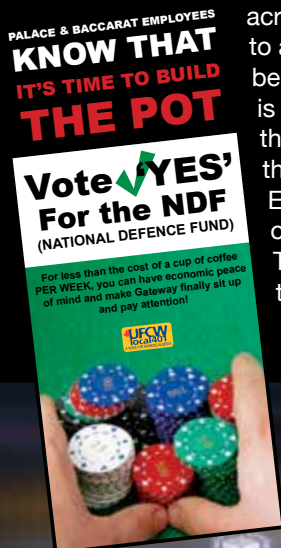
Gateway is spending money in British Columbia and Ontario, expanding their businesses, but they are seemingly indifferent to the legitimate and reasonable concerns of the staff at both their Edmonton casinos. "The employer has created this circumstance," says Hesse.

"By failing to negotiate fairly at the Palace they have protracted bargaining unnecessarily. This has put workers in a position where they can demand fairness from two vantage points at the same time." And indeed Baccarat and Palace employees are shouting very loudly for respect and dignity in the workplace.

Watching this unfold will be of special interest to Edmontonians. West Edmonton Mall is a high profile tourist attraction and the Palace Casino is located there. The Baccarat Casino is situated in the midst of the development of the new downtown hockey arena and entertainment complex. Can you imagine the controversy that will be associated with the picket line at that location?

Edmonton's Gateway Casinos workers are no strangers to standing up for their rights and pushing back when Palace and Baccarat management act in either aggressive or dismissive ways. Holding their employer accountable has been something that Palace employees are certainly familiar with and Baccarat employees are just as determined to fight for fairness and respect in their casino.

Stand with Baccarat and Palace workers and stay tuned for more as this evolves.





And Our iPad Contest Winner is ... THOMAS STEWART!

In our last edition of *Your Voice* we asked members to write to us with their stories about how belonging to UFCW 401 has changed or improved their lives. We promised the winner would be the lucky recipient of an iPad.

The calibre of entries was so impressive that we decided to also award 2 runner-up prizes of a \$50 Superstore gift card and a UFCW 401 jacket to each.

Thomas Stewart, however, was the contest winner and took home an iPad and a 401 jacket. Thomas' entry titled, ***Are Unions Really Needed Today: YOU BET!*** earned him top honours and was also featured in one of our bi-weekly e-news editions sent to members on our email list in September. Thomas simply took the time to relate his personal experience about his interactions with his union and how he was assisted during difficult circumstances, coming to realize that unions are as relevant today as they've ever been.

Thanks so much to all who entered the contest. We had a very tough decision to make but we were thrilled with all the participation. Keep your eye out for future contests and make sure you participate for your chance to win, just like Thomas did. It's easy, it's fun and you could walk away with some pretty cool swag!

New Energy. New Leadership.



Rachel Notley

Alberta's
NDP
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This article was supposed to review significant cases fought by the labour movement in 2014. There were many such cases across the country in the past year but I only have room to provide you with the highlights. My hope is that these cases will be ones that are relevant and of interest to you, our members. While this was supposed to be about 2014 cases, there were some notable ones that came out in 2013 as well. This article will review cases from the Courts, Labour Relations Boards as well as Arbitration Boards.

All of these cases loosely fall into several categories. They are, 1. Privacy Rights. 2. Human Rights. And, 3. Union Representation Rights. Due to space limitations, here you will find a brief summary of legal cases we have recently faced.

Written by Kevin Tamblyn, UFCW 401 Legal Counsel



The Year in Review

1. Privacy & Freedom of Expression Rights

Last fall, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) came out with their decision in the case of *Alberta (Information and Privacy Commissioner) v. UFCW Local 401*. This case has been reported on in great detail in other issues of this publication and I will not go into detail here. Suffice it to say that while we were indeed in violation of the poorly crafted PIPA at the time, the Supreme Court ultimately held the Act is unconstitutional. The Court struck down the entire PIPA but gave the Alberta government a year to fix it. That year expired on November 15 and with our unelected Premier, Jim Prentice, proroguing the fall legislative session and the SCC granting their request for a six-month extension to fix the Act, they have now introduced and passed Bill 3 as their response to the SCC decision, though it still requires Royal Assent. The exception Bill 3 (Personal Information

Protection Amendment Act) adds to the Act is narrow and full of limitations. It narrowly applies to unions and only during a labour dispute when the union is informing or persuading the public about a matter of significant public interest or importance. To add insult to injury, the bill also leaves it to the Privacy Commissioner to determine what expression is reasonable and we all know how that went the last time the Privacy Commissioner decided on these matters. Thus, Bill 3 does little to remedy the Act's restriction on unions' freedom of expression, and nothing to remedy its restrictions on the freedom of expression of other advocacy, lobby, public interest, social, and labour groups. Essentially, our fear is that this bill leaves PIPA as is and consequently invites more Charter litigation to ensure the constitutionally protected right to freedom of expression is respected. We continue to intervene and shape the landscape on this important

matter affecting workers across the country, so stay tuned for more on this ongoing battle.

Drug testing in the workplace has been a hot issue for the past few years with many cases having been decided at various levels of Court as well as before Labour Arbitrators. Employers want to be able to randomly test their employees for drugs and alcohol in the workplace. They say it is imperative to ensure the safety of workers and protect their property. Unions take the position that mandatory testing is a gross violation of employees' personal privacy. How would you like to be forced to pee in a cup or give up your blood when you have done nothing wrong? When Suncor Energy Inc. wanted to randomly test its employees, UNIFOR (formerly CEP) Local 707 took them on. Suncor wanted to exploit the lengthy delays in the arbitration process in order to get its plan established.

Local 707 applied for and won an injunction, thus preventing Suncor from implementing their scheme until the issue was decided at arbitration. The Alberta Court of Appeal found that without the injunction, the employees would suffer irreparable harm. The court stated, “the non-consensual taking of bodily fluids is a substantial affront to an individual’s privacy rights”. When the case got before an Arbitrator on its merits, the union won again. The arbitrator found that Suncor had not proven there was a serious enough problem with drugs and alcohol in the workplace to justify the serious invasion of privacy rights inherent in random testing. He found that there was no proven connection between drug and alcohol abuse and accidents in the workplace sufficient to justify the invasion of privacy. This follows recent decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada.

2. Human Rights

In the past, if an employee wasn’t able to work her scheduled shifts due to child care responsibilities she was out of luck and could be fired. These types of cases were relatively common. Everything changed, however, when the Federal

Court of Appeal decided the case of *Johnstone v. Canada (Border Services Agency)*. The court found that under appropriate circumstances, child care responsibilities are covered under the protected ground of “Family Status Discrimination” in the Human Rights legislation. Thus, if the required criteria are met the employer must accommodate an employee in these circumstances by giving them a work schedule that allows them to care for their children. The employee however, must meet a stiff test including showing that it is a last resort.

3. Union Representation Rights

Unions have long had difficulty obtaining the necessary information we need from employers to enable us to properly represent our members. Even such simple things as phone numbers and addresses have been an issue on occasion. The case of *Bernard v. Canada* raised a whole new twist in the saga. In that case, the employer wanted to provide basic contact information to the union but the employee, Ms. Bernard, objected. The employer honoured her wishes and refused to provide contact information to the union. This case wound

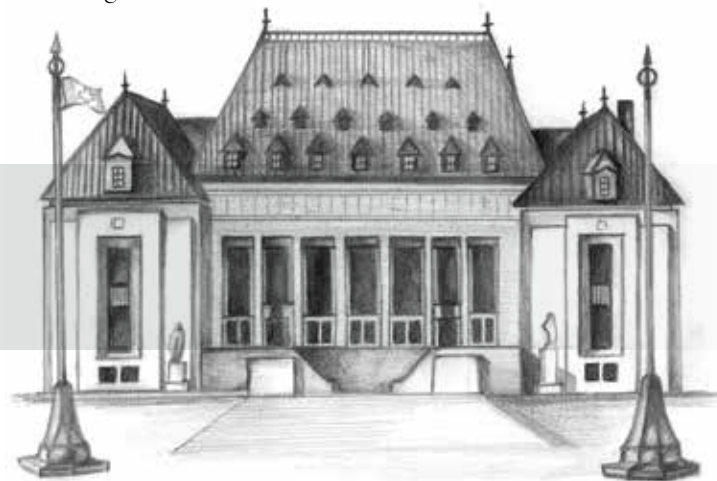
its way up to the Supreme Court of Canada and the union won. The Supreme Court found that the union required its members’ contact information in order to do its job of representing them, a job which was mandatory under the labour laws. It held that to properly do its job, the union had to be on the same footing as the employer who already had access to the information.

The *UFCW Local 503 v. Walmart Canada* case was also heard by the Supreme Court of Canada this year. UFCW Local 503 was certified to represent the employees of a Walmart store in Jonquiere, Quebec. Walmart is famously anti-union and refused to negotiate a first Union Contract with the union. The Quebec Labour Board imposed a Union Contract and Walmart promptly closed the store putting hundreds of employees out of work. UFCW filed a complaint that this closure was illegal and the case finally found its way up to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court agreed with the union and declared the closure to be illegal. We are still waiting to hear what

remedy will be ordered for the union and its members.

UFCW Local 401 was also successful this year in helping to protect the rights of workers to be represented by a union. Local 401 was in the midst of an organizing drive to unionize the employees of “iHotel 67 Street”, a large hotel in Red Deer. Hotel management found out about their employees’ efforts to join a union and began a reign of terror against the employees involved in the drive. It had closed door meetings with all employees where threats and intimidation tactics were used to discourage employees from supporting the union. Ultimately, several employees were fired for supporting the union. The Alberta Labour Relations Board found that the hotel’s actions were illegal. It declared that the employees had a right to be reinstated with back pay for the wages they lost. The union was entitled to costs from the hotel and was given the right to have closed door meetings with the employees of the hotel to repair the damage done by the hotel’s tactics.

Overall, 2014 was a good year for unions in the fight to protect the important rights of workers!



Alberta Could campaign calls for progressive taxes to fund public services



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NEW
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SOON

Word Wonderment

boycott

Have you ever wondered where the word 'boycott' comes from? Its usage dates back to late 1800s Ireland and a landlord by the name of Charles Boycott. Boycott became the subject of the Three Fs campaign (fair rent, fixity of tenure, free sale) by the Irish Land League in an effort to win greater rights for tenants in the country.

After Boycott refused to provide reductions in rents to farmers who had suffered poor crops on land he managed, the Land League started a community-based campaign to deny Boycott all conceivable local services in order to pressure him on the decision.

The campaign gained international attention and eventually led to the implementation of the Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1881, which secured substantial reforms for Irish tenants and is considered one of the most important pieces of legislation enacted by the British House of Commons in that period of time.

To this day, boycotts are used to pressure unreasonable employers, such as the Labatt workers' call for a national boycott on all Labatt products during their protracted dispute with the employer.

Word Scramble

Unscramble below to find an informative labour term.

h a p s i c s l o h s r

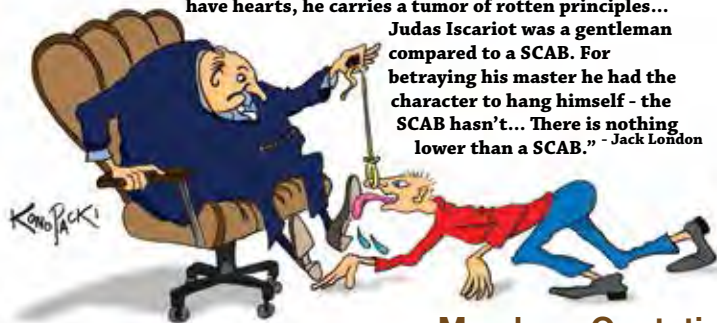
n d a r m l a f u o r

THE SCAB

"After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, and the vampire, he had some awful stuff left with which he made a SCAB."

"A SCAB is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a waterlogged brain, and a combination backbone made of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts, he carries a tumor of rotten principles..."

Judas Iscariot was a gentleman compared to a SCAB. For betraying his master he had the character to hang himself - the SCAB hasn't... There is nothing lower than a SCAB." - Jack London



Members Quotation Rows

Letters in each vertical row fit into the squares directly below them but are in a mixed order. A black square indicates the end of a word. When the letters are in their correct location you will be able to read a quotation from left to right. Good luck!

T	H	T	R	C	R	I	A	C	I	A	H	A	I	E	T	L	T	H	I	F	R	E	A	P	I	E	S	Y	M	V	E	R	R	O
T	P	O	H	E	A	S	A	T	G	N	G	U	T	I	A	N	I	S	B	L	M	S	E	V	R	L	O	O	E	E	P	A	I	
N	E	G	O	U	E	N	S	O	M	M	T	N	N	G	T	O							N	E	M		R	A						

Labour Movement Word Search

Search for words by reading forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally but always in a straight line. Using the list below circle as you find them and then cross them out in the list.

BALLOT	HOURS	SCHOLARSHIPS
BARGAINING	HUMAN RIGHTS	SHOP STEWARD
BENEFIT	JOIN US	SICK PAY
COLLECTIVE	LABOUR DAY	SOLIDARITY
COMMITTEES	MEMBERS	STRIKE
DIGNITY	PENSION	UFCW
EDUCATION	PRIDE	UNION
ENGAGEMENT	PROUD	VACATION
EQUALITY	RAND FORMULA	VOLUNTEER
FAIRNESS	RESPECT	VOTE
GO UNION	SAFETY	WAGES
GRIEVANCE	SCAB	WORKPLACE
HEALTH	SCHEDULES	YOUR VOICE

E	Q	U	A	L	I	T	Y	P	R	O	U	D	G	U	N	I	O	N
A	O	M	P	S	S	D	R	T	S	E	C	N	A	V	E	I	R	G
Z	K	I	V	U	I	N	Z	M	I	T	S	N	O	Y	I	P	O	N
B	X	Q	N	G	O	T	E	S	Y	R	O	P	W	N	Z	E	B	I
H	K	I	N	I	Y	M	X	O	V	I	A	E	E	X	M	N	M	N
P	O	I	N	W	B	E	R	E	T	O	V	D	L	C	W	S	T	I
J	T	U	I	E	U	D	O	A	Y	I	G	P	I	K	T	I	Y	A
Y	O	U	R	V	O	I	C	E	T	Y	W	M	F	L	F	O	A	G
G	L	S	Y	S	O	U	O	C	E	C	J	N	I	E	O	N	D	R
E	L	S	U	S	D	L	E	C	F	A	I	R	N	E	S	S	R	A
K	A	E	A	E	Z	L	U	U	A	E	L	E	W	T	W	O	U	B
I	B	G	V	H	L	R	F	N	S	W	B	I	A	C	O	Q	O	U
R	N	A	E	O	H	E	A	L	T	H	M	E	R	I	R	G	B	E
T	A	W	C	O	M	M	I	T	T	E	E	S	I	C	K	P	A	Y
S	H	O	P	S	T	E	W	A	R	D	E	D	I	R	P	U	L	N
O	R	A	L	U	M	R	O	F	D	N	A	R	F	N	L	B	G	O
S	E	L	U	D	E	H	C	S	T	H	G	I	R	N	A	M	U	H
S	C	H	O	L	A	R	S	H	I	P	S	F	Q	I	C	E	A	K
N	O	I	T	A	C	A	V	E	N	G	A	G	E	M	E	N	T	L

401 EVENTS CALENDAR

january

1	New Year's Day
5 – 9	Safeway-Sobeys Negotiating Meetings – Calgary
19 – 23	Safeway-Sobeys Negotiating Meetings – Calgary
19	Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
20	Education Course – Superstore Communications Steward – Edmonton
22	Education Course – Superstore Communications Steward – Calgary
27	International Day in Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust
27	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
27 – 29	Education Course – Federal Health and Safety – Calgary
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Lloydminster
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Grande Prairie
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Red Deer

february

2	Union General Membership Meeting – Lethbridge
2	Union General Membership Meeting – Banff
2	Union General Membership Meeting – Beaver River Lodge
2	Union General Membership Meeting – Conklin Lodge
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Camrose
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Taber
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Devon Lodge
3-4	Education Course – Superstore Basic Steward Training – Calgary
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Medicine Hat
5	Union General Membership Meeting – Fort McMurray (Safeway/Superstore)
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Canmore
4	Union General Membership Meeting – Hinton
6	Union General Membership Meeting – Aramark Long Lake
9	Union General Membership Meeting – Henday Lodge
9 – 13	Safeway-Sobeys Negotiating Meetings – Edmonton
10	Union General Membership Meeting – Brooks
10	Union General Membership Meeting – Wapasu West
11	Union General Membership Meeting – Wapasu Main/East
14	Valentine's Day
16	Family Day
19	Chinese New Year
20	World Day of Social Justice

Don't forget to check your union bulletin board or ufcw401.ca for updates or changes to 401 events.

401 EVENTS CALENDAR

march

1	Zero Discrimination Day (UNAIDS)
8	International Women's Day
17	Education Course – Superstore Membership Engagement Steward – Edmonton
19	Education Course – Superstore Membership Engagement Steward – Calgary
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
25	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
26	Union General Membership Meeting – Grande Prairie
26	Union General Membership Meeting – Red Deer
21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22	World Water Day
30	Union General Membership Meeting – Beaver River Lodge
31	Union General Membership Meeting – Camrose

Don't forget to check your union bulletin board or ufcw401.ca for updates or changes to 401 events



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"We dream of a society where families are not broken up by urgent need for survival. We dream and actively work for a homeland where there are opportunities for everyone to live a decent humane life."

UFCW 401's New Website Launch... **COMING SOON!**

We are very excited to announce the launch of our new and improved UFCW Local 401 website. You can still find us at the same web addresses (gounion.ca or ufcw401.ca), but the site will have a whole new look and feel. More importantly, there will be many exciting changes that will assist 401 members in their interactions with the local union, as well as improving access to services.

Our website, originally launched in August 2003, has served many useful purposes. The ability to communicate with you on important matters like negotiations updates, benefits information, various educational opportunities, grievance and arbitration wins, who your Rep is and how to reach them have all been core functions of the website to date. While these remain important functions, trends and technologies change and the services UFCW offers have evolved and grown exponentially. As a result, our website is being reinvented in order to meet the changing needs of our ever-growing membership.

Navigation will be easier and the entire website will have a cleaner, slicker look that is very user friendly, with direct connections to various social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We will also have a much-improved advanced search feature that will get you where you need to go for all the information you want!

We know that more and more members today are using their cell phones and tablets to access information and so our new site will be far more user friendly for those devices. Known as “mobile aware” technology, it will be much simpler to navigate your union’s website from your phone. Staying connected to your union through this new website will be easier than ever.

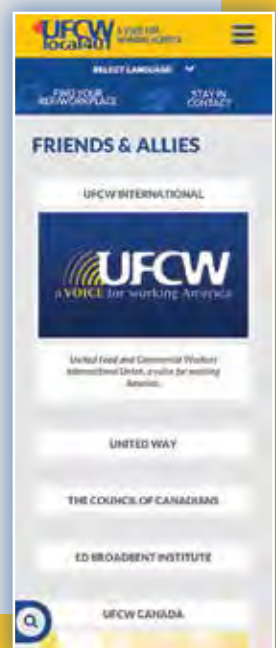
Are you on a jointly trusted union/employer benefit plan? You will soon be able to have plan information at your fingertips. Additionally, there will be no more waiting for forms or hunting them down in your workplace. Instead, you’ll be able to download those forms directly from our website so you can submit your claims that much faster.

Helpful tools like the ability for you to report an address, phone number, or email change already exist on our site, but we’re trying to go further with what you can do online.

For example, do you qualify for the union dues rebate program? You’ll soon be able to apply online by simply filling out your information on an easy to use form. Just fill in the necessary fields, scan your pay stubs, and press “send”. It’s an easy way to get your dues rebate without ever having to leave the comfort of your home.

We’re also very excited to announce that soon you’ll be able to access most union contracts on the new website. You’ll simply search your workplace in the new and improved search engine and find a downloadable PDF copy of your union contract. This will be an invaluable tool for you in your workplace.

Written by Christine McMeekan, Communications Representative



Any questions you may have about rates of pay, benefits or rights you enjoy being a UFCW 401 member can be answered by pulling up your union contract on your smart phone in your lunchroom at work (for example) in just seconds. And with the advanced word search feature available in PDF documents, you can find answers to your questions even faster.

Another very handy and important tool for members will be the Google translate option. We have a diverse membership of almost 30,000 members and many speak languages other than English. This creates a challenge that we were very keen to meet. We want to communicate with everyone as best we can and this translation feature will allow for quick translation throughout many areas of the website.

Another brand new feature that we hope to roll out in 2015 is the introduction of a “Stewards’ Lounge”. This will be a place where Shop Stewards can have discussions with each other on a variety of workplace issues, exchange information and documents and help each other by providing support on a variety of matters. This would be a special section dedicated specifically to Stewards in order to support their efforts in the workplace.

Once this is set up, we’ll ensure the Stewards around the province are made aware, have the opportunity to get a sign in ID, and begin getting plugged in to the wealth of knowledge around the province.

We are confident that you will find UFCW 401’s new website an important and useful part of your work life. We are always looking for ways to better communicate with and support our members and this will be yet another tool for doing so.



Watch for a BIG CONTEST coming soon to celebrate and promote the launch of the new website!

There will be BIG PRIZES! Please help spread the word. But for now, please go to: gounion.ca/stayconnected and submit your email address to us, if you have not already, and get regular updates from us, including an important alert to the contest and website launch.

Local 401 Communications Department: Today and where we are going

a union is a
living, breathing
thing made
up of a living,
breathing
membership

UFCW Local 401 is a changing union in a changing Alberta. Recently, it seems as though life in this province means the only thing you can count on to be consistent is that change will happen soon in your life or at your job. Big or small, change is coming and it is coming fast. The best way to be prepared for this change is to be informed about what it is that might impact you and to know the solutions available to you should you need them in making the best decisions for yourself and your family.

Many of our members have reached out to us via their Union Representatives and email to ask us questions about these changes as they impact their rights and benefits at work. The UFCW Local 401 Communications Department has found that by way of their questions, our members have provided valuable feedback to us as a department to help us understand the best ways we can reach our membership in our communications efforts. As such, over this past year our department has strategized new ways to communicate with our membership in order to keep them informed of the most relevant issues affecting them. You may have already noticed a difference in the way we communicate to you as we implement new tools best able to meet the transforming needs of our rapidly growing membership across the province.

As the voice of working Alberta, we see change everyday and are trying to embody that change. After all, a union is a living, breathing thing made up of a living, breathing membership. In our case, the membership of Local 401 is greatly increasing in size, and as that happens we want to ensure that we maintain the same level of excellent service we have always provided to our members. Like all living things born to change, we must continue to evolve as a union that reflects its membership's needs in order to remain an effective, strong and united organization, as is our mandate.

UFCW Local 401 is not just the leading major union in Alberta; we are also the largest private sector union in the province. We are dynamic in our planning and aggressive when it comes to protecting your rights as a worker, never shying away from the tough matters or cases.

UFCW 401 fights to ensure its members receive fair treatment, wages and benefits at their workplaces as part of the **401 Union Advantage** we offer. We do not exclude anyone from our membership based on their differences, cultural or otherwise, because we know diversity keeps us strong as a union. That is the **401 Union Promise** that keeps us progressive and that our members have come to expect of us.

Over the years, we have consistently shown an ability to adapt and grow as a union, while improving the working lives of our members and all workers in Alberta. That is why we have been around for more than fifty years now.

It is a value that President Doug O'Halloran has instilled in his departments in order to produce the boldest and most direct voice in our communications. What makes Local 401 uniquely successful as a labour union is that we are always looking forward and acquiring better tools and resources to wage the battle that is the defence of your human rights and dignity in the workplace.

The past few years have brought unique challenges to the UFCW Local 401 Communications Department. We have had to develop an effective communications strategy to connect with our members in the particularly remote areas of our province, as well as the many members of our union with English as a second or even third language. In response, we have adapted our communications efforts to become a bigger, faster, stronger union. We have expanded the range of tools we use to reach even the most remote members and have succeeded in engaging members of all ages on our social media networks like Facebook, Twitter and our website **ufcw401.ca**. The department has also had great success in delivering the latest by-the-minute news to our savvy members who are connected via email subscription to our e-news letters and press releases.

As part of the effort to strengthen communications to our membership, President Doug O'Halloran has been successfully blogging on the Huffington Post Alberta and has had stories featured in other major news publications. Active on Twitter, President O'Halloran often provides hard-hitting commentary on the news

of the day while defending the rights of 401 members in his tweets. In this successful recent effort to keep you connected, we see the benefit and dedicated accomplishments of the 2010-2011 staffing additions to the communications team who have utilized their unique skills to move our department forward. Local 401 Graphic Designer Cori Torres and Communications Representatives Christine McMeckan and Scott Payne have proven invaluable assets to the department and have delivered a new calibre of communications outreach to our members.

In 2015, we are making even more changes to modernise and better target our communications to members. We do all of this with the constant goal in mind to inform the members of the excellent services and free educational programs available to them via UFCW Local 401. That is why we have streamlined the Communications and Education departments into one unit that will more effectively respond to the needs of our membership and provide overall better services. The new Communications and Education department welcomes the addition of Communications and Education Representatives Lama Alsafi and Cam Sherk, who brings with him years of experience in project design and course management.

Free continuing educational classes, workshops and seminars

for members will continue to be a priority for UFCW Local 401 as we implement our new communications and education strategy in 2015. 401 members have the opportunity to advance their skills and education with day and evening courses that will help them grow and succeed in their career. It is more important now than ever for you to keep your skills up to date as a worker. That is why Local 401 has been focused on improving the range of educational programming we offer and expanding the type of courses on hand to better reflect the knowledge requested by members.

Based on feedback received from our members, the local union's new Communications and Education department will oversee the development of new educational courses that will provide workplace specific training, some of which has already been rolled out and will continue into early 2015. UFCW 401 President Doug O'Halloran hopes these courses will give members access to new knowledge and life skills that will increase their career potential. "Education of our membership will be a key focus of our department in the coming year," said President O'Halloran. He continues, "For this project to succeed, it is key that we extend our educational reach to all members, from those

Interested in improving your skills and knowledge on the job? Then talk to your Union Representative to find out what upcoming free educational courses are available in your area.

If you are not already connected to us through one of our social media networks or receiving the latest news via email subscription and need help in connecting, please contact your Union Representative today to help you sign up to our electronic mailing list.

in Edmonton and Calgary to those in the most remote areas of Fort McMurray.

As we build this new programming, we will tailor our training and courses to the unique workplaces different members face to better demonstrate the scope of knowledge required for that environment."

2015 will usher in another major communications upgrade that members have been asking for with the launch of the **new UFCW Local 401 website**, whose innovative design has been chaired by Graphic Designer Cori Torres. The new website will feature a mobile friendly design and be an easy to use tool for members to access the latest information related to their workplace, their union and their right to fair treatment. This major project will revamp the existing website and is expected to be a highlight accomplishment of the department this coming year. 2015 will also see 401 intensify its visual messaging by engaging members with new platforms and programs on social media to keep up with the pace with our new website and popular quarterly publication, *Your Voice* magazine.

This year, 401 will launch even more initiatives aimed at improving the local communities that 401 represents in Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Lethbridge and Brooks. Our Community Action Network (CAN) Committee is going strong and has had many successful community outreach campaigns this year with fantastic community engagement results. The Local 401 Communications and Education department will increase its technical support to CAN Committee in order to focus on community service and member appreciation. UFCW 401 strongly believes in the importance of showing our local communities, our members and their families our gratitude for their loyalty and continued support. So this coming year, look forward to more community and member appreciation events coming to an area near you.

The 401 Communications and Education department will continue to look to our members to provide us with the same valuable feedback that we have received over the last year as we implement our new strategy **to better serve our members**. As always, we want to hear from you on social media and through our website. We encourage you to engage with us this coming year as we grow and change together.

For the latest news and updates, including labour news, negotiations, general membership meetings, events and strikes then please follow UFCW Local 401 and Local 401 President Doug O'Halloran on Twitter at: **@ufcw401** and **@DougOHalloran**.

UFCW Local 401 Negotiations Highlights for 2014 Another Busy and Fruitful Year



An old friend of mine used to say that you never get handed to you in life what you deserve, you get what you negotiate, and so you should never be afraid of a little fight. It is a sentiment that has run through my head during the process of becoming a newly hired member of the UFCW Local 401 team as a Communications and Education Representative. My introduction to the union has allowed me the pleasure of meeting many knowledgeable and forward-thinking 401 colleagues who I am enthusiastic to work alongside with in the mission to provide the best service to Local 401 members.

This past October in Edmonton, I got my first chance to see 401 labour negotiations in action while representing the Communications Department at a round of negotiations between Gateway Casinos and the 401 Palace Casino Bargaining Committee, steered by

UFCW Local 401 Executive Director of Labour Relations, Tom Hesse. In this experience, I was struck by the determination exhibited by the 401 members on the committee as they fought for a better Union Contract and fair access to their health benefits.

A short time after these negotiations, I was granted a backstage tour of the Gateway owned and operated Palace Casino located at the West Edmonton Mall. I got to meet 401 members in the Casino, as well as have a first hand look at the working environment they faced. My well-informed tour guide, Local 401 Communications Representative Christine McMeckan, pointed out key details along our tour through the neglected casino where I was shown carpets on the gaming floors that are secured by duct-tape and where other ramshackle infrastructure leaves the temperature on the floor so hot at times that it has impacted the health of workers and 401 members.

As UFCW Local 401 has continued the effort over these past months to secure better conditions and treatment for Palace Casino workers, I have come to see the sheer dedication of the Local 401 negotiations committee as they daily face a well-funded and often manipulative opponent across the negotiating table. However, we know that with the win-record of 401 Negotiators, soon this brave and defiant campaign by UFCW members working in the Palace Casino will be looked upon as a worthwhile part of the journey to secure that better future they deserve for themselves and their families. Beyond everything, this is the goal that UFCW Local 401 works to achieve for our membership.

It is a thought for Gateway workers to especially consider as the possibility of a dispute looms larger for them and as we now take a look at an overview of the year's main events in negotiations for the Local in this issue of *Your Voice*. Notably, many of the developments to report this year have come as a result of

the previous labour disputes 401 workers have won against employers, proving that our past victories continue to bear fruit. This year, we see multiple employers such as Old Dutch Foods in Calgary, McKesson Canada and Gate Gourmet in Edmonton all achieving a Union Contract during the bargaining process, whereas in previous negotiations, 401 members have had to go on strike in order to secure a fairly negotiated agreement with these same employers.

In his report on 401 negotiations this year, Lee Clarke, Local 401 Negotiator notes, "Many other agreements were ratified this year around the province, but I chose to focus on Old Dutch, McKesson and Gate Gourmet because of the history of struggles we have had with those employers in past negotiations. Any time you have a labour dispute with a particular group, you are never really sure what to expect the next time you go into negotiations. Not only did we get agreements without labour disputes this time around, but we were able to achieve good Union Contracts at that."

On June 5, despite a lengthy strike during the last round of negotiations over the critical matter of Union Representation, Old Dutch workers won a tentative four-year Union Contract with multiple advancements, such as a three per cent wage increases every year and for every wage grouping including premium and retroactive increases. This contract also achieves:

- An employee rights clause;
- Language to ensure members receive a payout of each year's unused vacation pay;
- A direct bill drug card;
- Improved overtime scheduling and seniority rights;
- Better scheduling provisions;
- Full time protection for weekly hours;
- Leaves of absence and bereavement leave;
- Increased RRSP contribution;

- And improved Union Representation language.

Similarly, McKesson Canada employees in Edmonton who had an extended strike during preceding negotiations have won an improved Union Contract without a strike or delay this year. According to Clarke, the issues in the last strike, "were monetarily based; employees were being paid much less than other employees were being paid under the McKesson banner in other jurisdictions and under different Union Contracts. The employees had had enough and went out on strike. Hostilities and bad feelings have built up over the years and continue to this day." Nevertheless, McKesson workers are now enjoying the benefits of their new Union Contract that include, "improved part-time scheduling, increases in shift premiums, improved vacation language, bereavement allowances and benefits as well as percentage increases in each year of a four-year deal," said Negotiator Clarke.

The same can be said for employees of Gate Gourmet in Edmonton who Clarke says have gained in their new Union Contract, "improved overtime and vacation scheduling, better rest provisions, improved leaves of absence and bereavement provisions, improved grievance language, improvements in dental coverage as well as other benefits and wage increases in each year of a three-year deal."

Safeway

Looking to Safeway negotiations, UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren explains that though the same players are at the table, the new company owner has created an environment for negotiations where deceptive practices and lack of progress have led many Safeway workers to showing frustration not witnessed by Secretary Treasurer McLaren since the mid-1990s.

In Safeway, we find an unprincipled employer demanding many concessions that Safeway employees have strongly resisted; these include eliminating department managers from the union and awarding suppliers the right to stock shelves. Both moves, according to Secretary Treasurer McLaren, are designed to severely cut the hours of hard working employees. Safeway dubiously reasons that this will lessen the impact of the unfair advantage Safeway suffers in the market at the hands of their competitors. Contradicting this tired Safeway company line, Secretary Treasurer McLaren reminds us that through her years of experience, "concessions are simply not needed in the economic climate of today's Alberta."

On the importance of a strike vote for Safeway, Secretary Treasurer McLaren explains, "a strong strike vote is the hammer we need at the negotiating table and sends a strong and clear message to the employer that the employees are not prepared to accept concessions to their Union Contract. A strike vote is a critical message to send to the employer that needs to come directly from the members themselves because they are the union," said Secretary Treasurer McLaren. The other hammer the Safeway membership has, according to the Secretary Treasurer is that they now are members of the National Defense Fund (NDF). "This is a special Fund where part-time employees pay one dollar per week and full-time employees pay two dollars per week into the Fund. In the event there would be a strike, the Fund pays extra picket pay, legal expenses, and a magnitude of other costly items. When a company knows you belong to such a huge Fund they tend to be more serious at the bargaining table, especially after a strong strike vote," said Secretary Treasurer McLaren. The Secretary Treasurer further notes,

"I am confident that the Safeway members will give us a strong strike vote if asked to do so in order to strengthen our position at the bargaining table." She adds, "Safeway workers should rest assured knowing that your Bargaining Committee, with the support of the membership, will continue toward our goal of achieving an improved (not concessionary) Union Contract."

Superstore

Executive Director of Labour Relations, Tom Hesse says Superstore is an employer who has come to understand the strength 401 members have when standing together. "Unions are about solidarity and success through solidarity – united we bargain, divided we beg," said Hesse noting that this equation of success was proven at Superstore this year. The revolutionary language won by Local 401 in the contract has given Superstore workers a real process to grieve any violations of that agreement by their employer.

This language is a big benefit to workers, agrees UFCW 401 Union Representative, Ricardo de Menezes. "The strike has given us much more access into Superstore and I am proud of the successful language we achieved in the Contract," said de Menezes, who noted that the language regarding the commitment to compliance of supervisors was a particularly remarkable feat. "No other place in the country to this date has realized an agreement with this same language," added de Menezes.

In his advice to employees, like those at Superstore who have recently ratified a new Union Contract, 401 Negotiator Lee Clarke had this to say, "be diligent in enforcing the newly negotiated provisions of your Union Contract. Enforcement is the key!"

We need to hold your employer accountable to what they agreed to at the bargaining table, so tell a Shop Steward or call the union when the company is not following the contract. The hard-fought victories achieved by your union committee at the bargaining table are only words on paper unless we hold the employer accountable to them."

"Executive Director Tom Hesse agrees, noting that successful implementation of the Union Contract at Superstore is something that can only be achieved by the strength through solidarity equation. "When the rubber hits the road, solidarity will be the key to implement changes on such things as enforcement of rights, information sharing and allowing Steward led workplaces," said Hesse.

As luck would so have it, this year workers at the Palace and Baccarat casinos are coincidentally negotiating both of their Contracts in tandem. It is the first time such a scenario has been presented to Local 401: that two different contracts are negotiated under the same employer and at the same time, but that is just the way the cards fall sometimes. For Hesse, this collective negotiation is an opportunity for Gateway Casinos workers to learn from the great lessons of victory at Superstore when 401 members united in action during the negotiations and strike. According to Hesse, "the sheer strength and visibility of us all together on the picket line during the short strike really toughened our position at the negotiating table with Superstore and made us a force to be reckoned with."

Ultimately, this unprecedented negotiation has ended up benefiting the workers in the casinos as they have built strong bonds between the two groups that are even sturdier now than that first Edmonton Gateway negotiations meeting I attended back in October.

Now, 401 members at the Palace and Baccarat are creating a network of solidarity between them similar to that seen at Superstore before its recent major, and decidedly short, strike.

"Our united voice is putting a new kind of pressure on Gateway as members have considered joining the National Defense Fund, a contingency financial resource given to workers in case of a strike with their employer," said Executive Director Hesse.

401 members at Gateway have shown strong interest in joining the NDF throughout their participation in the union's democratic process in which they have considered contributing to the Fund. As these workers negotiate their Union Contracts, collectively joining the NDF may give Gateway workers a new boost of economic solidarity between them of the kind that paved the way to the Superstore contract. Tom Hesse notes, "the NDF gives the platform to succeed through the power of economic solidarity and allows us to translate that power into real success at the bargaining table to give workers real rights and benefits at work."

Finally, to these Gateway Casinos workers and others on 401 bargaining committees who may be headed to the negotiating table in this coming year, Negotiator Lee Clarke leaves you with some practical advice, "keep a log or a diary of things that you see in your workplace that need to be addressed in bargaining. Bring those suggestions with you to a proposal meeting or fill out a bargaining survey. Also, be active and volunteer to participate in negotiations."

And while every Local 401 bargaining committee will encounter its own unique challenges this year in negotiations, remember that solidarity is the key to success, or as Tom Hesse would say, 'united we bargain, divided we beg'.

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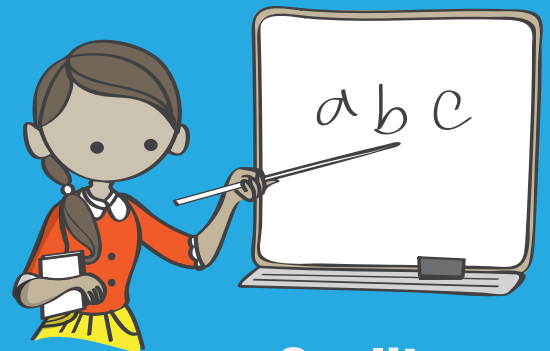
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Compensation**



**Occupational
Health & Safety**



**Work-life
Balance**



**Quality
Public Education**



**Retirement
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Unions: Bringing you a Canadian standard of living.

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ALBERTA'S
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LAST YEAR

Across Alberta last year, **420,600** workers earned **\$4.75/hour** more, on average, because their unions negotiated fair wages and work hours..

which put an extra **\$61 MILLION** into the provincial economy every week.

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