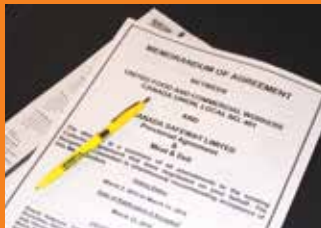


your voice



United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401 Vol. 105 - June - Sept. 2015



Safeway Members Win New and Improved Contract

Superstore Supervisors – The Winds of Change

Website Contest A Success

Making History, Instead of Repeating It

your voice

United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401 - Vol. 105 - June - Sept. 2015



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webCampus info here: www.ufcw.ca/webcampus

Union Savings info here: www.unionsavings.ca

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Orange wave illustration and Harper illustration: Cori Torres

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Last month, on May 5th, an historic political upset took place, Canadian style. It didn't involve an underground resistance. It didn't require riots or massive demonstrations. It wasn't even brought about by a province-wide general strike. It was a "perfect storm" of events that culminated in Albertans becoming so disgusted with the constant mishandling, and at times downright scandalous ineptitude of the province's 44-year government, that many finally found there was no other choice but to hand the PCs their walking papers – and how! It was a mass firing of epic proportions.

But on we go with the work at hand and our excitement for change is tempered by the realities of very tough times for some of our members.

This edition of *Your Voice* is a significantly pared down version of what we've produced previously. It is an important part of our obligation to share information with our members about what is happening, both good and bad, but the time and energy that goes into creating a quality product like *Your Voice* has to be balanced with the immediate needs of our membership, and we are keenly aware of this. We have had many battles in recent months and we came to the quick conclusion that the magazine would have to be abbreviated this time around.

With the falling oil prices leading to massive layoffs in the tar sands affecting hundreds of our members; Sobeys threatening to close Edmonton warehousing operations, Superstore standing in the way of their supervisors' freedom to become members of the union and enjoy the much needed protection and benefits that accompany membership, and some employers playing games with our members' livelihoods, we were tapped out. We think, however, that you will find the stories contained within this edition, though fewer in numbers, to be informative and relatable. Some of the stories will highlight battles we are taking on and others will talk about hope and changing times.

Change does not come easily or quickly, and as always it will take patience and determination. Representing some of the hardest working people in the country, we have made history with some of the battles we've taken on with you our members. And while we are happy to see the orange glow of a new dawn, our determination for a better life for our members and their families is only emboldened by the new political landscape in our province. These are indeed hard times but together we can make positive change happen.

The late Jack Layton summed it up beautifully;

*"My friends,
love is better than anger.
Hope is better than fear.
Optimism is better than despair.
So let us be loving,
hopeful and optimistic.
And we'll change the world."*

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Go Big or Go Home:

Safeway Members Weather the Storm and Win!

strengthen

It was 2013 and Sobeys had just purchased Safeway for CAD \$5.8 billion in a record sale giving the company the leading market share in Western Canada. During this time, we at UFCW Local 401 were looking at ways this landmark sale would impact our thousands of members working for Safeway across the province; we specifically had our eye on the upcoming Union Contract negotiations with the new employer in 2014-2015.

Our experience in strategic corporate research told us we would be in for a fight with Sobeys and we had to approach this profit-driven company with a new method they were sure to understand if we wanted to not only maintain the standards of the current contract at Safeway but to also win necessary gains for our members reflective of a changing Alberta.

What we were confronting together was the prospect of negotiating a new Union Contract with a new company that has very deep pockets. Add to this a background of financial uncertainty in the province and we have what you might call a negotiating challenge, to say the least.

Outcomes in the negotiation process are impossible to predict. However, it was apparent early on in negotiations that the employer was determined to cut back on a number of benefits enjoyed by Safeway workers, and in the meantime, offer our members a contract not up to our standards as a union.

The company was sticking hard to its demands of major concessions from their workers during negotiations:

Sobeys wanted to remove department managers from the union and allow vendors to stock store shelves. Both of these major concessionary demands from Sobeys would have had an immediate and severely negative impact on the lives of Safeway employees, and **we could not stand for this as a union.**

We knew there was a storm coming and we hunkered down to ensure we could navigate these waters as best we could and with the highest interest of our valued Safeway membership always at the forefront of our negotiations. We were negotiating against the odds, so from the outside looking in, it is understandable to think that this labour union might be worried about the uphill challenge ahead of us, but then maybe you are not familiar with the fighting spirit of UFCW Local 401 and the fearlessness of our union members.

persevere

commit

solidarity



“I am extremely proud of the strength, perseverance, and determination of the Safeway membership and the bargaining committee,” said Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren

“The negotiation process is rarely easy and it was a long ten months for Safeway members as we sought to work with a new employer to achieve a fair deal,” said UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren. “At the bargaining table and in the stores, Safeway-Sobeys was sent a strong message that Safeway members would not accept the major concessions the employer had on the table. The new owners of Safeway learned quickly that UFCW Local 401 members would fight to maintain their contract and also to achieve gains that they deserved.”

Safeway members made their voice heard and as a result, Sobeys dropped its major concessionary demands and a tentative agreement was reached with the company in February 2015. Ratification meetings and votes were held across the province in March for members to vote on the new tentative agreement negotiated with the employer by UFCW Local 401 and the Safeway bargaining committee.

At these meetings, Safeway members came out in large numbers to learn the details of their new contract, to ask their Union Representatives questions, and to connect with their union and their fellow Brothers and Sisters. Safeway members made an informed vote on the proposed contract and in the end, Retail members voted 95% in favour of accepting the offer, and Meat and Deli members voted 93% in favour.

“I am extremely proud of the strength, perseverance, and determination of the Safeway membership and the bargaining committee,” said Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren, “because not only did they fight off the employer’s major concessions, they achieved major contract improvements that they deserved, *including wage increases.*”

As Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren further reports, the new contract is a considerable victory for Safeway members in more than one way, “an important note is this is the first time since the very early nineties that an agreement has been reached with Safeway without having to take a strike vote first!” Our members should be very proud of what they have accomplished with their new employer.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank every Safeway member for demonstrating so clearly what we can achieve when we **bargain strong together!**” said Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren.

With the fighting spirit that fills every UFCW Local 401 member across this province, there was never need to doubt that we would **go big or go home**, as they say, when it came time to negotiate with Sobeys. In these negotiations, Safeway members faced the storm together and showed their collective strength to their new employer. More importantly, members proved to themselves the power of solidarity in the face of sweeping change.

UFCW LOCAL 401 WEBSITE MEMBER APPRECIATION CONTEST A SUCCESS

Many of you have heard by now, on 12 February UFCW Local 401 launched a new website. The redesigned **ufcw401.ca** is a great shift in our union's communications as we seek new ways to bring members closer to their union and to each other as Brothers and Sisters.

"The focus of the new website is member service," said UFCW Local 401 Secretary Treasurer Theresa McLaren. "We are pleased with the stylish new look of the site and with the positive feedback we have received from members who are enthusiastic about the easy-to-use design and ability to instantly find information at their fingertips."

"Considering the busy lives of workers today, we wanted to ensure our members could connect with their union no matter what time their shift is at work or how remote the location of their workplace in this large province," said Secretary Treasurer McLaren. "On that note, we made sure to include the mobile-friendly design, member search tools and world language translation features as key aspects of our website redesign in our effort to better communicate important workplace information to our diverse membership."

This includes the ability to quickly access online information and forms about your benefits, rates of pay, health and safety and legal rights at work through our website.



Winner #1

Name: **George Hillier, Brooks**
Prize: **50" TV**
Local 401 Member For: **7 Years**

How did you hear about the Member Appreciation Contest?
"I saw the contest on the website and Liked it on Facebook."

What do you like about the new website?
"I like that it is more user-friendly and I can get to the stuff I want faster and easier."

What are you going to do with your grand prize?
"The TV is going in my man cave!"

Why do you love your union?
"I love my union because the union looks out for members' rights and represents the workers against abuse or mistreatment from the employer. And, I won a TV!"



Winner #2

Name: **Kathy Villemaire, Medicine Hat**
Prize: **16 GB iPad**
Local 401 Member For: **21 Years**

How did you hear about the Member Appreciation Contest?
"I went to the website to update my new address and saw the contest."

What do you like about the new website?
"I like that it is very colourful and easy to navigate."

What are you going to do with your grand prize?
"It is funny timing because my laptop just crashed and I need to take it in to get repaired, winning this iPad worked out very well for me."

Why do you love your union?
"I love my union because when I need them, there is always someone there for me."



Winner #3

Name: **Matthew Carew, Calgary**
Prize: **\$500 Safeway Gift Card**
Local 401 Member For: **6 Years**

How did you hear about the Member Appreciation Contest?
"I heard about the contest through an email from the union."

What do you like about the new website?
"The new website is very informative."

What are you going to do with your grand prize?
"I am going to spend it as needed."

Why do you love your union?
"I love my union because they get things done."



Winner #4

Name: **Emily Martin, Edmonton**
Prize: **\$500 Real Canadian Superstore Gift Card**
Local 401 Member For: **5 Years**

How did you hear about the Member Appreciation Contest?
"I am a regular visitor to the website and saw the contest posted there."

What do you like about the new website?
"It is so easy to navigate."

What are you going to do with your grand prize?
"...I will spend it," said with a smile.

Why do you love your union?
"I love my union because I feel protected and educated about my rights."

Written by Lama Alsafi, Communication and Education Representative

The site will soon include a new feature uniquely designed for UFCW Local 401 Shop Stewards based on their feedback on which tools are needed to be a union activist in the modern-day workplace. The Stewards' Lounge will be a place where union stewards can go to find resources as well as to connect with other Local 401 Stewards across the province to share documents, information and tips on effective advocacy at work. As well, members will soon be able to view their Union Contract on our website by computer, tablet or smartphone.

It is easy to understand why the union would want to celebrate this technological leap forward and improvements made in member service, and what better way to do so than by showing our appreciation to members in the month-long *UFCW Local 401 Member Appreciation Contest*?

In the contest, announced on 13 February, we asked Local 401 members to celebrate with us and invited our union members to enter the contest for a chance to **win one of four grand prizes!** We were so impressed with the number of entries in the Member Appreciation Contest; we decided to extend the contest deadline by one week to give more 401 members a chance to join in on the fun!

Here is what we were giving away: *one 50" TV, one 16 GB iPad, one \$500 Safeway gift card, and one \$500 Real Canadian Superstore gift card!*

Now without further delay, it is time to announce the lucky winners!

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

"Congratulations to all of the winners in the Member Appreciation Contest and thank you to everyone for entering! Our union members are the ones who really made this contest a success by spreading the word about it to their fellow workers," said UFCW Local 401 President Doug O'Halloran.

"We want our union members to know just how much we value their loyal membership. We will continue to look for ways to celebrate UFCW Local 401 members, so make sure to check our website often for news on future contests and events for members only."

As part of our month-long Member Appreciation Contest, we also had some fun every week with 401 members on Facebook and Twitter with Thursday Trivia games. Members were challenged with a Local 401 trivia question every week on social media for a chance to win some cool union swag. Congratulations to all of our Thursday Trivia social media contest winners and to all of our grand prizewinners!

Want a chance to win with your union? Follow UFCW Local 401 online to hear about upcoming contests for your chance to win big!

WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE?



LOTS OF US ARE WORRIED ABOUT JOBS, ABOUT FINDING THE HEALTH CARE WE NEED FOR OUR FAMILIES, ABOUT OUR STANDARD OF LIVING WHEN WE RETIRE. WE CAN CHANGE THAT.

Let's work together for a better Canada

We need a government that makes better choices and builds a better future for all Canadians.

To get there, we need new allies.

So now's the time to connect with our co-workers and neighbours. Ask them what they think about creating better jobs by fixing health care, child care and retirement.

**Together, we can move forward
and build a better future.**

canadianlabour.ca



Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada



UFCW Local 401 Organizing Growth in Alberta

Over the past couple of years, many UFCW Canada local unions across the country have dedicated a great deal of resources to their organizing departments as they attempt to organize more workers to join the union movement. UFCW Local 401 is no exception, it just so happens though; we are leading the way in this organizing initiative as we grow our membership to more than 30,000 members across Alberta.

For decades, Alberta has been known to consistently elect a Progressive Conservative government to power, which is traditionally (and staunchly) anti-union and anti-labour. For everyday Albertans, a fiercely anti-union political party in power has meant that the government does not support the legal rights and financial interests of the hardworking families who make up the working class in Alberta, **and the majority of voters.**

Instead, the PC government has done seemingly all it can to support the legal rights and financial interests of *Big Business* and foreign corporations while in leadership. Choosing corporations over people at every opportunity, the government has made it easier for employers to take advantage of their employees and to infringe upon their rights as Canadian workers.

It comes as no surprise then, while speaking with employees working in our core industries; we have found a positive shift over the past few years when it comes to the opinions of workers on unions. As they watch their elected governments repeatedly step on the rights of all workers, and find that the laws in place to protect us at work, such as the *Alberta Employment Standards Act (ESA)*, are not in the best interest of workers, many in Alberta are starting to see the need for union representation in their workplace as they seek the protection and benefits that can only come with the **Union Advantage.**

Written by Joe Irving, Union Representative



Continued on page 9.





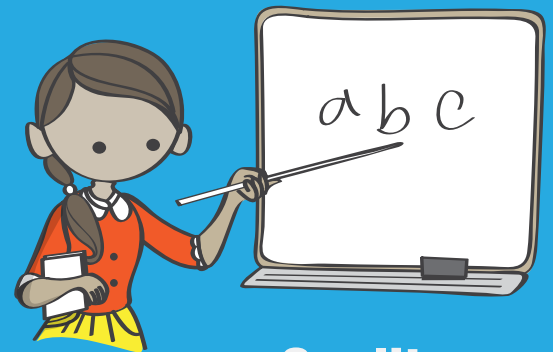
**Fair
Compensation**



**Occupational
Health & Safety**



**Work-life
Balance**



**Quality
Public Education**



**Retirement
Security**



**Respect
in the Workplace**

Unions: Bringing you a Canadian standard of living.

**Alberta
Federation
of Labour**





Some might say, if you do not like your employer or the treatment you receive at work, the easiest solution to your problems might be to simply leave the workplace and seek employment elsewhere. However, many employees would like to stay at their workplace. Some employees stay for the relationships built with the customers over the years, others because they like their friends at work, or they believe in the products being sold. In our opinion, these are good employees who simply deserve to be treated with dignity and respect at work. Nothing changes without workers who are willing to stick around (and **stick up** for themselves) in the workplace to ensure vital changes are made to improve their lives and working conditions.

Workers who want to stay and change their workplace for the better might find the way to achieve these positive changes at work is through the representation, protection and resources of a union. UFCW Local 401 gives workers the ability to make the changes they seek in their workplaces, while also protecting their jobs under relevant legislation known as the *Alberta Labour Relations Code*.

This code is far more extensive than the basic protections offered to workers under the *ESA*, and ensures employers must work with employees and the union to come to a fair and equitable Union Contract. Once workers agree to bring a union to their workplace, they will have protection under the *Labour Relations Code*. This code is intended to allow employees to speak to one another about unions and engage in union activity without intimidation, coercion, or retaliation from the employer for doing so.

In April, representatives from UFCW Local 401 gathered with other UFCW organizers and activists from across the country to attend the 2015 *UFCW Canada Growth Summit* in Toronto. The conference was a great success, allowing UFCW union organizers and activists to connect and share their organizing experiences with each other, both the success stories and barriers faced today in organizing workers, heard in a series of panel discussions.

UFCW Local 401 staff members, Lama Alsafi, Chris O'Halloran, and Richelle Stewart were invited to sit on panels at the conference where

they spoke of Local 401's new approaches and unique success experienced in organizing workers and achieving growth in a political climate hostile to unions.

Two recent examples of UFCW Local 401 organizing success, the Calgary Quest Children's Society and Sobeys Western Cellars Liquor Store, were used at the Growth Summit to showcase our union's efforts to win fair working conditions for workers, despite having some of the worst worker protection laws of any province in Canada.

The participants of the Growth Summit were let in on the secret to success in these two organizing campaigns by the Local 401 panelists: the bravery and big picture thinking of the workers at Calgary Quest and Sobeys Liquor Store were the *real reasons* these organizing campaigns succeeded. These workers were scared and many faced management intimidation when they first approached Local 401 to improve their working conditions. What our organizers did was to empower the workers to take charge of the campaigns themselves and simply guide them in making the most educated and strategic decisions based on our experience.

Though workers struggled in these campaigns, they persisted and continued to assure themselves and their co-workers of the benefits of working collectively to win a fair Union Contract at work. In the end, both workplaces were victorious and workers felt a great sense of pride having led the campaigns to organize themselves.

Keep in mind there are still workers out there who are fighting for many of the benefits we have negotiated in our Union Contracts, and sometimes take for granted as union members. We must then remember to share our victories with other workers to empower them with the idea of creating positive change in their workplace to improve their working conditions. The only way to grow our collective voice is for workers to talk with other workers.

Get your friends or family members to contact our organizing team confidentially at **1-877-GO-UNION**, so they too can start receiving the benefits and protections that you have as a UFCW Local 401 member!

People often have a lot of misplaced ideas about what politics is all about. We watch television shows like *The West Wing* or *House of Cards* and we see all this intrigue and excitement; glory and gusto; savvy and suspense.

Making History, Instead of Repeating It

That might make for good television, but it doesn't generally draw a very accurate picture about the political process.

However, every once in a while politics actually live up to all that drama. Once in a lifetime, something truly special and unexpected happens. Something that lifts our hopes, tempers our cynicism, and proves Tommy Douglas' words that, *"tis not too late to build a better world,"* true.

Written by Scott Payne, Communications & Education Representative

On May 5, 2015, Alberta voters witnessed one of those moments as Rachel Notley and Alberta's New Democrats toppled the PCs 44-year rule in Alberta and ushered in the province's first NDP government ever.

An electoral outcome that no one could have predicted, the Party began preparations with what seemed like ambitious goals at the time: grow its seat count in Edmonton and elect MLAs outside of the city in Calgary and Lethbridge. To do this, leader Rachel Notley and the team behind her employed a campaign that blended criticism of Jim Prentice's plan to force working Albertans to pay more and get less with optimism about the possibility of a brighter and more hopeful vision for the province.

Tapping into Albertans' long-term dissatisfaction with the ruling party, Notley focused her message on supporting Alberta families rather than catering to the needs of the province's wealthy corporate class. Talking about the importance of protecting public health care, building a first-class education system, and creating quality jobs across the province, Alberta's

Alberta's Progressive Conservative Party (PC) could only watch as their once-mighty empire drowned beneath an orange wave in the provincial election...

Torres

Thank you, Albertans, for putting your trust in our party.
We made a little history tonight!

- Rachel Notley

New Democrats spoke directly to the issue most important to the majority of voters. At the same time, the campaign was able to draw a strong contrast between Notley's everyday values and Prentice's entitled attitude by championing the need for modest increases in corporate tax rates to ensure all Albertans were paying their fair share – a call that Prentice and his Party had flatly ignored when consulting Albertans about their budget.

Alberta's New Democrats also scored key victories throughout the campaign as the only party other than the PCs to field a full slate of candidates, presenting a well-coordinated province-wide campaign, and posting a record breaking fundraising effort. In particular, Rachel Notley's flawless performance in the Leaders' Debate was a turning point in the campaign as the voting public got a taste for what real political leadership looks like.

UFCW Local 401 also showed substantial leadership in this election, helping to create the conditions for a groundswell of momentum. Members like Chris Nielsen and Barb Miller ran and were elected as MLAs for Edmonton-Decore and Red Deer-South respectively. A host of 401 members also worked on campaigns in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge as campaign managers, voter contact organizers,

election-day organizers, and canvassers. The union also committed staff resources to assisting the party with organizing both in lead up to and during the election.

But the real story of this election is the response from Albertans themselves. Presented with a real alternative, with the chance to imagine a better future for themselves and their families, and an opportunity to chart a new course for the province, voters in Alberta responded decisively and overwhelmingly. Phones rang off the hook, signs flew out the door, and volunteers came out of the woodwork.

People actually got excited about politics for a change. They saw getting involved in politics not as a waste, but as a vehicle for the building the better world they wanted to live in. They rediscovered a lost sense of camaraderie and resonated with Rachel Notley's reminder that, "our communities are better off when all our communities are better off."

Every once in a while, if you're lucky, you get to witness people coming together to do something truly amazing.

Every once in a while, politics surprises you for all the right reasons. And if you work up just enough courage like voters in Alberta did, you can give yourself the chance to make history instead of repeating it.



401 EVENTS CALENDAR

june

1	General Membership Meeting – Banff
2	General Membership Meeting – Hinton
2	General Membership Meeting – Camrose/Wetaskiwin
2 – 4	Warehouse Facility OH&S Training – Edmonton
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Medicine Hat
3	Union General Membership Meeting – Canmore
6	Pride Parade – Edmonton
9	Union General Membership Meeting – Fort McMurray
12	Union General Membership Meeting – Pebble Beach
15	Union General Membership Meeting – Beaver River Executive Lodge
15	Union General Membership Meeting – Conklin
16	Union General Membership Meeting – Devon Lodge
16	Union General Membership Meeting – Brooks
16 – 18	Production Facility OH&S Training – Brooks
17	Union General Membership Meeting – Aramark Long Lake
18	Union General Membership Meeting – Anzak Lodge
20	David Martin Southern Open
21	Father's Day
21	National Aboriginal Day
22	Union General Membership Meeting – Henday Lodge
23	Union General Membership Meeting – Wapasu West
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Wapasu Main/East
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Athabasca Bog

july

1	Canada Day
1	Praise a Postal Worker Day
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
30	Union General Membership Meeting – Grande Prairie

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

401 EVENTS CALENDAR

august

3	Civic Holiday
5	Union General Membership Meeting – Lloydminster
6	Union General Membership Meeting – Athabasca Bog
9	International Day of World's Indigenous People
12	International Youth Day

september

6	Pride Parade – Calgary
7	Labour Day
8	International Literacy Day
21	International Day of Peace
22	Union General Membership Meeting – Edmonton
23	Union General Membership Meeting – Calgary
23	Union General Membership Meeting – Lethbridge
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Red Deer
24	Union General Membership Meeting – Grande Prairie
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Banff
28	Union General Membership Meeting – Beaver River Executive Lodge
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Hinton
29	Union General Membership Meeting – Camrose/Wetaskiwin
30	Union General Membership Meeting – Medicine Hat
30	Union General Membership Meeting – Canmore

Do you see something on this calendar that interests you?

Perhaps a school that's going on or one of our fabulous member driven committees that piques your interest or tickles your fancy? It is a great time to get more involved in your union, and there are numerous ways to do so. Be sure to call your Union Rep to find out more about whatever union action or event interests you, and learn how you can get involved. **Get connected and get involved!** You are a member of Alberta's most dynamic union and by becoming more involved in your union, you can make a valuable contribution to your community and help build a stronger future for all workers in the province.

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

Superstore *Continues* to Fight Their *Supervisors* *Who Wish to* Join the Union

Some of us remember all those years ago when the Real Canadian Superstore first came to Alberta. It was 1984. For some of us, it doesn't seem all that long ago, though it was indeed thirty-plus years ago.

In the last thirty years, the Superstore brand has grown and flourished, becoming the most profitable Canadian grocer in the country, coast to coast. Loblaws, which is the parent company of Superstore, operates numerous business ventures under a diverse range of banners, these include banking, real estate and retail. Loblaws' multi billion-dollar acquisition of Shoppers Drug Mart in 2013 has proven it is a contender in many different retail markets across Canada. There is no doubt about it; Loblaws is a much different creature than in its early years.

Customers in Alberta are not the only group to notice a change in Loblaws. UFCW Local 401 and our thousands of union members across the province working for Superstore have noticed a real change in company values and practices over the years. It comes as no surprise then that quite like changes in departments, store design, sales practices and products sold that the role of Superstore's employees would also change. The changes that have impacted our members the most relate to staffing, schedules, available shifts and employer practices within each store department.

One of the most notable of these observed changes is the transformed job function of Superstore supervisors. Over the years, the union has raised the issue of supervisors doing bargaining unit work with the employer. In other words, we have objected to supervisors doing work that is appropriately done by our union members as per the Union Contract.

UFCW Local 401 Union Representatives are always looking for ways to protect our members' work because we understand it is the amount and availability of that work that ensures our

Change

members have as many hours as possible week after week. With no less than 86% part-time workers trying to share the pie when it comes to available hours, it's an important matter to keep our eye on.

Supervisors should supervise, they should not be doing our members' work and taking away hours from workers on the floor. In the past, the problem only cropped up now and then. At other times it has been more pronounced. But we were always able to raise the concern with the company and it would be corrected for our members.

In the last few years; however, things have changed. In fact, they have changed so much with regard to supervisors doing bargaining unit work that many have characterised it as far more than just a change, it is a veritable "seismic shift".

During UFCW Local 401's investigation of this wholesale shift in job function at Superstore, we discovered that supervisors were little more than clerks with a supervisor title. Day after day supervisors were forced to do more of our members' work and it was resulting in hardship for members because of the declining pool of overall available hours.

Just as troubling to the union was the fact that supervisors were clearly being taken advantage of by the company and that Superstore management was seemingly enjoying the fact that these supervisors did not have union representation and so did not have anyone to turn to if they ran into issues regarding treatment, discrimination, management bullying, or unfair decisions from managers or the Eastern based company itself.

In the end, what we found was a group of employees who were being subjected to a tremendous amount of pressure without the Union Advantage enjoyed by our members: having a real collective voice with the employer to speak out against the deplorable treatment many of them were receiving on a daily basis.

Prior to negotiations with the company beginning in early 2013, the union started hearing from Superstore supervisors and the stories we heard concerned us greatly. Many of the supervisors we talked to were nervous to state their support for union membership in a more public way but were prepared to sign a petition stating they wanted to join the union and begin negotiating for themselves the very protections others in their departments were already enjoying as members of UFCW Local 401.

Early on during negotiations, the union made it very clear to the employer that we viewed the supervisors to be appropriately placed within the bargaining unit and further that we wanted to bargain rights for them during that round of negotiations considering the radically transformed role of the Superstore supervisor. The union also requested to include representatives from the supervisors' group of workers in the negotiations and hoped to get agreement from the employer on this point early on in negotiations. The company refused to co-operate with our request and stated they did not agree with us that supervisors were regular employees or that they should be included in the bargaining unit and therefore in negotiations for a new Union Contract.

Based on the company's refusal to negotiate with their supervisors, UFCW Local 401 filed an Unfair Labour Practice Complaint at the Alberta Labour Relations Board and we've been fighting with the company about this matter ever since that fateful round of negotiations in 2013. And to make matters even more frustrating, at the Labour Relations Board

hearings, believe it or not, the company has told the Labour Board, and is now openly admitting, that most supervisors are not managers and are simply employees for the purposes of the law. What does this mean to Superstore supervisors? It means that they are completely eligible to unionize under Alberta's laws and to join the rest of the staff in pursuing fair wages, benefits and working conditions. It means supervisors no longer have to be on their own. It means they can have representation.

It means that they can choose representation!

It's been a long process with many frustrating delays but we are hopeful with only a few more hearing dates yet to be scheduled, we will soon get a decision from the Board that allows us to represent all of the hardworking employees at Superstores across the province, including the supervisors.

We know as a labour movement that we are stronger together and that this victory will bring more power and a greater bargaining position to all of our members across the province working at Superstore.

We're in the home stretch as they say, and will report back once the Labour Board renders its decision. In the meantime, if you know of any department supervisors who are interested in being a part of the union and exercising their collective voice with other supervisors, please ask them to call the Union Representative assigned to their store and talk to them confidentially about any workplace concerns they have. Feel free to share this article with your Supervisor and tell them to contact us if they would like. They can receive confidential advice and be part of the one of the most positive changes at Superstore in years!

There continues to be a lot of healthy interest among the supervisors to finally have union representation in the workplace and we look forward to the day when all Superstore and Liquorstore workers are represented by one union, the UFCW Local 401.





Word Scramble

Unscramble below to find three informative labour terms.

1. lagreen himbemserp
etimg
2. ohps werdsat
3. livecotelc emagenert

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.

LABOUR	MEDIATION	CAMPS
NEGOTIATING	STANDARDS	WAREHOUSE
SOLIDARITY	LEADER	ENGAGEMENT
DIVERSITY	TRAINING	VOICE
FAIR WAGES	SHOP STEWARD	BULLY
COMMUNITY	TIME	SAFETY
UNION SAVINGS	CONNECTED	HEALTH
COLLECTIVE	FREEDOM	ABORIGINAL
BALLOT	POLITICS	YOUTH
VOTE	JUSTICE	SPEAK OUT
RATIFICATION	UNIONISM	RAND FORMULA
RESPECT	SCHEDULES	SECURITY
DIGNITY	WEB CAMPUS	
HOLIDAYS	RETAIL	

Word Wonderment

What the Heck is The "Rand Formula"?

Many years ago Justice Ivan Rand of the Supreme Court of Canada, issued a decision on mandatory union dues, otherwise known as "dues check-off", in order to end a bitter strike in Windsor, Ontario between Ford and approximately 17,000 of their workers.

The union was demanding mandatory membership and dues payment, which the employer opposed vigorously, of course. (Funny how employers like to talk about their employees' freedom to choose where dues and representation are concerned, but when it comes time to implement a ridiculous policy or practice they tell you to suck it up!) Justice Rand settled the matter in his 1946 decision, resulting in an end to the 99-day strike.

Justice Rand pointed out in his decision that because unions are legally obligated to represent all workers within the unionized workplace, whether they're union members or not, it is only fair that everyone who benefits from that representation have to pay their fair share.

The level of representation that workers receive directly affects a union's ability to fund their many efforts in order to take on employers. Imagine if you joined a gym and had the right to decide at any point that you were not going to pay your monthly membership fees. How long before the gym equipment becomes broken down or obsolete? How long until staff levels would dip due to layoffs because there's no money to have sufficient, qualified trainers to help you meet your goals? How would your gym stack up among those who had mandatory monthly fees for all members? Well, your union is no different. We are only going to be able to take on your employer when you need us if there is a reasonable funding system, which is always voted on by the membership.

Your union dues are an investment in yourself and your co-workers. "Free-riders" who don't want to pay union dues and still receive all the benefits of unionization are doing everyone, including themselves, much harm. Your union dues work hard for you every day. They are also tax deductible and you get a good chunk of them back every year at tax time. But most importantly, they are used to represent your interests and improve your working conditions through your union contract, as well as providing a level of job security not enjoyed in non-union workplaces. Being a part of a progressive social justice organization like a union and knowing you're paying your fair share is indeed something to hold your head high about.

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U	G	Y	K	W	P	E	K	L	Y	K	E	E	M	I	T	S	C	H	E	D	U	L	E	S

Last issue's answers can be found at gounion.ca/your-union/your-voice-magazine

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