

CUPE MEMBERS ARE STANDING STRONG

Challenging the right-wing mantra of a 'changed world,' CUPE members across Ontario are forging links with their communities, their brothers and sisters in private and public-sector unions and progressive groups to call for a 'better world' where working people are recognized for the positive contributions they make to the community, inside and outside the workplace.



In mid-June, inside and outside workers from the City of Toronto walked off the job after negotiators refused to withdraw demands for major rollbacks to work and seniority rules and benefits. They join their sisters and brothers from CUPE Locals 543 and 82, who have now been on strike in the City of Windsor for more than three months.

On July 4, 90 members of CUPE 1521-02, representing front line staff at the Association for Community Living Lanark, struck after the employer refused to offer workers a fair deal that would provide them pension security available to other ACL workers across Ontario. As well, 50 members of the Power Workers Union (affiliated with CUPE 1000) walked off the job in Ingersoll to hold the line on employer demands for major cuts to worker benefit packages, changes in work rules and an attempt to create a two-tier workforce with contracts of differing lengths for inside and outside workers.

Using the current recession as cover, more and more employers are using the bargaining table to try to force rollbacks that would strip current and future workers of the chance to retire comfortably and care for themselves and their families.

While it is natural for workers to feel insecure about their jobs during a recession, during this downturn they are pushing back. University of Windsor Labour Studies professor Alan Hall recently told the Canadian Press that workers are responding differently in this recession.

Hall said it's unusual to see workers so willing to embark on major strikes during an economic slowdown. He suggested this willingness to stand up for their rights probably comes from the awareness that employers are trying to pass the brunt of the recession onto the backs of their employees while enjoying raises, benefits and oftentimes huge bonuses for themselves.

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It's a sentiment shared by CUPE Ontario members on the line and their leadership. "These labour disputes have far less to do with worker demands and far more to do with governments and business using the economic crisis as a convenient pretext to drive down worker wages and benefits," CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan stated in a recent Toronto Star opinion column.



Council of Canadians Chair Maude Barlow at Site 41

CUPE ONTARIO JOINS FORCES TO STOP THE DUMP

On July 4, CUPE Ontario joined forces in Simcoe County with the Council of Canadians, local First Nations and the Canadian Auto Workers to fight a proposed dump site on one of the world's most pristine water sources.

More than 400 people made the trek to Tiny Township to take in the scenery, listen to music at an informal picnic, and hear keynote speaker Maude Barlow argue against the proposed dump, dubbed Site 41.

The county is attempting to develop a dump site atop the Alliston Aquifer, which contains some of the purest water on the planet. Dozens of women from the Beausoleil First Nation have been camped out at the site in hopes of drawing attention to a potential catastrophe.

CARIBANA PREPARATIONS WELL UNDERWAY AT CUPE ONTARIO

CUPE Ontario is preparing to 'Jump Up' for racial justice in our work, our society and the world next month. Preparations are underway for a CUPE Ontario contingent at this year's Caribana Parade, which takes place in Toronto August 1.

Members of the Racial Justice Committee are spearheading the work to put on an exciting and entertaining Caribana for all members that will also convey our key messages of investing in people and continuing the struggle for racial justice across Ontario and Canada. While organizers continue to work towards the August 1 parade date, CUPE Ontario remains mindful of the labour dispute between the City of Toronto and members of CUPE Locals 79 and 416.

We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure our support for Caribana doesn't conflict with our support for our striking CUPE locals in Toronto.

Get up-to-date news affecting you every day at:
www.cupe.on.ca

'SWEET' DELIVERY FOR LTC'S 3.5 NOW

Long-term care (LTC) residents, workers and Members of Provincial Parliament awoke June 30 to the aroma of cupcakes with a twist. The pastries and other sweets delivered to LTC facilities and Liberal MPPs offices by CUPE LTC sector members smelled like any other, but carried a message that residents in long-term care deserve better treatment, courtesy of customized icing that included an important number—3.5.

For LTC workers and residents, 3.5 represents the minimum standard of hands-on care, in hours, that nursing home residents should receive daily.

Prior to the 2007 provincial election, Premier Dalton McGuinty promised to enshrine minimum care standards. However, the Health Care Workers Coordinating Committee (HCWCC) wasn't prepared to let the McGuinty Liberals slide on their broken promise of minimum care for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Instead, committee members decided to make June 30 an unofficial 'Residents Appreciation Day,' as



Meagan Rae-Dixon unleashes the power of pastry and 3.5 NOW

well as a 'Day of Baked Action.' Participating CUPE locals across Ontario celebrated Residents Appreciation Day by bringing baked goods such as cookies and cupcakes into their workplaces, all bearing the "3.5" message. At the same time, every Liberal MPP in the province received a special delivery of cupcakes that also included the "3.5" message in icing on top.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

- Sept. 21-24: Health Care Workers Co-ordinating Committee Conference, London Hilton, 300 King Street, London
- Sept. 20-24: OSBCC Retreat, Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre, London
- Oct. 5-9: 24th CUPE National Convention, Montreal, Quebec
- Oct. 15-18: Annual Health & Safety Conference, Kingston Holiday Inn Waterfront
- Oct. 20-25: Annual Fall School, Sheraton Centre Hotel, 123 Queen Street, Toronto
- Oct. 25: Children's Rock Concert, Ottawa
- Oct. 26-30: Activist Training, Crowne Plaza Toronto Airport
- Nov. 1: Children's Rock Concert, Sudbury
- Nov. 1: Children's Rock Concert, Thunder Bay
- Nov. 2-3: 2009 Ambulance Workers Conference, Caesar's Windsor
- Nov. 13-15: Annual Trades Conference, Westin Prince Hotel, Toronto
- Dec. 11-13: Winter School, Howard Johnson Inn and Convention Centre, Timmins

All hotel reservations should be made through W.E. Travel: 1-888-676-7747

CUPE SUPPORTS STRIKING WORKERS, PRIDE

Even when it's hard, solidarity matters. That's why, despite not having an official presence at this year's Dyke March and Pride Parade events in Toronto, CUPE Ontario was there in spirit so as to support their striking brothers and sisters, as well as Canada's largest Gay Pride event.

On June 25, CUPE Ontario issued a statement which read, in part, "We cannot celebrate Pride the same way as in past years while CUPE members are standing up for their rights, walking the picket line and going without wages. Therefore, CUPE Ontario will not have an official contingent in the Pride Parade on Sunday or the Dyke March on Saturday.



The decision not to have an official contingent wasn't taken lightly, and made in consultation with CUPE Ontario's leadership, rank-and-file LGBT activists and CUPE 416 and 79 local leadership.

Even without an official presence, members were strongly encouraged to take part in Pride festivities, including the Dyke March and Pride Parade, with many joining up with our friends in the labour and broader social movements, including our friends within the Ontario NDP and their new leader Andrea Horwath.

INCINERATOR GOES FORWARD, WE PUSH BACK

Despite massive opposition, Durham Regional Council last month narrowly approved a controversial plan to allow construction of a trash-burning incinerator in Clarington.

Regional Councillors voted 16 – 12 in favour of moving forward with the multi-million dollar incineration project that, if completed, would burn more than 140,000 tonnes of garbage daily at a minimum cost of over \$200 million.

Councillors took their vote shortly after 2 a.m., following dozens of deputations by concerned citizens, labour groups and their partners in the environmental movement. Among those making presentations against the P3 incinerator was Brother Wyman McKinnon, who warned councillors that P3s never deliver the cost savings promised.

Also on hand to present the case against the proposal was Brother Mark Brooks from the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), who cautioned councillors against dealing with Covanta Energy, the New Jersey-based company which will build and operate the proposed incinerator. Brother Brooks' union has been engaged in several long battles with Covanta, which has an even lengthier rap sheet for labour and health and safety violations in the U.S. and Europe.

While the proposed incinerator has crept forward slightly with Regional Council's vote, CUPE Ontario and its partners in the labour and environmental movement will continue to push back against the Region's ill-considered plan.