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# WE ARE THE SOLUTION NOUS AVONS LA SOLUTION

47th Annual CUPE Ontario Convention - Wednesday May 26th – Saturday May 29th, 2010

Convention Capsule 3

May 29th, 2010

## *Convention elects new officer team to lead Ontario Division*



Over two rounds of balloting on Friday morning, the close to 1,000 voting delegates elected a president and a secretary-treasurer giving CUPE Ontario a new officers team to lead the division for the next two years. This will be the first time in 18 years that CUPE Ontario emerges from convention with a president who is not Sid Ryan.

Fred is the first openly gay man to lead a major trade union in Ontario and it was a hugely emotional moment when, having risen to thank delegates, he asked his life partner Kerry Peer to join him on stage. The Secretary Treasurer election is also an important “first” as Candace Rennick becomes the first woman and indeed the youngest person ever elected to the top financial officer spot in CUPE Ontario.

Both Hahn and Rennick thanked their opponents and thanked the delegates noting that our elections are the cornerstone and the health of our union.

Both new officers as well, made clear in their campaigns and in their speeches, a commitment to setting the organization on a sound and open financial footing, to ensuring that CUPE continues to be a leader in the defence of public services, of our collective agreements and in the struggle for equality rights across Ontario. Originally from Tillsonburg, Ontario, 42 year old Fred Hahn is a social worker from Toronto and has been an active CUPE member since 1990. He was first elected to the CUPE Ontario Executive Board in 1998 and was elected Secretary-Treasurer in 2006.

A long term care worker, 31 year old Candace Rennick grew up in Peterborough and has been a CUPE union member her entire adult life. Candace has held many leadership positions in CUPE including the presidency of her home local, CUPE 2280 in Peterborough and Vice President of CUPE Ontario. Candace is also a Vice President of CUPE National and serves as a Vice President of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

## ***New OD budget charts course to strengthen fightback capacity***

Delegates approved a new budget recommended by the Ways and Means Committee for 2010/11 that will address the Ontario Division's financial challenges and put the organization in a stronger position to defend members' interests. It projects a surplus of \$54,615. A revenue increase over current year's actual is forecast through a rise in per capita income and added contributions from CUPE National for campaigns to protect members and public services.

The plan also includes stronger controls over expenditures and ensuring operational funds are spent as efficiently as possible. On the administrative side, CUPE Ontario will work with the national union to reduce costs on items ranging from photocopying, technology, cell phone plans and car leases.

Proposed changes to sector committees and jurisdictional conferences were hotly debated. While fewer resource will be available for core funding, additional campaign resources will be available.

## ***Delegates rise early for Moist's pension breakfast***

Over 100 delegates forfeited sleep this morning to talk pensions with CUPE National President Paul Moist. As part of CUPE's national pensions campaign, Moist has been hosting pensions breakfasts at CUPE conventions across the country. In his presentation, Moist described a national retirement income system that has reached a boiling point.

"Over 11 million workers don't have workplace pension plans, and those who do are seeing their plans coming under attack," said Moist. "And the RRSP system has shown itself to be too expensive and too risky to provide an adequate retirement income for the majority of Canadians. One thing is clear: things need to change."

Moist says there is a solution to Canada's pension crisis. "By expanding the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), we could double CPP benefits for the 93 per cent of Canadians who contribute. By increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), we could lift hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty. And by enacting tougher laws to protect pensions, we can make sure that workers – like those at Nortel – never again have to pay for their employers' bankruptcy with their pensions."

"We can improve pensions for all Canadians, but it will require buy-in from Canadians and their governments," said Moist. Insurance and fund companies have opposed any pension reforms that would affect their revenues. "We must be forceful," said Moist. "We need to keep getting the message out: Canadians deserve better pensions, and we have solutions that work."

## ***Workers Action Centre's Deena Ladd addresses convention***

Deena Ladd, Coordinator of the Workers Action Centre in Toronto spoke to delegates about the necessity of working to bridge the gap between union workers and non-union workers.

The Workers Action Centre helps those who are not unionized. "For the past 10 years we at the Centre have assisted workers with access to protection they do not have," explained Ladd.

Ladd called for CUPE and other unionized workers to reach across the divide that pits union workers against non-union workers, private sector employees against public sector workers, those who have immigrant status against those who do not have legal status.

"The fight for good jobs is aligned with the fight for public services. The fight for good public sector jobs leads to good jobs for all," Ladd said. Following her address delegates spontaneously passed the hat and raised \$1,700 for the Workers Action Centre.