



50th Annual CUPE Ontario Convention - Toronto Sheraton Centre. May 31, 2013

Convention Capsule 2

CUPE Ontario grows by more than 40,000

CUPE Ontario’s membership grew by 16 locals and more than 22,000 last year, and by more than 40,000 over the last two years, Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick revealed in her address to Convention.

“At the last convention we said we would continue to reach out to non affiliated locals— especially the small ones— and bring them into the CUPE Ontario family,” she said. “And we’ve been working on that.”

The union is also on a stronger financial footing, she reported, because of increased revenue from membership growth, careful budgeting and an efficient pay-down of long-term debt.

That strengthened financial position is important as we face increasing attacks on our basic rights from Conservative governments at all levels.

“Ontario is a major battleground for all of CUPE,” she said. “Public services and programs for millions of Canadians are at stake; the jobs of thousands of CUPE members are at risk.”



Local	Employer	# of members	Local	Employer	# of members
749	Municipality of Port Hope	20	4088	Cathay Pacific airways	338
896	Au Chateau Home for the Aged	154	4513	Huron County EMS	70
1393	University of Windsor	272	4830	Hellenic Home	110
1496	Heartwood Revera	124	4914	Employees of Peel CAS	400
1628	Peel District School Board	787	5060	St. Olga’s Lifecare Centre—CAMA	70
2501	Halton children’s Aid society	104	7548	Fam. & Children’s Serv. of Frontenac, Lennox, Addington	171
2722	Oxfam Canada	47	79	Municipality of Toronto	20,000
2977	Bethesda Community Services	226			
4044	Canjet Airlines	172			
TOTAL NEW MEMBERS					23,065

Supporting our collective strength



Citing attacks on CUPE members by right-wing governments across the country, National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury assured delegates their National union is there to support them and highlighted that resourcing the political fights we face has taken the largest portion of new revenue for 2013.

“Challenges like Bill C-377 and Stephen Harper’s plan to go after union security, together with provincial legislation taking away bargaining rights, are all evidence of a determined right-wing attack on Canadian trade unions,” said Brother Fleury. “They are also chipping

away at public services, with spending cuts at the provincial level and ongoing efforts to privatize and contract out services in municipalities.”

Brother Fleury highlighted the new permanent Fight-back Fund. Last fall, the NEB approved a fight-back campaign worth more than the \$1.7 million. Much of that went to a major television advertising campaign: “Collective Bargaining Works.”

CUPE also increased its elections budget, Strengthening Divisions Fund, amounts available for cost-shared campaigns in the National Defence Fund (Ontario locals, committees and councils benefited from \$1.49 million of the \$2.45 million budgeted for 2012 cost-shared campaigns), and Defence Fund support for regional strategic initiatives (of which Ontario received \$800,000 last year). On the Strike Fund, Brother Fleury said: “With \$62 million in the Strike Fund, no CUPE member will ever have to stand down from a picket line because our union can’t support their strike.”

Solidarity with Porter workers

Striking workers from Porter Airlines received a resounding reception at Convention on Thursday morning. The workers have been on strike for five months, fighting an anti-labour employer for a first contract that includes wages above poverty levels.

At the podium, CUPE Ontario pledged \$10,000 to support the strike, which was matched by CUPE National. Dozens of locals lined up to pledge support, raising a grand total of more than \$52,000. The strikers received numerous commitments from CUPE Ontario to help organize solidarity rallies in cities where Porter flies, and from members and retirees to spread the word:



Don’t Fly Porter. COPE 343 is asking union locals to “Adopt a Picket Day” on a Tuesday or Thursday at Billy Bishop Airport in Toronto. For more information, contact Mary Stalteri at mstalteri@copeontario.ca.

Idle No More is about all of us



In response to the Harper Conservative Government's Bill C-45 — a so-called budget implementation bill that altered 64 acts, including making unilateral changes to, among others, the Indian Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Environmental Act, four women in Saskatoon decided to organize a mass teach-in in Saskatoon on November 10, 2012, to protest the violation of the treaty rights of indigenous peoples. With this peaceful teach-in event, these four women, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon, Nina Wilson and Sheelah McLean, inspired others to organize teach-ins, rallies and protests in their own communities across

Canada, which helped launch the Idle No More movement.

At CUPE Ontario's 50th convention, Idle No More co-founder Sylvia McAdam shared with delegates her story about the birth of this grassroots movement and the importance of working together to fight for equality, justice and fairness. "The Idle No More movement is not just an 'Indian Thing,' said McAdam. "This movement is about all of us. If you care about people's rights, about the environment, about the land and water in Canada, this movement is about you and about all of us. We must unite and work together to support Idle No More."

According to McAdam, this grassroots movement must continue to build alliances and bring working people together to defend our rights to clean water and land. "The Conservative government does not have our consent for the destruction of our water and land," continued McAdam. "Moving forward, we all need work protection and workers' rights, we all need clean water and land, and Canadians deserve accountability, equality and fairness from the Harper government."

McAdam concluded her speech by urging delegates to join the grassroots movement with different activities, from song and dance, to music to letter writing to demonstrations to webinars: "We can all participate to make Canada a fairer and more equitable place." For more information, visit www.idlenomore.ca

Young Workers & Allies Hospitality



Youth, labour alliance catalyst for change



The best way to shift the balance of power to a more equal, progressive Canada is to create space and opportunities for long-term alliances between disaffected and racialized youth and the labour movement, guest speakers told delegates at yesterday's Equality Luncheon.

But first, labour must reach out to young people. There's one snag, said Mohammad Ali, a Canadian Federation of Students activist and musician: "Youth don't know unions and they have a cynicism and distrust of government and established organizations including unions."

Here in Toronto, Ali said, city workers and graffiti artists have been attacked by the Rob Ford administration, but they did not work together on common strategies.

"This," he said "needs to change for effective resistance and a catalyst for change."

As a 21-year old Parliamentary page in the House of Commons, Brigitte DePape felt powerless to make change until one day she realized she had a choice

and could actually disobey. That's the day she stood in the House with a "Stop Harper" sign in the middle of the government's Throne Speech.

The economy is not working for many Canadians, youth in particular, DePape told members. "The Harper government won the last election by less than 7,000 votes and there are 1.2 million young people in Canada. If we vote, we change the government."

Growing up in the shadow of Sarnia's chemical valley and the Suncor Refinery, Vanessa Gray of the Aamjiwaang First Nation thought that "everyone had a refinery in their backyard." It wasn't until her early teens when her cat got cancer that Gray started to question why so many of her neighbours died young and why children in her small community of 1200 had high rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

"I thought maybe people here shouldn't be dying so young," said Gray, who refers to the practices of the oil and bitumen industries as "environmental racism" and heads up an environmental group for youth called Green Teens. Young people, Gray said, "deserve a healthy future."

Mark the time and location! Day 3 Events:

- ⇒ 8 to 9 a.m. ⚬ Pink Triangle Election Caucus (Civic North)
- ⇒ 9 a.m. to noon ⚬ Call to Order (Grand Ballroom)
- ⇒ 10:40 a.m. ⚬ Michael Harrington, Chicago Teachers Union
- ⇒ 11 a.m. to noon ⚬ 50th Anniversary Showcase

- ⇒ Noon to 1:30 p.m. ⚬ Rally and March to Ministry of Labour
- ⇒ 1:30 to 5 p.m. ⚬ Call to Order
- ⇒ 2:00 p.m. ⚬ Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath
- ⇒ 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. ⚬ Convention Social/Dance (Dominion Ballroom)