



THE VIEW

FROM

Local 2

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1
WINTER 2012

Does Politics Matter

In the recent election in the United States SEIU made the re-election of President Obama and democrats across the United States its number 1 priority and engaged in a massive campaign to win for workers. SEIU members and staff knocked on more than 2.5 million doors, made more than 5 million phone calls, advertized on radio and television, got voters to the polls and contributed millions to the election effort.

SEIU made a real difference and we should be proud of their incredible effort – because the outcome in the political battles in the U.S. is hugely important to working people in that country who could have lost their “health care”, “assistance for high-

er education” and “union rights” if the Republican’s had won the elections.

Politics is important in our country too.

Our politicians set the rules



we live by and what they do affects us each and every day. There are politicians here who sincerely want to change our health care,

make education less affordable, shred the social assistance network and reduce the ability of unions to effectively represent workers.

A few of the many examples that are impacting our members today:

The Ontario governments’ decision to end the slots for tracks program putting thousands of jobs of our members working at race tracks at risk.

The ongoing City of Toronto decision concerning allowing a casino or casinos in Toronto (if a casino was located at Woodbine, it would save hundreds of our members jobs).

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Bargaining Unit Updates

Members at **Pepsico Foods (Trenton Plant)** ratified a three year agreement in May of 2012. The agreement will see wages increase by 2% each year, bringing the lowest wage rate in the plant to almost \$23 per hour by 2015!

In June of 2012 Members at the **Township of Red Rock**, ratified a four year collective agreement with an 8% wage increase over the life of the agreement! More recently, in October 2012 our members at the **Town of White River** members ratified a three year agreement. The agreement included a 4% increase in wages as well as a lump sum payment in the first year of the contract. Both agreements represent a significant achievement in the municipal sector where economic pressures are increasing.

Our collective agreement with **CNIB (Service and Administration)** covers approximately 80 employees. In July of 2012 members ratified a new 2 year agreement that provided new job security language, and wage increases of 2% each year.

A new Collective Agreement was recently ratified by members employed at **Vincor Labs** in Niagara Falls. Highlights include an across-the-board 2% annual wage increase in each year of the 4 year deal plus an additional \$500 annual bonus cheque on April 1st of each year. The agreement also includes improvements to benefits and shift premiums.

Members at **St. Vincent de Paul** in Windsor recently ratified a new 3 year deal. The agreement included benefit improvements, an additional paid sick day and improved bereavement leave. The Bargaining Committee achieved wage increases of 2% (yr 1), 2.25% (yr 2), and 2.25% (yr 3) with an signing bonus of \$300 (ft) and \$200 (pt).

Members at the **Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver** ratified a new five year agreement in early November, 2012.

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Branch Local 902—Annual General Meeting and Member Education

Branch Local 902 held its Annual General Meeting and training workshop on the weekend of October 12 to 14, 2012 in Digby, Nova Scotia. This year's AGM was attended by representatives from our bargaining units at Acadia University, Dalhousie University, Melville Gardens, South Shore Regional School Board, Tideview Terrace, Town of Wolfville, Tri County Regional School Boards, Villa Acadianne and Windsor Elms.

The AGM, and the training program, provided an opportunity for members from across the province to work together, share their experience and strengthen communications. On all

counts it was a success!

The Executive of the Branch Local was elected at the AGM. Loretta Melanson, President (Tideview Terrace), Karen Rice, Vice- President (Tideview Terrace, Jacqueline Swaine, Treasurer (South Shore Regional School Board), Elaine Connelly, Recording Secretary (Tideview Terrace) Penny Foster, Trustee (Tri County Regional School Board), Troy Acker, Trustee (Acadia University), Catherine Reteff, Trustee (Melville Gardens).

The weekend also included a day long workshop entitled, Facing Management. This program included a presentation as well as member participation through various role playing exercises. It was a great opportunity for members to learn and strategize based on the experience of other bargaining units.

Workshop participants provided positive feedback on their experience:

" Being a "newbie" this workshop really helped brings things into perspective. Thank you for the tips/tricks/ tools, which I feel will be very useful in the future!"



Francesca Musso (left) and Maria Di Sisto, Participation House, Markham

In Recognition of service to the Union and its Members

Marg Young served our Union and the membership at Kwik Lok for almost twenty years. Marg's involvement with the Union began in the late 1980s when she took on the role of Shift Steward. For many years Marg served as Chief Steward of the Kwik Lok bargaining unit bringing her skills and experience to bear on behalf of her members at the bargaining table, in the grievance procedure and in her support for her members on a daily basis. Marg has told us that the Union was "always there for her". We would like to recognize that for almost twenty years Marg was always there for her members at Kwik Lok! Thank you Marg!



How we Remember

Even when we can't wear our poppies, we can still remember our veterans on Remembrance Day.

This is how our members at the Labatts London Ontario brewery stepped up to the



plate when told they couldn't wear poppies on Remembrance Day due to the pins involved. The solution was to get the company to fly poppy flags at the facility entrances to show our support for all veterans, including a number of our retirees.

Ontario Horse Racing Industry – Transition Funding Update

Following months intense political pressure, the Ontario government announced the appointment of a 3 member panel mandated to make recommendations on the impact of the cancellation of "Slots for Tracks" and requirements for transition support. As the largest Union in Ontario's horse racing industry, SEIU Local 2 played a leading role in this ongoing campaign and continues to lobby/advocate on behalf of our racetrack members.

SEIU Local 2 made submissions to the Panel (see our website). The Final Report, recently released, includes recommendations that purse monies (prize money won by horses) be funded solely from wagering revenues and that public transition funding be provided over the next 3 years. The Panel concluded that for prize monies to remain at close to previous levels (to maintain an acceptable horse supply), the number of race dates across the Province would need to be cut in half. The Panel also recommended a new lottery and/or Sports Book to provide a revenue stream following the 3 year transition period. Final decisions with respect to the Panel's recommendations have not yet been made.

Please check our website for more detailed information and updates.

Bargaining Unit updates continued.

The new agreement includes 2% wage increases in each year, a transfer of pension to the MSPP, increases in vacation, and improved contracting out language.

A new five year Collective Agreement was ratified by the membership at the Ontario Nurses Association in June of 2012. The new agreement includes improvements in benefits, mileage and allowances together with wage increases of a minimum of 6% over 4 years. The settlement also included substantial lump sum payments in Year 1 of the agreement.

In July of 2012 a 3 year collective agreement was reached with **Oxford Properties (Yorkdale)**. Yorkdale is one of the few properties left in the GTA that employs its own cleaners. Improvements included language to

ensure a fair distribution of overtime and statutory holiday work. Improvements were made to the Retirement allowance as well as across the board wage increases in excess of 2.75% in each year.

In November of 2012 first collective agreements were reached for employees of **Asbury Building Services Inc.** These employees, who work as cleaners in a cluster of buildings in Toronto, joined our Union September 2012. Prior to becoming members they were earning minimum wage of \$10.25 per hour with no benefits and little hope of seeing a wage increase in the near future. The new collective agreement increased wages immediately by a minimum of \$0.75 per hour (some staff saw an increase as high as \$1.05 per hour) for those making minimum wage as well as providing Health and Welfare benefits for employees working over 25 hours per week. The agreement also provides for 2 float days per year and vacation improvements.

On top of that, the local membership decided to donate \$3000.00 to help the kick-off of the Poppy Fund Campaign. They also have poppy donation boxes placed throughout the plant and instead of pin poppies there are poppy stickers that comply with safety standards.

The union co-ordinated with the London Poppy Fund people and arranged for the donation to be made to the district commander and the local Duchess of Kent Legion. The London brewery remains a dedicated supporter of our military. On behalf

of all veterans, the district commander wanted to make sure that the Local's members know how grateful the veterans are for our support. For them, it was simply an honour to be able to contribute.



Omni workers at Proposal Meeting on September 12, 2012.

Omni workers in Vancouver have recently ratified a new contract. The new Collective Agreement includes a Health & Welfare Plan (benefits), wage increases and a paid personal day.

Politics Matters, continued

There are no successor rights attached to our collective agreements in the janitorial sector in any province when the owner of the building changes their cleaning contractors. This makes raising standards for our cleaners extremely difficult.

The attack on teachers (and all education workers) in B.C. and Ontario.

The threat from the Ontario Conservative party and the Saskatchewan party to legislate right to work laws which weaken unions and lead to reduced wages and benefits for workers.

Unions and workers do

need to be actively involved in the political decisions facing us.

At the same time our most important priorities continue to be negotiating good contracts, providing service to our members and growing the union through organizing. It is important, however, for all of us to be aware that the political environment in which we carry out our work has a huge influence on our ability to be successful in our primary mandate - making the lives of our members better.

Politics matter and SEIU will continue to actively support those parties and candidates who endorse and promote pro-worker issues.

You should too!