



THE VIEW

FROM

Local 2

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Stronger Together – A Local for Canadians from Coast to Coast.

On June 12th the International Executive Board approved the merger of SEIU Local 902 (representing members in Nova Scotia and with jurisdiction throughout the Maritime provinces) with Local 2 BGPWU (representing members in Ontario and British Columbia) thus creating a Local that now represents Canadian workers from coast to coast.

The merger agreement had previously been approved by a 98% vote to the Local 902 membership at a series of Local 902 membership meeting throughout Nova Scotia held during the first week of June.

“This merger is truly a win-win for both Locals” said Local 902 President Cedric Thibault.

Local 902 benefits from the resources, staff, expertise and bargaining power of the largest local, while Local 2 gains increased clout with cross-Canada employers, increased membership, as well as significantly increased organizing opportunities.

Local 2 President Cam Nelson told the SEIU Local 2 BGPWU Executive Board at its July meeting that this was a proud day for Local 2 and fulfilled his dream of building a truly Canada-wide Local within SEIU.

He warmly welcomed Cedric to our Executive Board, noting that Branch Local 902 was the largest Branch Local in our Union, and welcomed Gerard Higgins and Cheryl Robichaud who are valuable additions to the Local 2 staff. Truly we are Stronger Together.

Canadian Brewery Council Meets in St. John's, Newfoundland



Brewery Council in St. John's

The Annual Canadian Brewery Council Conference was chaired by brother David Bridger from Branch Local #1 Labatt's and was attended by 40 Union reps from across the country. Reps from Labatt's, Molson's, Brewer's Distribution, and independent breweries all participated representing several Unions. Attendance increased by almost 50% from a year ago and there was discussion to expand further by including more of the distribution workers, specifically Brewer's Retail in Ontario.

A great discussion took place and a Benefits Committee was struck with the mandate to push forward on industry benefits issues. Looking to build on one of the best Council meetings in years the benefits committee will work on their agenda this year. Next

year's Council will take place in Edmonton, Alberta.

Local 2 Helps Save 2009 Fort Erie Racing Season

Citing unsustainable losses year over year, Nordic Gaming announced in late 2008 the devastating news that racing would be permanently cancelled at the Fort Erie Racetrack. Over 100+ members were issued permanent layoffs just before Christmas.

ing sale, there is a renewed optimism regarding the long-term future of this legendary track and continued sustainability of our members' jobs.

Growth Leads to Move

25 years ago the BGPWU purchased its first office building at 238 Jane St., Toronto, and for 25 years that building served us well.

While most other Unions are shrinking, in just 4 short years SEIU Local 2 BGPWU has more than quadrupled in size, proudly making us Canada's fastest growing local in Canada's fastest growing Union.

After joining SEIU and embarking on a truly remarkable program of growth, the once spacious offices at Jane St. became more and more cramped and less and less suitable.

Following approval at the last Council, the Local went out to find a new office building that would accommodate the staff and provide the Local with the space and technology to better service our ex-

Along with other community partners, SEIU Local 2 BGPWU launched an aggressive lobbying campaign to save this historic venue and our members' continued employment. As a result of our persistent and diligent efforts, the Town of Fort Erie stepped up to the plate with a conditional monetary offer to purchase the track in exchange for Nordic's guarantee to run the 2009 racing season

in the interim. As a result, all 100+ members of SEIU Local 2 BGPWU have been brought back to work for the '09 season. SEIU Local 2 BGPWU is proud to have played a pivotal role in saving the 2009 season at Fort Erie. With the welcomed announcement of the pend-

panding membership.

We accomplished it this June, and moved into our new building at 2600 Skymark Ave., Mississauga – only 5 minutes from the Peason International Airport, an import locality as we become a cross-Canada Local.



Local 2 Staff at Our New Office

Richtree Market Restaurants

In a show of what solidarity can accomplish, full-timers and part-timers were able to get full benefits through the hour bank system. Previously, part-timers had no benefits.

Negotiations also resulted in a third 15 minute break, in addition to the current two and lunch time; increased gratuity for senior employees; the removal of all disciplines from our employee records after 12-months; and students will keep seniority. We were also the first group in the Benefit Trust Fund. Today, costs have been contained and even reduced over the term of our current agreement, and we've increased benefits in dental and other areas.

McMaster Machinists Reach New Deal

Following the Physical Plant and Hospitality pattern bargaining, McMaster Machinists unanimously ratified a new 18 month collective agreement with 2.75% wage increase, new Lead Hand rate of \$2.00/hour, 2 paid personal days/year, Employer-paid fund of 2 cents/hour for Union Education, improved bereavement, and numerous job posting/seniority language improvements as well as Employer-paid leave for Chief Steward to attend Local 2's Annual Council.

Historic Gains at Wine Rack Stores!

Over 120 SEIU Local 2 members at Wine Rack Stores are celebrating historic gains achieved in their most recent contract negotiations. For the first time ever, part-time employees will receive bereavement leave entitlement, jury duty pay, scheduling language, guaranteed minimum shift lengths, and reimbursement of tuition fees for wine courses/diplomas.

In addition, the Union also achieved vacation entitlement improvements, a streamlined grievance procedure, and perhaps most importantly, significantly expanded mobility/

employment opportunities on an annual basis (twice as many stores, twice as often) including advance notification of new store openings.

The settlement also provided for various wage increases ranging from 7% - 14% over the term of the 30 month deal.

Victory for Striking Workers at Windsor Raceway

Facing permanent layoffs and unsatisfactory severance, security guards at Windsor Raceway went out on strike in March 2009 to secure an improved exit package. By the end of the four week strike, workers won a substantially enhanced severance package which was almost 80% better than what the Em-



Members on Strike at

Windsor Raceway

ployer had initially offered.

"Sure it was a tough decision, but this strike was first and foremost about dignity and respect. We were victorious in the end - after four weeks on the picket line we achieved a significantly improved package," said Rick Berthiaume, an employee of the Raceway for 38 years. Workers were able to increase their severance to 2 weeks per year to a maximum of 104 weeks. The deal, which also included 30 weeks of health, drug and dental coverage, was ratified unanimously by the members.

Improvements at Trenton Frozen Foods Plant

At the end of May 2009, SEIU Local 2 members at Pepsi (Trenton Frozen Foods) ratified a three year Collective Agreement that provided strong improvements in a number of ar-

reas. Through the hard work and resolve of the bargaining committee, the Union was able to fully protect existing health and welfare benefits, as well as the defined benefit pension plan, which includes a temporary bridge to those wishing to retire early. In addition, we were able to negotiate restrictions on the use of part-time labour, while at the same time, establishing a Health Care Spending Account for part-time employees. The Union was also successful in reducing the existing wage progression system, such that employees will now reach the full wage rate one year earlier. The Collective Agreement also provides for increases in the safety footwear allowance, all shift premiums, and an approximately 15% improvement in employees' vision care allowance.

The agreement features a wage increase of 3% per year, bringing the lowest wage in the plant to over \$20 per hour after the first wage increase this past June 1st. In light of economic conditions, particularly in the Trenton area, we believe that the settlement is an important step forward for SEIU members at Pepsi.

Arbitration Scheduled for Brantford Casino Members

As a result of an unrelated strike by CAW members at Brantford Casino and the OLG's decision to close the Casino during the work stoppage, the Employer pro-rated all hourly employees' vacation pay when the 2 month strike was eventually settled.

Although the CAW subsequently lost its grievance in arbitration, SEIU Local 2 BGPWU is proceeding to arbitration on behalf of its members citing superior vacation pay language.

Said Chief Steward Ray Albert, ***"We are pleased SEIU Local 2 BGPWU negotiated such strong contractual language and fully anticipate a successful arbitration. Most significantly, as we head back into negotiations later this year to build upon the successes of our first Collective Agreement, our members are appreciating more and more the value and importance of being unionized - this is a real wake-up call regarding what the Employer could and would do if we didn't have our Union representing us."***

Employers Can't Negotiate Directly with Employees in the Bargaining Unit

Without consent of the Union, the Employer at Northern Communication Services Inc. sent correspondence to SEIU members asking them to vote on changes to the Collective Agreement more than one year before the agreement terminated.

Not only did the Union oppose the Company proposal but threatened to file an Unfair Labour Practice pursuant to the Canada Labour Code.

Even though the Employer later agreed to rescind their proposal, it immediately sent yet another offering to change the agreement directly to the members – an offer which would have seriously divided the membership as it provided for differing increases in wages throughout the unit.

In effect, the Employers action's pitted new hires against long term employees, pitted the two classifications against each other and seriously undermined the Union, all at the same time.

This time, with the complete support of the members, the Union did file an Unfair Labour Practice Complaint before the Canada Labour Relations Board. One week before the hearing, the Employer contacted the Union to negotiate a settlement to the unfair labour practices. Ultimately, the Union was able to negotiate a substantially higher wage increase, retroactive to November 2008.

The lesson learned - not only must employers negotiate only with the Union but, when the Union is involved, employees always achieve more.

Bargaining Breakthrough at Immigrant Women's Centre

Our members at IWC in Hamilton unanimously ratified a 12 month contract extension providing for the first time, health and dental benefits for the staff. The deal requires the Employer to contribute 7% of total monthly payroll to the Union's Benefit Trust. Said Steward Susan Globe: "The

members are ecstatic with this impressive achievement - thank you SEIU Local 2 BGPWU!" In addition, the Union also negotiated 2 extra paid vacation days for 2009.

SEIU Local 2 Security Officer Receives Medal of Valour

The International Association for Hospital Security and Safety (IAHSS) has awarded Local 2 member Michael Hearn with a medal of valour for disarming a violent patient.

(Chairperson, Region 16, (Eastern Canada)
International Association for
Healthcare Security & Safety).



He was honoured at the IAHSS 41st Annual General Membership Meeting and Seminar on June 23, 2008 for his dedication and achievement to healthcare security and safety worldwide.

Officer Hearn, who works at Rouge Valley Health System, Toronto, Ontario, successfully disarmed a violent and disruptive emergency room patient on April 16, 2008. The patient possessed a knife and had self inflicted injuries. Hearn restrained the patient until appropriately controlled, thus avoiding the possible use of a firearm by a police officer present during the incident. Hearn suffered minor injuries as the result of his intervention.

Organizing Victories

Toronto

Nearly 2,000 janitors in the Greater Toronto Area have already joined J4J. After cleaners from a handful of more companies unite, Toronto Area janitors will be ready to launch a market-wide campaign to pressure property owners and managers, and the cleaning companies they contract, to raise standards for all cleaners in the city.

Jane Finch Mall

Impact Cleaning Services workers came together and united at Jane Finch Mall. The victory was an important crack in the company's anti-union campaign against workers' desires to unite city-wide.

Ottawa

Allen Maintenance City-Wide Victory

Over 250 workers have won union recognition and wage increases so far. Allen is the second largest contractor to be unionized on a city-wide scale in Ottawa. Recently, Hallmark House-keeping services janitors also united across the city.

123 Slater Ave.

Employees of Service Master at 123 Slater Ave. voted to unite on May 29th. The workers are confident they have won their unionizing effort, however, the ballot box is sealed and currently awaiting to hear the official results from the Labour Board. The consensus amongst workers is that a victory is imminent. An Unfair Labour Practice has also been filed against the company in the termination of worker Domenica Palacios.

90 Sparks St.

Bee Clean Janitor Services employees working at 90 Sparks St. celebrated their successful drive to unite at the end of May. The victory paves the road for many other Bee Clean workers in the city looking to join Justice for Janitors.

Tunney's Pasture

After a difficult struggle with Eviros Janitorial Services, janitors were able to come together and declare victory at Tunney's Pasture. Approximately 32 cleaners are employed at this Ottawa location.

Vancouver

Victory at Omni Cleaning

After an intensive nine months campaign, workers at Omni Cleaning in BC have won Union recognition. The Union has successfully negotiated a first collective agreement. At press time, the Union is planning ratification meetings.

