



THE VIEW

FROM

Local 2

SEIU Local 2 2006 Annual Council and Training Conference

This year the SEIU Local 2 BGPWU Annual Council & Training Conference was held April 26th -28th in Orillia.

Cam Nelson, President of SEIU Local 2 BGPWU opened the conference with a warm welcome to all delegates, including new members attending for the first time and was particularly proud to extend a special welcome to the 39 first-time conference participants from our newest and largest branch local (L. 528 - Race-track and Gaming Workers).



Training courses included Stewards Training and Collective Bargaining, both of which were highly successful and well received. Ted Mansell, Secretary-Treasurer for SEIU Local 2 BGPWU said

"You can see the immediate effect our quality training has on conference participants – unquestionably, it creates more effective stewards and union negotiators and ultimately, that's what makes this conference the success that it is."

With over 200 participants this year, the 2006 Annual Council & Training Conference set a new record for attendance. The Officers and staff of SEIU Local 2 BGPWU wish to thank the conference attendees for giving up their valuable time to participate in this important event and in so doing, improving their skills as front-line stewards and/or union negotiators on behalf of their members in the workplace.

Constitutional Amendments

At its annual meeting, the Executive Council approved a

number of minor amendments to the Constitution:

- The provisions for monthly Executive Board and branch local meetings has been revised to four (4) times per year.
- Eligibility provisions have been revised to loosen minimum requirements that in the past, unfairly prevented some members employed on a contract basis from being eligible to run for office in branch local elections.
- A recall provision has been incorporated into the Constitution whereby a steward may be removed from office in accordance with a Trial Board or recall petition/vote requiring two-thirds majority of all affected members.
- Local 2 BGPWU members employed as professional security officers can be, because of legitimate job requirements, unfairly placed in a potential conflict of interest with Article 15 of the Constitution. Accordingly, a new Section 16 has been incorporated into the Constitution recognizing and addressing this potential conflict of interest while still maintaining the intent and purpose of Article 15 regarding same.

Benefit Trust Plan

The Union has taken action to make it easier to provide insured benefits for members whose employers do not provide adequate coverage. Together with sister local, SEIU 1.on, the Union has established a Benefits Trust, which acts as a substitute for less than satisfactory, or overly expensive, employer benefit programs.

The Trust is funded by negotiated employer contributions, sometimes supplemented by employee contributions, and will allow the Union to seek out the best possible benefit price for its members.

This process is already underway as our Richtree Market Restaurant members ratified a new contract by a large majority, and approved a switch of their benefit package to the Trust.

Part-time members for the first time will have benefits too. Branch President, Bob Williams said, ***"It was a large revolutionary contract and it's great to see the members vote to take care of all members, to let all have a chance for eyeglasses, dental and other things that the plan supplies in the near future. It was a hard but tremendous effort. As the trust continues to grow throughout Local 2.on, we hope for better benefit conditions for all members."***

Off-Track-Betting: Abuse by Customers



SEIU Local 2 BGPWU was made aware of problems in the Flamboro Downs off-track locations which involved two members being harassed by patrons. The Union immediately addressed the issue by filing a health & safety grievance with impressive results - the employees received monetary compensation for interruption of work and/or extra costs that they may have incurred, plus an apology from the Company for how long it has taken to rectify this unacceptable situation.

Most importantly, the company has formulated specific health and safety policies and procedures on how to deal with irate customers including the employees' legal right to refuse unsafe work.

The Union is pleased with this major victory and expects other race tracks to follow the responsible approach of Flamboro Downs regarding aggressive customers and worker safety.

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CNIB Workers Ratify First Agreement

Nicholas Mawer has worked for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) as a counselor and a Rehabilitation Teacher for over 9 years. The thought of forming a Union never crossed his mind until last year when the CNIB unexpectedly announced the layoff of a large number of his co-workers. The layoffs happened without regard to seniority and without consultation with the individuals who provide hands-on vital services to the visually impaired. Moreover, the CNIB directly eliminated services for seniors- a core population who experience vision loss.



It was at this stage that the Service and Administrative employees working for the CNIB in Toronto, Barrie and Oshawa had decided they needed a voice in their workplace and joined SEIU Local 2. on BGPWU.

After bringing all three groups to a strike deadline within 48 hours of one another, the three negotiating committees, along with SEIU Local 2 Special Representative Allen Ferens, were able to reach first agreements at a joint mediation session on June 16th.

The first agreements achieved more than what the members had ever imagined. In fact the agreement was unanimously ratified by member's at all three sites.

Following ratification Mawer acknowledged **"the process was challenging, but I'm proud of the work we have done for our co-workers and for visually impaired individuals – both clients and staff"**.

The new 3 year collective agreements provide members with numerous benefits such as improved overtime entitlement, a float holiday, bereavement improve-

ments, seniority rights, a signing bonus and a wage grid that provides fair and competitive compensation levels. Wage adjustments will see some members receive immediate wage increases as high as \$4000 per year.

According to Mawer this first agreement should go a long way in convincing other CNIB employees about the many benefits of joining a union.

Robins Donuts (Thunder Bay)

Teetering on the brink of bankruptcy and with our members' jobs hanging in the balance, Robins Donuts was granted protection under the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) on July 16, 2004. Although the plan of the interim receiver was to continue business in its present form, two locations were closed during the receivership process. Unfortunately, a third location was lost as a result of the closing of the old Hospital in Thunder Bay. We continue to represent the members at the remaining two locations.

The sale of business is anticipated to be completed in the next 45 – 90 days and the new owners have already agreed to assume the Companies' union agreements although they are still not willing to assume responsibility for the outstanding grievances. It is the Unions position that in accordance with the Ontario Labour Relations Act, they are legally obligated to accept the Union, the collective agreement, the employees and grievances that go along with it. With each passing chapter of this ongoing saga, SEIU Local 2 BGPWU will continue the fight on behalf of our Robins Donuts members.

Justice for Janitors

In May, SEIU Local 2 announced the launch of an aggressive campaign to organize cleaners across the province. Under the banner of "Justice for Janitors" workers in the building service sector are fighting to improve working conditions and gain a voice

on the job.

"We have put up with horrible wages and substandard working conditions in this industry for too long. Its time we as workers came together to do something about it." says Kathy Fournier, and employee of Hurley Corporation. In the first four weeks of the campaign, over one hundred workers have voted to join the union.

For regular updates and to read the campaign newsletter, go to: www.seiulocal2.ca

Jobs Saved at Alexandria Moulding

Just eight weeks after Alexandria Moulding advised the union that the company had decided to relocate its warehouse operations to New York State and eliminate 85 jobs, the Union negotiated a commitment by the company to build its new warehouse in Alexandria and staff it with Local 2 members.

Because of a previously-negotiated clause in the collective agreement, the union had the unique opportunity to craft a new agreement which would convince the company to stay in Alexandria. As a result, the collective agreement was lengthened from three years to six - with wages, RSP contributions and attendance bonuses being reduced during the first three years, however, the wages and RSP contributions would be recovered and improved during the final three years of the agreement.

Said Cam Nelson, President of SEIU Local 2 who led the bargaining, **"The easy thing to do would be to simply condemn the company for its actions, make speeches and hold demonstrations - but that would have done nothing to save the jobs lost when the company relocated. The committee bargained hard to make the absolute minimum of concessions, guaranteed that those concessions would be short lived and most importantly, that the jobs would be saved."**

Congratulations to Cam Nelson, branch local president Bernie Carriere and the bargaining committee for a tremendous victory. The membership obviously agreed by voting more than 88% to ratify the new agreement.

