

# By-law and Policy Conference

SPECIAL EDITION  
MAY  
2005

FOR MEMBERS OF  
LOCALS 175 & 633 UFCW CANADA

On Saturday, April 23, 2005, more than 300 delegates attended the Locals 175 & 633 2005 Biennial By-law & Policy Conference in Toronto.





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*cep Local 571*

On Saturday, April 23, 2005, more than 300 delegates attended the Locals 175 & 633 2005 Biennial By-law & Policy Conference in Toronto. Delegates came from across the province and represented all the sectors that form our union. They convened to review and vote on proposed changes to the by-laws and policies that govern our local unions. A key component of the conference was President Hanley's Report on the state of the local unions. Excerpts from his report, concerning the progress since the last conference and outlining the challenges that we face in the future, follow below.

“As President I feel that part of my role is to create and share the vision of our members and our union and then make sure it happens. We have a talented staff whose input is welcomed and respected. They develop and implement the plans and programs and without them we would not be the great union we are today.

As President, I realize that our Locals belong to the members – not the officers –not the Executive Board – not the staff. All of us are merely stewards of the union, charged with the task of servicing you, the members. It is the members, who through their words and actions determine our goals and objectives and dictate to us, the leaders, their expectations. Many of the services that the members take for granted today, were, just an

**As President, I realize that our Locals belong to the members – not the officers – not the Executive Board – not the staff.**

# 2005 Biennial By-law & Policy Conference

President Wayne Hanley reported on the state of the local unions.

idea a short while ago. The members, executive board and staff help us formulate these ideas into defined expectations and then deliver on them.

As we do this we raise the bar knowing that future members will take these new services for granted too. I view this as a good thing. As we improve on our services we must set higher goals and standards to meet. This process enables us to be the leaders in the labour movement not the followers. And this leadership is only measured by the membership's level of satisfaction.

## NEGOTIATIONS

In the past two years the staff of your local union has done an outstanding job of negotiating the membership's good collective agreements. We *always* negotiate from a position of the members' expectations and *not* those of the employers. In 2003 and 2004, the membership ratified 269 of our 441 collective agreements, both new and renewed,

affecting more than 36,000 of our 50,000 members. The vast majority of these contracts resulted in wage, benefit, and working condition increases beyond inflation and certainly to the highest in the industries we represent. I am proud to say we have some of the best collective agreements in the country.

There are, however, a number of issues that threaten to erode the progress we've made over the years. In the next few years we face growing opposition from companies like Wal-Mart and we expect that employers will continue to export our manufacturing jobs overseas and south of the border.

Your Local rises to meet these challenges day after day through bargaining, grievance handling and organizing. We must protect the rights and benefits we've worked so hard to achieve as we face employers who do not value their workers or see the need to treat them with dignity and respect.



At the beginning of the conference, newly-appointed Executive Assistant to the President, Shawn Haggerty, read the Policy on Harassment, which opposes any form of discrimination or harassment, and the Rules of Order.

## GRIEVANCES

The local union works hard to resolve each grievance efficiently. It goes back to our promise of expedited problem resolution. Over the past two years many members fought for their workplace rights by filing grievances against their employer.

The stewards and staff truly did an excellent job of processing these grievances. Out of the entire 14,789 grievances filed, only 1,502 – or 10% – were unresolved as of January 2005. The entire membership benefits as a result of the early intervention and hard work by our stewards and staff, ensuring that their collective agreements are respected by their employers.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

It's a very exciting time right now for the Training and Education Centre (TEC). We recently launched high school credit courses online. This kind of opportunity is unprecedented in Canada and we are extremely proud to be able to offer it to you, the members and your families.

## Nationally, the UFCW is working hard to bring the benefits of union membership to workers at places like Wal-Mart.

In addition to innovative courses and groundbreaking opportunities, I am very proud to say that we trained a total of 7,838 members in the past two years. The numbers increase every year and it's gratifying to know that so many of you and your family members are expanding your education.

Over the past two years the local union gave out over 100 scholarships valued at \$1,000 each for members or their family members who are attending college or university. In fact, one of our own members working at Pharma Plus in Niagara Falls was awarded a 2004 UFCW International Scholarship valued at \$4,000.

Providing scholarships is a particularly important means of supporting the educational goals of our valued members. This organization recognizes not only the importance of education itself but also the rising – and often insurmountable – cost of that education.

Remind your co-workers and family members that all our courses are available to them free of charge and I encourage you all to participate.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

If we had to rank our 2004 accomplishments I can tell you that Health and Safety has to be number one.

We brought Local 175 Vice-President Janice Klenot on staff to the newly-created position of Health & Safety Representative. Janice was a Health & Safety advocate at Colonial Cookies and over the years has acquired Health and Safety knowledge that has earned her respect in the Labour Community as an expert for workers Health and Safety issues.

We quickly took an aggressive approach to upgrading the skills of Local 175 Health & Safety Committees and activists by providing weekend and week-

*continues on page 6*



## Delegates were inspired by two special guest speakers, UFCW Canada National Director, Michael Fraser and the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party (ONDP) Howard Hampton.



**Guest speakers included UFCW Canada National Director, Michael Fraser . . .**

UFCW Canada National Director Fraser provided an informative and motivational speech on the UFCW's ongoing campaign to organize Wal-Mart workers across the country. He reminded delegates of Wal-Mart's history of intimidation, firing and hiring policies to keep unions out. He spoke of Wal-Mart's unfair labour practices and challenges to Canadian laws, even appealing to the Supreme Court of Canada, which declined to hear its arguments. "Canadian companies who do business in the U.S. would not think of challenging the American Bill of Rights," he said. "But Wal-Mart wants to rewrite Canadian laws." The UFCW is making progress in organizing workers in Wal-Mart stores, especially in those provinces, such as British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec, where there are more favourable labour laws.

ONDP leader Howard Hampton spoke about the need for labour law reform. He told delegates that proposed changes to the Ontario Labour Relations Act, introduced by the McGinty Liberal government last November, do not repair the damage done by the Mike Harris Conservatives. Three critical areas where amendments to the current bill must be made involve restoring the traditional form of card-check certification for all sectors, extending union rights to agriculture and agri-business workers and restoring successor rights for building service workers, cleaners, and guards so these workers don't lose their jobs when work is restructured or contracted out. Howard reminded delegates that it's time to elect a government that truly respects the rights of all workers.



**. . . and the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, Howard Hampton.**

long training courses to the members as well as online Health & Safety training. We must continue Health & Safety training to our members as new laws have the potential to expose Health & Safety committee members to criminal charges and fines.

## COMMUNICATIONS

We continuously strive to improve our communication to the membership.

Our official publication Checkout magazine has been increased to six issues annually and we continue to send regular informational mail-outs, including a CD-ROM. Other new initiatives include new member kits, electronic newsletters and a new Web site, to be launched shortly. Our program of sending the members a collective agreement anniversary notice continues.

## YOUTH

Our Locals' Youth Committee has done a tremendous job performing skits at the Fall and Winter Training Seminars. While it can be difficult to engage our younger union brothers and sisters because they work part-time or balance their work with school, it's still important to let them know the union is here for them. It is crucial that we inform our youth of the benefits of union representation and actively encourage their involvement.

## BETTER SERVICING

I am pleased to announce today that within the next few weeks the local union will be instituting a new servicing standard.

Currently union reps are required to service their units once during a month. Today's demands of our members require us to do better. So very shortly this will change so that a representative will be in your workplace more frequently talking with the members and stewards. The new standard will be a minimum time between visits of 3 to 4 weeks and more often if required.

We have been reviewing staff workloads and will make adjustments where necessary including adding additional staff to accomplish this objective. And I can tell you an important part of this program will include evening and weekend visits in our retail locations.

Delegates discussed the changes and voted concurrence or non-concurrence.



## LABOUR COUNCILS

In 2005 and 2006 we will seek ways to involve more members in regional and municipal Labour Councils. The labour movement as a whole faces many challenges ahead as anti-union organizations like Wal-Mart, combined with an increase in job exports, hurt workers. And it's not just manufacturing jobs that are being shipped out of Canada now. Jobs in the service and professional sectors are also affected. Our involvement in Labour Councils will provide a greater opportunity to bring UFCW issues to the forefront of the Labour Movement.

Nationally, the UFCW is working hard to bring the benefits of union membership to workers at Wal-Mart. Under the leadership of National Director Michael Fraser, the UFCW national office drive to organize Wal-Mart is alive and moving forward.

## THE NEXT TWO YEARS

The next two years promise to be exciting. We will follow up on our successes and learn from our disappointments. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and diligence of Local 175's dedicated staff and stewards who are the foundation of our success. I would also like to express my gratitude to our Executive Board for their ongoing counsel, guidance, and most importantly their support.

A big thank you to all of you all for the outstanding job you do, day in and day out, at your workplaces. Our Union is strong not just because of our large numbers, but also because of the hard work and dedication of our rank-and-file members.

Our stewards, health and safety representatives, negotiating committees, activists and fundraisers are the best and the staff and I truly do appreciate everything you do. YOU truly are the

integral part of our great union that makes it all work.

As they say in a popular credit card commercial, your contribution as a steward in your workplace is absolutely *priceless*.

Once again, thank you all for your dedication and your continued support of your union. My commitment to provide each and every member with superior servicing and expedited problem resolution continues into my next term as your president."



**Newly-appointed Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Clifford explained the auditors' statements and highlights of the Locals' excellent financial progress.**

**Delegates heard reports from various union departments and committees, detailing some of the work that has been done over the past two years.**

**Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Clifford reviewed the Auditors Report** documenting the local unions' solid financial base and increases in assets.

**Committee members Sacha Minor and Mark Stockton presented the Youth Report**, which summarized the ambitions – including educating and



**Benefits Coordinator, Herb MacDonald summarized the department's accomplishments . . .**

organizing young workers everywhere – events, and other achievements of Locals 175 & 633 youth.

**Herb MacDonald of the Benefits Department** outlined the active role that members took on various Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) committees, advisory boards and meetings to promote changes in policy and legislation. The department was also involved in numerous WSIB training initiatives as well as representing members in WSIB, Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan appeals.



**. . . while Youth Committee members Sacha Minor and Mark Stockton reported on recent achievements.**



Health & Safety Representative Janice Klenot outlined the unions' advancements in Health & Safety . . .

**Health & Safety Representative Janice Klenot** reported on her department's initiatives. These included establishing a province-wide contact list of 1,238 Health & Safety Committee members plus improved health and safety training for members, stewards and committee members.

Courses are offered in workplaces, at the Stewards Training Conferences, over the Internet and in conjunction with the Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC).

This training goes a long way to making every workplace safer for our members. Now workers can properly identify and assess hazards and committee members can make recommendations to correct those concerns.

To further protect and enhance the health and safety of our members, the Local works to influence the government health and safety policies and legislation that affect our members. Last September, an Occupational Disease Panel travelled through the province to hear submissions to have the Occupational Disease Panel reinstated at the WSIB.

And on Repetitive Strain Injury Day – or RSI Day – February 28, 2005 – members of the Local worked with

a labour group to present petitions for Ergonomic Regulations to the government at Queens Park.

The Local also continues to negotiate better language into every collective agreement. With the input of our committees and members, we can make recommendations for contract language consideration to improve workplace health & safety.



. . . while Kevin Shimmin provided an updated organizing report.

**Organizing Representative Kevin Shimmin** said Ontario has some of the worst labour laws in the country, particularly when it comes to workers who want to gain union representation. In any given workplace, the fact that a majority of workers have the courage to sign union cards is no guarantee they will ever be unionized. They must also win a vote and the week before the vote is frequently marred by employer intimidation, harassment, threats of violence and terminations. Women, youth, and workers of colour are particularly vulnerable, as are workers in contract, part-time employment. It is these types of workers that Locals 175 & 633 are determined to organize.

In the labour movement, our Local is known as the leader when it comes



to organizing the workers who need unions the most. On a daily basis, our Organizing Department is supporting workers who face unsafe conditions, poverty wages, no benefits, discrimination, violent abuse and unjust terminations. These kinds of working conditions are found in companies large and small, whether they're call centres, nursing homes, factories, grocery stores, hotels or Wal-Mart. The fact that workers seek to exercise their fundamental democratic right to join our union is viewed as a threat to an employer's monopoly of greed and control. But employers have the laws on their side, so that means we have to organize and fight for workers' rights now more than ever.

The Organizing Department has confronted these challenges with creativity, determination and sheer hard work and rigorously trained members to be organizers – a program known as Special Project Union Representatives. Together in the last two years, Kevin,

Executive Assistant Jim Hastings took delegates through proposed by-law and policy changes.



**As we improve on our services we must set higher goals and standards to meet. This process enables us to be the leaders in the labour movement not the followers.**

assisted by Mona Bailey and Steve Robinson, has succeeded in organizing numerous workplaces.

**Kelly Provost**, presenting the **Education Committee Report**, detailed the increases in the number of members trained – a total of 16,656 since the TEC opened seven years ago. Every year the number of participants has increased by almost 40 per cent. This year alone we expect to have over 6,000 participants.

The Locals have an extensive set of programs including high school credits, literacy, upgrading and GED preparation courses. Of course, labour education and steward training continues to be the backbone of our work and it continually expands. We already have 36 courses online and we are adding another 30 new Health & Safety courses. Kelly Provost's summary was very clear: "Members of Locals 175 & 633 have, at their disposal, the most advanced and

extensive membership training programs in North America."

**Judith Burch**, Co-chair of the **Target Equality Committee**, reported on the numerous gifts and donations provided to *Youth Without Shelter*, a community agency that provides food, boarding and programs to youth between the ages of 16 and 24.



**Representative Kelly Provost highlighted the advances at the Locals' Training & Education Centre.**

The committee also organized donations of new stuffed animals, hats, scarves and mittens for women and children at the *Redwood Shelter*. They are selling T-shirts, pins and candles to raise money for the community's projects.



**Executive Assistant Teresa Magee monitored voting on the by-law and policy changes.**



Representative Jennifer Tunney provided an overview of Communications Initiatives.

Jennifer Tunney of the **Communications Department** detailed the extensive changes to the Locals' Web site, which provides almost daily updates on negotiations, strikes, grievances, organizing and events where our members participate.

New video features have enabled us to document and share images and commentaries during events like Labour Day Parades, Seminars, Conferences and picket lines. Currently our site averages 260 unique visitors per day.

The Web updates, together with the numerous other communications initiatives ensure that Locals 175 & 633 members receive information through many means at regular intervals. We can say confidently that there are no better-informed union members in Canada.

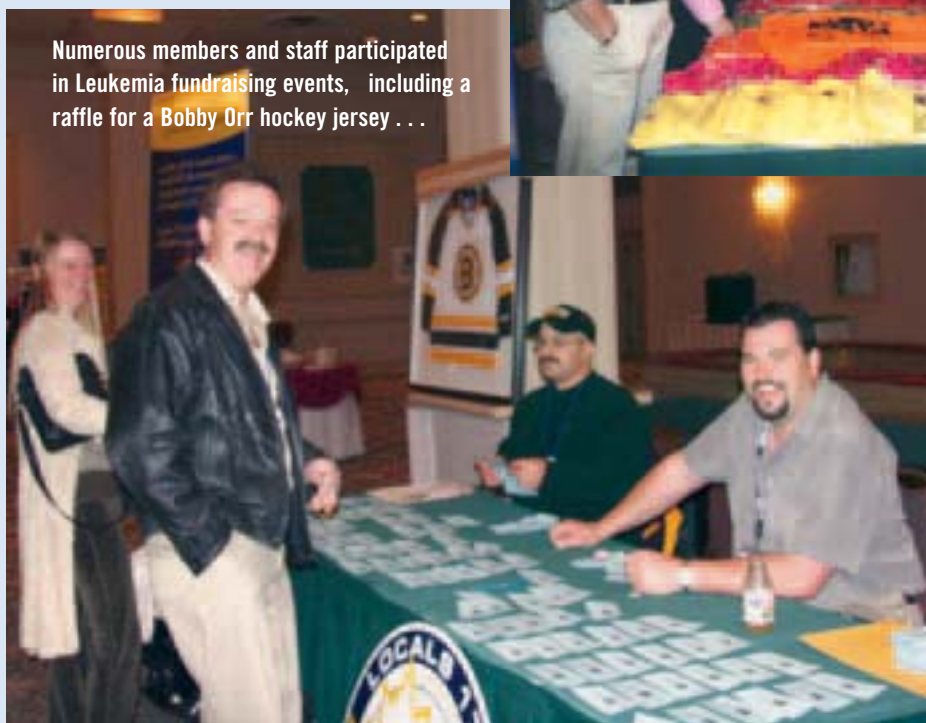
The delegates were also provided with a Leukemia Fundraising Report listing some of the many events that have raised more than \$440,000 for leukemia research in the past two years alone – and almost \$3-million in the last decade and a half.

Many events have raised more than \$440,000 for leukemia research in the past two years alone – and almost \$3-million in the last decade and a half.

... while other staff sold T-shirts for Target Equality to raise money for community initiatives.



Numerous members and staff participated in Leukemia fundraising events, including a raffle for a Bobby Orr hockey jersey . . .



Target Equality Committee members Sylvia Groom, Sharon Gall and Judith Burch organized the sale of T-shirts.

**Our stewards, health and safety representatives, negotiating committees, activists and fundraisers are the best and the staff and I truly do appreciate everything you do. YOU truly are the integral part of our great union that makes it all work.**

## What the delegates said

“This is my first time at a bylaw conference and I’m looking forward to a really exciting conference. I hope I can find out all kinds of information that I can bring back to the membership and let them become a lot more informed than they have been in the past. I see there’s a lot of people here who have a lot of information so I’m looking forward to a really exciting time and gaining all that to take back with me.”

**Robert Prettie, Union Steward at KSR Dresden Industrial in Stratford**



**Robert Prettie**



**Barbara Carr**



**James Golding**

“I enjoy coming to conferences – they’re a lot of fun – particularly the chance to meet Howard Hampton again. I like to get a chance to see the rest of the stewards – some of them I know from previous conferences, meetings and stewards seminars. Nice to say hello again – like back to family and back to friends. The policy conference is useful because the membership doesn’t really know

17 months. It was a very long strike, very trying. And it was very refreshing to know that we had a lot of support from our union who stood behind us 100 per cent.

This is my first conference. I enjoyed it immensely. With any training session or conference – I find when you go back to the workplace you feel refreshed and ready to take the world on again.”

**Barbara Carr, Canada Safeway in Thunder Bay**



**Karen Vaughan**



**Calvin Weir**

“Janice Klenot believes in me enough to have sent me to an instructor’s training course last year and I enjoyed it. This year the Local sent me away for Level II Health & Safety – Committees and Law and now I’m an instructor with all this health and safety knowledge behind me. I’ve been to many conferences and they’re good for networking. I meet new people and find that they have the same problems that I do.”

**Karen Vaughan, Maplewood Nursing Home in Brighton**

what’s going on in the Union unless they attend meetings. I feel like this one is an important one because it affects me personally.”

**Calvin Weir, Shoppers World Price Chopper in Brampton**

“I’m a file maintenance clerk and a newly elected E-Board member. I’m also a fairly new shop steward. I really got involved and realized how important the union is when I was faced with having to go on strike. I was one of the sisters who was put on strike for

“I work with the members and I’m involved with the health and safety committee. The conference is a very good educational experience – more than I knew before – very enlightening. Especially the Health & Safety. It’s the most important. I learned about the WSIB today – it was a good experience.”

**James Golding, Avon Sportswear in Toronto**

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FOR MEMBERS OF LOCALS 175 & 633 UFCW CANADA



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