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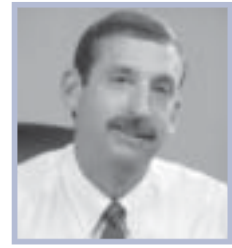
Views

Food & Commercial Workers) Locals 175 & 633

News &

An Official Publication for the Membership of UFCW Canada (United

Health & Safety: A Top Priority for 2004



By Wayne Hanley, President Local 175

Last year Health & Safety became a mega-issue in Ontario workplaces because of the appearance of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as “Mad Cow Disease”. In addition, there was an expectation that a third – West Nile disease – would become more prevalent.

Our members in Health Care facilities, and their families, were particularly at risk due to the SARS outbreak. The virus killed 44 people in Canada and threatened the lives and health of many more. Many members in hospitality and tourism lost hours and wages because of declining tourist business.

After a Canadian cow tested positive for “Mad Cow Disease” many Locals 175 & 633 members in the beef processing industry endured layoffs and reduced hours as cattle exports and demand for beef products plummeted. While the risk to human health is very slight, it nevertheless makes workers wonder what other hazards might be lurking in their workplaces. Additionally, the threat of West Nile disease was another worry for members who work at golf courses and other outdoor facilities.

These new hazards, combined with increasing automation and line speeds, repetitive strain injuries, an aging workforce and the infusion of large numbers of young, inexperienced workers create a tremendous need for Health & Safety educational initiatives.

In response, the Local incorporated more Health & Safety News into our regular publications, as on pages 7 and 8. We also employed Local 175 Executive Board Vice President, Janice Klenot, to establish Health & Safety priorities. She will work with the Health & Safety Committees in all workplace units to review the level of training and plan new initiatives.

The Executive Board Health & Safety Committee has some new members. They are listed on the back page. Posters and brochures, developed in response to the 2003 safety questionnaire, will inform members about critical Health & Safety issues in their workplaces. A series of newsletters, specific to various workplaces, will provide more information.

Additionally, we increased the frequency and availability of Health & Safety training courses. Earlier this year we became the first Union in Canada to make various courses, including Health & Safety I and II, available over the Internet. These courses are supported by certified instructors.

Through these courses members can join the “TEC Room” and share experiences with instructors and other participants through our state of the art voice and video conference technology.

We will continue to do everything possible to support our workplace Health & Safety Committees and help them to eliminate accidents, injuries and illnesses in their workplaces..

We very much welcome and appreciate your input and ideas.

Wal-Mart workers – or others wanting to get connected to a better life - should visit www.walmartworkerscanada.com to learn more about Unions and Wal-Mart or call 1-877-24-UNITE (1-877-248-6483)

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Negotiations

Sobeys workers celebrate new Union contract win

On January 31, 2004, members at **Sobeys Milton Retail Support Centre** voted 82 per cent in favour of a new contract. The centre, which is a main warehouse and distribution facility for central Ontario Sobeys stores, employs 560 workers.

“Winning this new contract is a victory for these workers,” says **President Wayne Hanley**. “Because of the determination and resolve of the membership, the union committee was able to negotiate improved pensions, health & welfare benefits and wages.” Company contributions to the Canadian Commercial Workers Industry Pension Plan (CCWIPP) provide a member benefit of \$40.00 per month per year of future credited service in the first year of the agreement. On January 1, 2005 the benefit increases to \$42.50 and in the final year members receive \$45.00 per month per year of future credited service. Wages increased \$2 per hour across the board. Workers also gained a \$650 signing bonus.



The Union Proposals & Negotiating Committee included, from left: Union Rep Dan Serbin, Central East Director, Jerry Clifford, Chief Steward Learie Philips, Paul Santos, John Robinson and Steve Wright. Absent from photo: Executive Assistant to the President, Jim Hastings.

The ratification followed an earlier vote rejecting the company's original offer and a prior meeting when an overwhelming majority voted in favour of strike action.

Retirement home members secure first collective agreement

On December 10, 2003, workers at the **Carriage House Retirement Home** in **Oshawa** ratified their first collective agreement. Among other improvements to the work environment, that flow naturally from unionization, are secured pay increases, for both full and part-time workers, plus health coverage and seniority rights.

Wage increases vary depending on seniority levels but range from 50 cents to \$1.75 more per hour in the first year and up to \$2.27 per hour over three years. A shift premium is new for afternoon and night shifts.

Workers receive overtime after 7 ½ hours per day or 75 hours bi-weekly. Those scheduled are guaranteed a minimum of four hours of work, or pay, if no work is available.

... continued on page 3

Arbitrations

Dresden Industrial worker fully reinstated

In December 2003, arbitrator Peter Barton issued a decision in favour of the Union in a hearing involving **Dresden Industries**, located in **Ridgetown**, Ontario about 30 kilometres east of Chatham. The Grievor lives about an hour from the plant and got a ride to and from work with a co-worker. After beginning parental leave, the Grievor realized that he, his wife and newborn baby could not live on the low Employment Insurance benefits he received. He took a lower paying job at a plant located five minutes from his house because he did not want to be stranded an hour from home if his young wife and newborn needed him.

When the employer found out he had another job, they fired him. The company claimed the Grievor was in violation of a clause in the collective agreement preventing an employee from taking another job while on an authorized leave of absence without the employer's prior approval.

The Union and the Grievor successfully argued that the Employment Standards Act provides parental leave and it is not comparable to a leave of absence subject to the provisions of the collective agreement. The clause, therefore, did not apply to the Grievor's circumstances. Arbitrator Barton reinstated the Grievor with back pay and the Grievor has since returned to full-time employment at the Dresden plant.



Year End Grievance Report

A good union contract is an important first step to ensure respect, dignity and fair treatment in your workplace. But it is only the first step. Making sure that the employer lives up to the terms of the collective agreement requires ongoing vigilance.

Stewards will work with members and Union Reps to determine if there is a violation of the agreement and if so they will document the employer's misbehaviour and seek an appropriate remedy. Often the Union Steward and Rep, working together, are able to secure financial compensation from the company.

More than \$1.5-Million Recouped for Members

In 2003, the five Union Reps in the South-Western Region were successful in gaining back almost \$660,000. An additional \$1,000,000 was won back for members in the Eastern, Central East and Central West Regions.

This money was *paid back to members* due of breaches of the union contract by employers.

These figures do not include financial settlements awarded by arbitrators nor do they take into account additional sums paid to members in the future. Employers have learned they can no longer short change members on the benefits negoti-

ated for them.

As employers become greedier and more demanding, it becomes necessary to file more grievances and invest more time and resources to enforce contract rights.

Grievances Filed in the Locals' Workplaces		
Year	Grievances Filed	% Settled By Year-end
2003	7,335	77.8
2002	7,185	72.9
2001	6,582	77.3

Everyone is dedicated to resolving grievances as quickly as possible. As of December 31, 2003, almost 80 per cent of last year's grievances and just about 99 per cent of the 2002 grievances had been resolved.

If you think you are *not* being treated fairly in your workplace – whether it's a financial or other issue – speak to your Union Steward to determine if the grievance procedure might offer an appropriate solution to the problem.

Negotiations (Cont'd)

Seniority now applies to layoffs, call ins, call backs and scheduling. Workers completing five years of work service with the company are entitled to three weeks vacation time. All employees secured sick leave, nine statutory holidays each year and three paid days leave under the bereavement clause. Workers also have dental coverage and receive leaves of absence.

Union Negotiating Committee: Mark Chynoweth, Mary Durnin, Deborah Lea and Union Rep Mike Brennan.

Video Store workers win three-year contract

On January 13, 2004, members at **Blockbuster Video in Woodbridge** ratified a renewed collective agreement with a number of improvements.

Wage increases are 20 cents per hour in each year. Additionally, they receive 20 cents per hour retroactive to November 1, 2003, a 10-cent per hour merit adjustment each year and a guarantee of merit rates, up to 20 cents per hour, if rating exceeds expectations. There is also an increase in the starting rates.

If a worker is called in to fill a shift, the agreement secures a minimum of either three hours work or pay. Workers benefit from an improved sunset clause that restricts disciplinary actions to a maximum of 18 months.

The company will cover the cost of doctor notes in the event of sick leave. In addition, there is improvement to the language of, and entitlement to, bereavement leave. Other language improvements throughout the contract improve clarity for both workers and the company.

Loeb workers receive improved pay and pension benefits

On February 15, 2004, members at **Loeb McArthur in Ottawa** ratified a renewed collective agreement with wage increases and better pension benefits.

Full-time workers receive quarterly lump sum payments totaling \$800 per year in addition to an hourly increase of 90 cents per hour. Part-time workers gain similar lump sum payments totaling \$400 per year and 90 cents more per hour by the end of the contract. There is also a new wage scale for full and part-time meat cutters.

In addition, workers on "Express Cash" and Lead Hands receive shift premiums of 75 cents per hour. Night shift workers' hourly premium increases to 95 cents.

Members benefit from improved pensions payments resulting from increased contributions by the company. By the end of the agreement, CCWIPP benefits will total \$40 per month per full year of future credited service. There are also improvements to members' Health & Welfare benefits and increased Vision Plan coverage.

Union Negotiating Committee: Stephane Cantin, Patrick Cullen and Union Rep Luc Lacelle.

Wage and pension improvements for yogurt warehouse workers

Members at **Mississauga-based Danone Inc.** ratified a renewed three-year agreement on December 6, 2003, with significant wage and pension improvements.

Wages for all workers increase by 3 per cent per year, retroactive to October 1, 2003. In addition, those on the night shift receive a shift premium of 70 cents per hour. Full-time workers in the bargaining unit gain a signing bonus of \$500 and part-time workers receive \$300. Part-time employees working in excess of their regular shift are paid one and one half times their regular wage for the time past their eight or 10-hour shift.

Company contributions to the CCWIPP provide a member benefit of \$30.15 per month per year of future credited service in the first year of the agreement. On October 1, 2004 the benefit increases to \$33.23 and then \$36.61 in the final year. The committee negotiated an extra, 15-minute break for those working shifts of 10 hours or more. All workers are now entitled to two floating holidays per year.

Improved payments for unused sick days give full-time workers up to 150% of their regular pay for having between 58 and 70 hours of unused sick time. Part-timers can also receive up to 150% for having between 33 and 40 hours of unused sick time at year end.

The company will provide two pairs of coveralls for any employee, on request. Part-timers hired to full-time carry half their accumulated seniority. There are also significant language improvements to clauses regarding replacement positions and seniority, and downsizing and severance pay.

Union Negotiating Committee: Mark Dickson, Patricia Dodd and Union Rep Paul Jokhu.

Hotel workers receive WHMIS training and better wages

Members at the **Prince Arthur Waterfront Hotel & Suites in Thunder Bay** voted “yes” to a renewed collective agreement on January 21, 2004. Contract highlights include health & safety training and compensation increases.

The negotiating committee achieved an agreement that all new members, and those not already trained, receive Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training. This will prevent accidents by enabling workers to better recognize workplace hazards.

All existing pay rates increase by 20 cents per hour retroactive to November 1, 2003. Workers receive a subsequent raise of 25 cents per hour as of November 1, 2004. In addition, the shift premium for workers assigned to relieve a Department Head increases to 75 cents per hour. Maintenance workers receive employer-paid tools.

Union Negotiating Committee: Dale Gorrell, Christy Shadbolt, Donna Veley and Union Rep Colby Flank..

Cleaning and maintenance service workers ratify

Workers at **Toronto’s Hurley Corporation** ratified a renewed collective agreement on January 17, 2004. The three-year agreement secures annual wage increases and improved benefits.

In each year, workers receive wage increases of 20 cents per hour, plus all wage rates increase by 20 cents retroactive to September 1, 2003. A new night shift premium provides an additional 20 cents per hour.

Company contributions to the UFCW Benefits Trust Fund increase by 5-cent increments on January 1, 2005, March 1, 2005 and January 1, 2006. This will bring the total contribution amount up to 70 cents per hour per employee by the end of the contract. The employer will also make a \$400 contribution to the UFCW Training & Education Fund effective January 1, 2005.

Union Negotiating Committee: Jose Castellon, Maria DeAssis and Union Rep Joe DeMelo.

Wage and benefit improvements for packaging workers

On December 18, 2003, members at **Ball Packaging Products in Whitby** ratified a new three-year collective agreement that includes across-the-board wage gains and improved health and welfare coverage and benefits.

Skilled Trades workers receive 30 cents more per hour in the first year of the contract, 60 cents per hour in the second and 75 cents per hour in the third. All other classifications receive an increase of 50 cents per hour in the first year of the contract, 60 cents per hour in the second and 75 cents per hour in the third. Company contributions to the CCWIPP increase in the first year to provide a benefit of \$42.50 per month per year of future credited service, \$50 in

the second and \$57.50 in the final year.

Workers benefit from increased dental plan contributions and life insurance coverage, up to \$42,000. The vision care benefit amount increases to \$200 retroactive to December 1, 2003. Major medical coverage has a lifetime maximum increase to \$40,000. The annual maximum Group Registered Retirement Savings Plan (GRRSP) contribution remains at \$900 per year.

In addition, members benefit from new language covering training and contracting out as well as improvements to vacation guidelines. Mechanics receive increased time off in the months of July and August.

Workers at the Whitby plant manufacture metal packaging for the food and beverage industry.

Union Negotiating Committee: Steve Lucchi, Dean McLaren, Jerry Najduk and Union Rep Mike Brennan.

Best Western workers make gains

On January 15, 2004, members at **the Best Western Continental Inn in Windsor**, owned by **Bilt-Rite Industries Ltd.**, ratified a three-year collective agreement with wage and other improvements.

Front Desk, Night Audit and Housekeeping receive wage increases totaling 25 cents per hour over the term of the agreement. All maintenance staff receive a total raise of 10 cents per hour during the contract. In addition, workers receive a 50 per cent discount when they purchase their meals at Season’s Restaurant.

Language improvements for part-time workers mean they will be reclassified as full-time if they work more than 24 hours per week for 14 weeks or more. Other improvements include a guarantee that the training of a new housekeeping employee will not take away work otherwise available to a bargaining unit housekeeper for any longer than four days.

Union Negotiating Committee: Marlene Lamont, Vel Wickens and Union Rep Julie Johnston.

Daycare and resource workers ratify improved contract

On January 7, 2004, members at the **Trenton Military Family Resource Centre** ratified a renewed agreement with several significant amendments. Workers receive increases in wages and pension benefits, plus several other improvements. The 35 members at the centre are daycare and resource workers providing services to military personnel and their families.

There is a new wage grid reflecting agreed-upon pay equity increases of up to \$6.50 per hour, or more. Workers receive a subsequent minimum raise of 1.5 per cent in 2004 and an additional 20 cents per hour for some positions. Membership pension benefits improve as well.

Clarified language regarding seniority and service means improved vacation entitlements and benefits for some workers in addition to general improvement to vacation eligibility. New, important anti-harassment and anti-violence

language protects members. In addition, improved health and safety language establishes a committee to improve and maintain the safety of the work environment.

Union Negotiating Committee: Manon Lachance, Andrea Turner and Union Rep Marilyn Lang.

Contract improvements for poultry workers

Workers at **L&V Poultry Processing Ltd.**, in **Beamsville**, ratified a renewed agreement on December 20, 2003.

Workers receive 75 cents more per hour on ratification. In the second and third years, raises are 45 cents per hour annually. In the final year, workers receive a raise of 70 cents per hour. In addition, there is a 25-cent shift premium for the sanitation crew and workers in the Live Receive/Kill Bay departments also receive a 25-cent shift premium.

Company contributions to the CCWIPP provide a benefit that improves over the course of the contract. As of ratification, workers receive a benefit of \$20.92 per month per year of credited future service. This amount increases to \$24 in year two, \$27.08 in year three and \$30.15 by the end of the agreement. The collective agreement also establishes new dental coverage for workers and their dependants. The coverage amounts for both life insurance and accidental death

and dismemberment (AD&D) increase to \$30,000. Vision care benefits also improve to \$250 per 24-month period.

The agreement improves vacation benefits for workers with long-term service, clarifies language regarding representation and establishes a 40-hour work week. Full-time employees with more than one year of service now receive two floating holidays per year and workers receive a Safety Boot allowance of \$90 per year.

Union Negotiating Committee: Laura Stillwell, Bill Winger and Union Rep Kelly Tosato.

Raises and respect in the workplace for foodservice workers

Foodservice workers at **Eurest Dining Services**, a division of **Compass Group**, ratified a renewed three-year collective agreement on December 7, 2003.

Retroactive to April 7, 2003, workers under Appendix "A" receive wage increases in each year of the contract. The per hour increases include 60 cents for general help, 64 cents for Short Order Cooks and 70 cents for Cooks. For those workers hired after April 7, 1999, the increases are 40 cents per hour for general help, 65 cents per hour for Short Order Cooks and 70 cents per hour for Cooks.

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Supermarket members win wage and benefit improvements

Approximately 1,000 members working full-time and part-time at eight **Barn Markets** ratified a new three-year contract on February 15, 2004.

"The negotiating committee's hard work succeeded in achieving significant improvements," says South Central Regional Director, Sharon Gall. "It gives us a solid agreement, which we can continue to build on in future negotiations." Highlights of the agreement include wage increases for all workers and benefit enhancements for part-timers. Most full-time and part-time workers gained wage increases of 85 cents per hour, bringing the highest hourly rate, in the last year of the contract, to \$14.60 and \$11.82 respectively. Specified positions, such as Bakers and the Bakery Department Head, have a new higher pay scale.

Department Heads and Assistants earn up to \$19.85 per hour. The company continues to increase its contributions to

the existing pension plan, which is the CCWIPP. For 2004, this will result in a defined monthly benefit of \$46.50 for each full year of credited future service.

Part-time workers are now covered by a prescription drug plan. The optical plan, for both members and dependants, also improves. A new scheduling improvement provides a four-day work week for the 25 per cent of employees (based on seniority) who work at the front-end of the store.

Bereavement leave and language regarding recall rights improve. All bargaining unit members are assured expedited investigations regarding harassment, discrimination and other types of human rights violations. For as long as the company policy requires workers to wear black pants, the company will provide them to union members, when requested.



*The Locals 175 & 633 Union negotiating committee for Barn Markets were (from left): **Judy Parker**, Floral Designer, store #214; South Central Regional Director, **Sharon Gall**; **Nancy McKay**, Produce & Bulk Foods Clerk #230 (Dundas); **Nadine Hannah**, Production Clerk, store #228 (Hamilton); **Elaine Collier**, Head Cashier/Bookkeeper, store #214 (Oakville) and Union Rep **Sylvia Groom**.*

*Absent from photo: Union Rep **Matt Davenport**.*

The Barn Markets, owned by the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company of Canada (A&P), have six stores in **Hamilton**, one in **Dundas** and one in **Oakville**. The chain was purchased by A&P in 1999. Five of the original stores closed between 2001 and 2003.

Health and welfare benefits improve for all workers in the bargaining unit. Vision care benefits increase to \$150, up from \$90. The benefit for AD&D rises to \$15,000 as does Life Insurance benefits. Both amounts are up from \$11,000 each. Workers with more than 15 years of service with the company are entitled to receive five weeks paid vacation at 10 per cent of their annual earnings.

The committee also negotiated important language amendments to the agreement. This includes new no tolerance language covering workplace violence and abuse, and bereavement leave for same-sex partners.

Union Negotiating Committee: Lorraine Astley, Berthe Jolicoeur and Union Rep Simon Baker.

IGA workers secure raises and better pension benefits

On December 29, 2003, members at **Havelock IGA** unanimously ratified a new three-year agreement, which includes wage increases of 10 cents per hour in each year of the contract for workers in both Appendix "A" and "D" classifications .

A new classification called Part-time Meat Clerk has been added. Increased employer contributions to the CCWIPP provide a benefit of \$30.15 per month, per year of future credited service, by the end of the contract.

Language improvements include new letters of agreement covering harassment, violence and abuse in the workplace that will ensure a safer work environment.

Union Negotiating Committee: Michele Ellis, Sharon Haines and Union Rep Marilyn Lang.

Retirement home workers achieve monetary gains and better benefits

Members at **Rowanwood Retirement Home** in **Huntsville** ratified a three-year agreement on February 15, 2004, which includes first and second year wage increases of 3.5 per cent for Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) and maintenance staff and 3 per cent for all other classifications. Third year wage increases are 2.5 per cent for RPNs and maintenance and 2 per cent for all others. The signing bonus is \$150 for full-time and \$100 for part-time workers. Shift premiums increase up to 20 cents per hour. There is a new shift premium for afternoon shifts of 10 cents per hour, in addition to the regular wage. The employer now covers 75 per cent of the benefits' cost, up from 50. Two additional holidays are recognized in the calendar year. Workers also benefit from improved bereavement leave entitlement and generally improved language in their agreement.

Union Negotiating Committee: Anna Recollet, Allen Woolman and Union Rep Archie Duckworth.

Building service workers ratify renewed contract

On December 6, 2003 **Nova Services Group Inc.** workers, who perform cleaning work at the Manulife Centre on Bloor Street in **Toronto**, reached a new three-year agreement. The

contract secures wage increases among other improvements.

In the first and second year, workers receive increases of 30 cents per hour. In the third year the increase is 40 cents per hour. The employer will also provide uniforms for all workers in the bargaining unit.

There are also language improvements that improve clarity in clauses such as grievance filing, probationary periods and vacation pay.

Union Negotiating Committee: Carlos Quezada and Union Rep Joe DeMelo.

Contract improvements for funeral services workers

On November 14, 2003 members at **Remembrance Services Inc.** in **Toronto** ratified a renewed collective agreement with several significant improvements.

The three-year contract includes wage increases for all classifications of 2 per cent per year. Company contributions to the CCWIPP equal a member pension benefit of \$60 per month per year of credited future service.

A new addition to seniority language entitles part-time employees hired after ratification, who successfully complete probation, to be credited with 50 per cent of their part-time seniority to a maximum of 12 months when hired to a full-time position. Another new amendment provides vacation pay for part-time workers with 10 years of service or more in the amount of 8 per cent of their annual earnings.

Union Negotiating Committee: Robert Glencross, Sean Marenger and Union Rep Paul Jokhu.

Retail Meat Cutters and counter personnel win increases

Workers at **Bloor Meat Market** in **Toronto** secured raises and other improvements in a two-year collective agreement ratified on November 27, 2003.

In the first and second year of the agreement, wages increase by 30 cents per hour for all counter personnel and those under the general help classification. Journeyman Meat Cutters receive raises of \$1.04 per hour. All wage increases are retroactive to November 1, 2003. The Head Meat Cutter receives a \$500 bonus in each year of the contract. Full-time counter personnel also receive a \$200 Christmas bonus.

Full-time counter workers are entitled to three sick days per year. In addition, the company will contribute \$100 to the Training and Education Fund in each year covered by the collective agreement.

Union Negotiating Committee: Michael Resaul and Union Rep Linval Dixon.

**For the most recent Locals 175 & 633 news, including negotiations, visit our Web site:
www.ufcw175.com**



Volume III, Issue 1
April 13, 2004

News

Health & Safety

Repetitive Strain Injuries and Back Pain at Work

The most common work-related injuries are chronic back pain and related Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs). These injuries usually result from lifting, pulling and pushing heavy loads, and driving, sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time. People working in jobs in many sectors are susceptible to these injuries including cashiers, labourers, assemblers, drivers and many others.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) states that each year, over 8,000 workers are permanently disabled by back injuries. Ergonomic legislation, however, is only slowly evolving. Some companies use things like automated arms and belts controlled by workers, for example, to eliminate the need for a person to do manual lifting. In the meantime workers must take safety very seriously and follow guidelines for safe lifting techniques and proper task management.

Signs and Symptoms of Back Injury

- Pain in the back or referred down the leg
- Restricted movement of the back

Injuries of the Back

Degenerative Back Disease:

As we age our discs gradually dry out and flatten. That means the discs lose height and as they do, the vertebrae move closer together. This is called degenerate disc disease. As the disease progresses, the space available between the joints and nerves and other tissues become smaller. Sometimes the space

becomes so small that the nerve and tissues become pinched. Although degenerate disc disease is part of the normal aging process and occurs over many years, it can be accelerated by awkward postures, movements and injury.

Herniated Disc

With movement and time, tiny rips can start developing in the outer wall of the disc. If there is still a lot of jelly-like fluid in the disc, the fluid will try to push through these rips, causing the disc to bulge. If the rip goes right through the outer wall and the jelly-like centre pushes through it, the disc is “herniated”. A herniated disc is sometimes incorrectly called a slipped disc. But discs are firmly attached to vertebrae, they do not slip out.

Pinched Nerves

As explained above, degenerative disc disease can result in a pinched nerve. Herniated discs can also cause a pinched nerve. If the centre of a disc bulges beyond its outer wall, it pushes towards the nerve. If the centre of a nerve bulges beyond its outer wall, it puts pressure on the nerve – which is not good! This can cause tingling, numbness and weakness in the leg. This pain is called “referred” because the pain does not start in the leg, but in the back. In other words the back refers the pain to the leg. What may appear to be a leg injury might actually be damage to spinal discs or nerves.

continued on the back page . . .



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Back Sprains and Strains

As is the case in other parts of the body, sprains and strains of the back occur when the back's ligaments or muscles are overused. This can occur during lifting and handling activities, especially when risk factors such as forceful exertions and awkward body postures act in combination.

Speak to your Health & Safety Committee if you have suggestions on how to improve your material handling job.

Job Tasks to consider when assessing job hazards:

- weight of the object to lift or handle
- distance of load to carry
- awkward shape or size of the load
- frequency of lifting or other load handling activity
- absence of convenient handholds on the load
- stability of the load
- distance from the floor when the lift starts and stops

Tips on lifting heavy objects:

- Only lift objects that you can manage well. If it is too big, heavy or awkward, ask for help.
- Lift using the leg and buttock muscles
- Bend at your knees and keep your back vertical, or

at least flat if leaning. Do not arch your neck or back.

- Keep object close.
- Limit or avoid twisting your back.
- Restrict the number of lifts because fatigue makes joints and muscles more susceptible to injury.
- Use a wide foot stance to provide stability.
- Stretch before and after lifting, especially if you have been sitting for a long period of time prior to lifting.

For those who must drive, stand or sit for prolonged periods, the pain and injury may be cumulative and go unnoticed. Make sure your seat is properly positioned for the task required. Drivers should ensure they relax their legs and have the back of their seat properly aligned to support their back. Take frequent breaks if possible, and always stretch whenever you can.

For more information contact the Health & Safety Department in the Mississauga office.

Executive Board Health & Safety Committee

Mona Bailey, Omemee; Bryan Braithwaite, Chatham; Georgina Broekel, Arthur; Rudy Gwinner, Cambridge; Janice Klenot, Kitchener; June Maruschak, Sarnia; Kevin Neville, Lunenburg; Toni Pettitt, Hawkestone; Peter Small, Oshawa; June Towler, Bradford; Pat Tweedie, Niagara Falls; Karen Vaughan, Picton.

Health & Safety News is a regular feature in News & Views, which is an official publication for the membership of Locals 175 & 633 of the United Food & Commercial Workers and published by Local 175.

Wayne Hanley, President • **Jim Andress, Secretary-Treasurer** • **Betty Pardy, Recorder**

Are You Moving?

If you are moving or planning to move, please let us know so we can continue to send you Locals 175 & 633 publications such as News and Views. Please mail your new address to us at UFCW Canada Locals 175 & 633, 2200 Argentia Road, Mississauga, Ontario L5N 2K7, or call us at 905-821-8329 or 1-800-565-8329. If you prefer, e-mail: membership@ufcw175.com

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