

ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



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PSAC ONTARIO

Standing Strong



I am proud of all the work our members have done to stand up for their rights, to demand respect from their employers, and to support their bargaining teams throughout this year. Our region has been busy with Days of Action, information pickets, mobilization meetings, strike training, conferences, demos, and many more events.

This work and everything our union accomplishes is due to our members volunteering their time, and the hard work of our staff and elected leadership. We knew that defeating the federal Conservative government would usher in change, but we also were not fooled into believing that our work would get easier under a Liberal government.

In fact, it has not in many respects. That is why your union continues to ask for your support and help as we mobilize, take action, and lobby to better the lives of our members and of the public.

Your contributions and support are appreciated, and the work that we do together is invaluable. Let us stand strong and fight for a better future.

Sharon DeSousa,
Regional Executive Vice-President – PSAC Ontario



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Ontario Council members, Regional Component Leaders, attending PSAC Ontario Regional Strategy Session in July with facilitator, Morna Ballantyne, middle row, far left.





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Young Workers Get Engaged

From June 3-5, 2016, over 60 women activists attended the Ontario Regional Women's Conference in Toronto. The conference dealt with important topics including, Domestic Violence in the Workplace, Childcare, Pay Equity, Employment Equity, Precarious Employment, The Fight for \$15 and Justice for Migrant Workers.

This Conference was an excellent opportunity for our young women activists to liaise with our more experienced Sisters within our movement. Interactions and experiences such as these will continue to engage and mobilize young workers.

PSAC Ontario Regional Women's Committees Representative, Missy Taylor and the entire organizing committee, along with staff, did an excellent job with the conference. This conference, along with other ongoing initiatives designed to engage young workers in their union, will help to keep our union strong.

Lauren Baert,
Young Workers Representative



Young Workers at the Regional Women's Conference

Celebrating Our Activists



Bob Black and Debbie Willett

Debbie has been a member of Ontario Council since its creation through our union's transformation brought about from regionalization. She has worn many union hats over the span of her career, which include local, regional and national positions. She will be greatly missed within our Union and the greater labour movement.

Bob Black, Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President

Debbie Willett, Area Council Representative on Ontario Council and the Chair of the PSAC Ontario Education Committee, is retiring after 31 years of working in the public service. Sister Willett has been a long time union activist, and has participated in countless demonstrations, conferences and events over the years.

Debbie started her career working for the Canada Employment and Immigration Centre and is finishing her career at the Canada Revenue Agency. She has been involved as a union activist for 29 years and has been the President of PSAC's Niagara Area Council for 25 years.

PSAC Ontario Regional Women's Conference



Conference Chair Missy Taylor

Treana Campbell, Barb Byers

Missy Taylor, Sharon DeSousa, Robyn Benson

The Ontario Regional Women's Conference was held from June 3 – 5, 2016, at the Chelsea Hotel in Toronto, with the theme; *"Confronting Isms...Empowering Women."*

The conference was packed with speakers, workshops and information and ran over two and a half days. Speakers ranged from our very own National President, Sister Robyn Benson and REVP Sharon DeSousa, along with Margaret Arnason from the Assaulted Women's Helpline, Councillor Krysten Wong-Tam, and Barb Byers from the CLC to name a few.

The topic of Domestic Violence was on the agenda with a workshop on Domestic Violence in the Workplace and a review of "Can Work Be Safe When Home Isn't?", including findings from the Pan-Canadian Survey on Domestic Violence and the Workplace.

Some of the topics were extremely difficult to discuss, however by learning together, engaging with one another, and most importantly supporting each other, we were able to deal with these very difficult conversations.

Missy Taylor, Regional Women's Committee Representative



Participants at the Regional Women's Conference



Participants in Plenary

Why is collective bargaining so important?

The previous Conservative government passed legislation to strip collective bargaining rights from our members in an attempt to erode a recognized democratic process.

Members deserve the right to have a say in which demands go to the bargaining table and to vote on a collective agreement. Inclusion in this process, and being kept up to date by our bargaining teams, who negotiate on our behalf for improvements to our working conditions; allows our members to hold our employers accountable. Collective bargaining has been the tool by which we are able to gain rights and respect in the workplace.

Article 23(4) of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states that "everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests" and being a member of a union, along with the process of collective bargaining, allows us the ability to gain rights and respect in the workplace.

David Carr



PSAC Ontario Academic Sector Educational Retreat

On May 6 to May 8, the PSAC Ontario Academic Sector met for our yearly passing of the torch. DCL 555 (University of Ontario Institute of Technology), DCL 610 and 611 (Western University) and DCL 901 (Queen's University), joined together to pass the knowledge of the outgoing Academic Sector Executives to the new incoming executives.

In addition, members established the Academic Sector Resolutions, the Academic Sector 2016-2017 shared projects and the Academic Sector 2016-2017 shared objectives.

This year not only were we successful in educating our new executives, we also pledged to establish a joint precarious worker educational campaign and unveiled the Ontario DCL Academic Sector scholarship of \$3000.00.

The PSAC Ontario Academic Sector is looking forward to a very active, and productive political year!

Marie Polgar-Matthews, Academic Sector Representative

2016 Toronto Pride

I'm delighted to share that 250 PSAC members came out to the 2016 Pride Toronto Parade on Sunday, July 3rd, 2016. This included members from as far away as Sturgeon Falls who came by bus, and members, along with their friends and family from CEIU, CIU, DCLs, GSU, UCTE, UNDE, UNE, UEW, USGE and UTE.

On June 28, 1969, a group of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning and Two-Spirited people stood up for many of the rights I now enjoy today. These activists rioted after a police raid at the Stonewall Inn (a local gay bar) in New York City. This event is widely considered the match that struck the fire of the LGBT rights movement.

In 1981, was Toronto's first Gay Freedom Rally. Similar to Stonewall, 3,000 activists protested against the mass arrest of 286 men in four bathhouse raids on February 5, 1981 by Toronto Police. As a result, PSAC Ontario's 2016 Toronto Pride float was 80's themed to commemorate the first Gay Freedom Rally in Toronto. You can find more great photos and information on upcoming events on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PSACPride

Thanks to the generous support of a Pollination Project Human Rights and Dignity Grant, we invite you to save the date for PSAC Toronto Pride speaker series:

- November 20, 2016 Trans Day of Remembrance; and
- December 1, 2016 World AIDS Day.

Steve Khan,
GLBT Representative



Photo credit: Ryan Solomon



PSAC Ontario Float in the 2016 Toronto Pride Parade

Member's Corner

2016.....Unions not needed

Recently I was people watching and listening to a couple's conversation that made me think of all the negative press unions get and how according to some people, unions are no longer needed.

This couple was discussing the recent laying-off of "Mike". The wife asked why "Mike" was laid-off, since he had been with the company for a long time. Her husband explained that while Mike had been with the company for 22 years, Mike was getting older and just couldn't keep up any longer with the younger staff. He was still doing the work but wasn't as quick.

She asked if Mike had been missing a lot of work lately, or whether he had been coming into work late, leaving early, or taking longer lunch breaks. No, Mike was always early, the last to leave, and was a really good guy.

She asked if Mike disrupted the work crew, or whether he had a negative attitude towards the work, or towards management? No, again Mike showed up every day on time and had a great attitude.

So if Mike is a good employee, with a good attitude, why would the company lay Mike off? Did they give him a good severance package and a recommendation when they let him go? Will he be able to collect his pension?

Of course not! The company doesn't have anything like that, he was just "let go" because he is 44 and just not able to keep up with the younger crew.

His wife said "...you know you are 38..."

Lynn Davenport, 2nd Vice President—UNDE Local 680

Have Your Say!!

Share your thoughts, tell a story, speak on an issue that's important to you!

We've set aside space in every issue for a member's submission. Articles should be approximately 250 words and pictures are welcome.

Send your submissions to Lino Vieira, PSAC Ontario Region Political Communications Officer, at vieiral@psac-afpc.com. Lino is accepting submissions anytime!