

President's Report

Greetings members of Local 1917,

I have some great news to share with everyone: we now can officially welcome the members from the former Local 557-0 to Local 1917. We now are a Local of five (5) units and need to make the members of Wellington Wood Products feel welcome and feel like they truly have found their home.

Personally and on behalf of the Local, I want to thank Roxanne Ash and Tabitha Shpak for their leadership and hard work at the last round of bargaining and in joining our Local. I had the privilege of negotiating their latest agreement with them and National Representative Jim Woods, and it's only fair to say that they all did a great job and I believe the members of WWP feel the same.

With any luck we will be able to continue to grow our Local and take on some more units through mergers or organizing.

As I'm writing this report I am currently in Port Elgin at the Unifor Family Education Centre attending a very intensive WSIB Level 1 & 2 course along with Brother John Anderson from RockTenn.

Keith Leahy (Hitachi), and Christine Jackman (CPK Ip), both have completed most of the required WSIB courses. With our training, John and I can join Keith and Christine in continuing to serve our members well with any WSIB issues.

I now want to briefly write about the recent round of bargaining at RockTenn. I'd like to start by thanking and congratulating the committee at RockTenn; Doug Abel, Blain Ferneyhough and Leanne Leveque for their solidarity and professionalism in ratifying a new 4-year collective agreement. They, along with National Representative Jim Woods, and me, are proud of the agreement and feel it best represents a fair agreement for this current snapshot in time. We are also proud of the overwhelming support the members showed by their strong acceptance vote. Job well done everyone!

I have been, and will continue to be, fairly busy for the next month or two. I will be attending the 2nd Presidents' Conference in Port Elgin at the Unifor Family Education Centre in early April and will report back to you in the next newsletter.

Also, I am the current Financial Secretary for the Independents Parts and Suppliers (IPS) Council. This council deals with issues mainly surrounding auto parts suppliers. With this position I have been fortunate enough to be involved in a very progressive initiative where we are building a database, gathering information, stimulating conversation, bringing together all parts suppliers, and so much more to strengthen the auto parts Industry.

This initiative has allowed us to form a "Task Force" made up of workplace representatives who meets with the IPS Executive and some National Representatives with the goal of, as mentioned, building solidarity and strengthen the auto parts industry.

We will be having a series of meetings covering Windsor to Oshawa to gather information and inform everyone of the task force and auto parts paper. We will also gather information to achieve our goal of building an auto parts force moving forward. Keep posted for more information on this in the coming months.

To wrap things up I want to tell summer to hurry up and arrive and wish everyone a great spring/summer season!

In Solidarity,

Robin Dudley
President, Unifor Local 1917

Ontario Regional Council Report

The second Ontario Regional Council Meeting was held in Toronto on November 21st and 22nd, 2014. It started with Independent Parts Suppliers (IPS) Council President Gerry Farnham, calling the meeting to order at 9:30AM sharp. A moment of silence was held in respect for our fallen Brothers and Sisters who passed away since the last meeting.

Jerry Dias, Unifor National President, introduced the agenda and other meetings scheduled for the day. The IPS Executive Committee was introduced. There is tremendous support for the parts sector. The discussion went on to state how we need to encourage more delegates to attend future meetings and it's time to rebuild the parts sector and momentum.

The IPS Executive Committee consists of: President Gerry Farnham, Vice President Tim Mitchell, Financial Secretary Robin Dudley, Recording Secretary Paula Carson, Industrial Director Fergo Berto, and Assistant to the President Shane Wark.

This reminded me of our Local Executive meetings. Brother Robin Dudley, Financial Secretary, read the financial report with the same protocol we used at our own meetings.

Bill Murnighan, who did the task force presentation "Building Strength Together," educated us in strategy and bargaining in the auto parts sector. It talked about contract provisions such as wages, hours of work, training and education, time off, pensions, benefits, closure and income security, health and safety, equality, family-friendly provisions, skilled trades, union security and programs.

The next guest speaker was Cara Mc Donald, who spoke on "Pension Fundamentals." The main discussion items were: 1. Defined Benefit (DB), 2. Defined Contribution (DC), 3. Target Benefit/Shared-Risk, and 4. Hybrid-Bargaining Challenges.

If any Brothers and Sisters are interested in reading any of these articles please contact me or the Local.

Our final speaker was Shane Wark, who challenged our delegates to bring up these issues to our members and at the Local to show the unfair practices of the Harper Conservative government.

Ontario Regional Council, Friday 21-11-2014

Ontario Regional Council (ORC) Chair Dino Chiodo started with a moment of silence, followed by an acknowledgment of all the retired members and the ORC committee. He also acknowledged National Executive Board members.

Dino Chiodo reminded members that the Sheraton Hotel chain is trying to cut jobs by offering incentives to guests to decline housekeeping in their rooms and offering bonus points and a \$5.00 credit towards the cost of their stay. This would eliminate jobs. "Shame!"

Next to take the podium was Ontario Director Katha Fortier who spoke about the newly elected members of parliament and regional representatives and how UNIFOR supported the NDP, and how the NDP has to regain the trust of UNIFOR. She also went on to speak about Tim Hudak, former leader of the Ontario Conservative Party and MPP for Niagara West, and his capitalistic corruption and the devastation he has caused the Canadian economy.

In support of our health care workers, a rally was planned to go to Queen's Park to join up with the other UNIFOR and CUPE members in solidarity to speak as "ONE!"

Next to speak was our very own Peter Kennedy, who brought news that UNIFOR has not generated as many new members as was expected. The Toyota campaign, for example, shows there is much work to be done.

Brother Kennedy also brought up the six points which we wanted to accomplish during our founding convention. The next topic was "Rebuilding labour protection for Ontario workers" and guest speaker Denna Ladd, spoke about working with non-unionized workers like temp workers and sub-contractors.

It is important to rebuild and protect our Labour Law so non-unionized workers are protected. One crucial success was Bill 18, "Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014," which gives workers 2-years to submit a work related complaint, instead of the original 6-months.

In Solidarity,
Mahmud (Mo) Harji

Retired Workers' Chapter

The cold and nasty weather of the new year was enough to keep our retired workers hankered down at home or to head south chasing warmer climates for the duration of winter. Spring is here now!

Early in February, President Robin Dudley and I were in Stratford to participate in a round-table discussion on the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP).

The round table discussion format allowed each participant three minutes to share their pro or con opinion.

The participants were a cross section of society. Represented were small businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, local farmers, local politicians, service groups, retirees, unions, and others. Each gave their own reasons and personal experiences for supporting the plan, or not.

It never ceases to amaze me how some people who have, don't want you to have. Or some who don't have, but you do, don't want you to have. Instead of wanting to lift everyone up to a decent standard, there are some who would prefer to drag everyone down to the lowest common denominator.

We have to remember precarious workers, young workers, and the two-thirds of Ontarians who have no access to any pension plan. This might be their only opportunity to a decent standard of living in their retirement years.

An ORPP is a great chance to lift all Ontario workers up to join those of us who are lucky enough to enjoy a pension.

In Solidarity,
Mel Davis, Chair
Retired Workers' Chapter
Unifor Local 1917

Unit 04 Report

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

It's my great pleasure to make my first report to you as Plant Chairperson. I'd like to extend congratulations to our three (3) new stewards: Michael Croitoru, Kelly Dewbury, and Rick Dure.

Currently, there are no grievances on the go. We are pleased to note there have been ninety (90) members recalled, and although there have been a few recent layoffs, we should be back to full in a month or so.

The company has received a big order for road slabs. This will keep our members busy into next year, and the VUP machine is to be fired up again, after a year or more sitting idle.

I'd like to wish all the members and their families a safe and happy spring and let's hope the summer weather comes soon!

In Solidarity,
Larry Breese
Plant Chairperson Unit 04

Retired Worker Unit 40



On March 19th, retired workers from Unit 40 (CPK), got together at the Union Hall to see about starting regular retirees chapter meetings.

The group of us who attended decided to hold meetings on the third Thursday every second month.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday May 21st at 12-Noon, at our union hall, 611 Silvercreek Parkway North. We have planned a potluck lunch for the meeting in May. Yum! That will be exciting. It was great seeing each other, as it had been a while, and we all enjoyed ourselves.

After the meeting in May, summer will be drawing closer, and everyone will be getting busy. It was decided that after our meeting in May we'll conclude our meetings for the summer and pick them up again in the fall, on Thursday September 17th.

I have asked everyone to bring forward things that interest them like cards, trips, etc., for the fall meeting discussion, to add some spice to our gatherings. Now that it is started I am hoping to reach more people in the future. And for any of our male retirees, Keith was a little outnumbered and would greatly appreciate some male company at the May lunch!

Please spread the word that all retired members of CpK and their spouses are welcome to join us!

Condolences: Since our meeting in March, Heather Nelson, one of our retirees, passed away on March 31st. Our sincerest condolences go out to her husband Keith and her family.

Dale Heaney
Retired Worker Unit 40

Unit 40 Report

Incentive is often the very reason we make the conscious decision to put our personal lives on hold and come to work.

As labourers in production and trades, we play a major role in the success of a plant. It is our effort - both physical and mental - that ensures machines and lines continue to run and produce.

It is about the skills and experience of the workers who fix and maintain, who change molds and colours, who assemble and pack, who take away full and empty dunnage and racks and return with the like, who load and unload product to and from trailers, and who monitor the quality of the product being produced.

It's about being heard when we speak, and considered when we suggest.

For the unionized workers at CPK IP it's about:

- Injection
- IP line
- Door line
- Console line
- Line drivers
- Shippers/Receivers
- Tuggers
- Set-up
- Sequencing
- Quality Inspectors
- Quality Auditors
- Service
- Linkers
- Shunt drivers
- Electricians
- Millwrights
- Tool and Die
- Layout Inspector
- Team Leads
- Facilitators
- Health and Safety
- Union Committee

The finest and most successful companies recognize and respect the people they employ as people. The worst take advantage and exploit their workforce and consider them little more than an extension of the machines they operate.

This company has the potential to be amongst the best in the world. We have endured the turbulent ride of the auto industry. Many of us still remember our former employer drove us into a brick wall, and left us for dead... but we survived.

We survived in large part to the dedication and devotion of the workers who stood strong, and continued to produce a quality product despite an omnipresent forecast of despair.

We have earned the right to be here. It's time we had a place at the table, it's time we had a say in our future direction, and how best to get there.

There is no doubt the company can achieve a high standard. As always, we will help drive it there. But we won't do it from the back of the bus. Nobody is getting there without us. That's where INCENTIVE comes in.

In Solidarity,
Jon West
Plant Chairperson Unit 40
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Unit 42 Report

Good day everyone.

Unfortunately I don't have much to report for this issue of the newsletter.

Currently we have a few grievances on the go, and hope to have most of them resolved in the near future. We also have a couple of grievances slated for arbitration with the intent to present them in June to the arbitrator. Once these have been settled we will discuss them with everyone via our monthly unit meetings.

For the information of all Unit 42 (Hitachi) members, we hold our Unit meetings on the second Monday of every month for all Unit 42 members, even though we are all on day shift now.

I want to encourage you all to attend our meetings so we can keep you all informed with the recent issues regarding the reduced production schedule and the company's request for flexibility.

We have met with the company numerous times on this issue, and have reported back to the members at our last couple of Unit meetings. Our goal is to reach a fair resolve and want it to be clear that we are doing our best to avoid any layoffs.

We also have discussed this situation with our National Representative and once again are committed to protecting jobs.

In closing, we all can see how slow things are and with any luck, hopefully it will pick up and we can get back to normal.

In Solidarity,
Robin Dudley
Plant Chairperson Unit 42

Unit 69 Report

Greetings to all!

I am glad to announce that on February 27th, we reached a collective agreement with RockTenn.

Our agreement is for a 4-year term with a 2% increase each year, retroactive to February 1st.

It was a tough set of negotiations with benefit concessions and changes that are pending for our facility, which at this time are not confirmed but will, hopefully, sustain us in our market. It will be a trying time in the next few months as things unfold and circumstances arise, but it will be for the betterment of our members' future.

There are increases to some of our benefits and some language was clarified, but I believe our strongest gain was in resisting the company's demand for mandatory overtime. It was on the table long into our talks. We are in the processes of addressing the company's requirements and there are many questions to address. Although many issues of priority were dealt with at the table, some items were deferred to in-house committees. This will allow us to iron out processes and language, and did not hinder our goal of a fair and equitable agreement.

The plan for our facility at this time is to introduce a state-of-the-art piece of equipment called the EVOL. It is the latest, and apparently, the greatest machine. It will convert boxes at rate of 400 a minute. It has the ability to change orders on the fly, and set-up orders in less than two minutes. While this could be a benefit, there is also a downside. The expectation is to replace older existing machines, and with that, displace our members.

It is unknown at this time the extent this change will have, but we negotiated terms that will lessen the impact. This was discussed at length throughout the process and we are confident we covered most of the possible issues we may face. It's a waiting game to see how things will play out. We will continue to fight for all of our members when the dust finally settles and the impact becomes clear.

The company had asked for a different approach to improve plant efficiencies that will kick in overtime after 40-hours of regular hours worked has been completed. There are some unique points that need to be clarified, but it is understood this needed to be addressed and to have the framework to move forward.

There is also an expectation that the company could go to a full three (3) shift operation in the near future. This will require new hires to handle the projected increased volumes. We also renewed a letter of understanding that could also move us into a six (6) day operation with the possibility of a seven (7) day operation, for which we have already established language.

There is great potential at RockTenn and we are confident that with the good membership we have we can rise to the new challenges. Our future is bright and remember that good paying jobs help drive our economy. So, it's not only about the present, it's how we position ourselves for the future that's important.

I would like to thank Leanne Leveque and Blain Ferneyhough for their valuable input throughout this process. They have done an admiral job. Thank you. We had some very tough and trying decisions to make getting this agreement. There were long and exhausting discussions that resulted in the best decisions possible for our members that move us forward. I would also like to thank Robin Dudley, President Local 1917, and Jim Woods National Representative, which helped us make informative and just decisions. Our committee thanks you both.

We wish to thank the membership for seriously looking at the memorandum and what it means for our future. I have always said that the members here rise to challenges. They always question, but at the end of the day, realize we need to move forward. Your overwhelming support of the agreement told us that. THANK YOU.

Things at the plant are fairly quiet with few grievances on the go. We hope to have resolutions soon. Very shortly we will be ramping up for the busy time of year. Staffing is an issue right now, and a lot of overtime is needed in order to keep machines running. We have been told the company will be bringing in new hires, and with the new vacation year fast approaching, students will be hired. We are thinking that this will help in the short term but with the possible changes mentioned earlier, the wait and see mentality is the way we are approaching the next few months.

We would like to congratulate Brother John Reynolds from the maintenance department. As of February 1st, John retired and we wish him all the very best in the future. Happy trails John, way to go, we will miss you.

We would also like to give a shout-out to Chris Brenneman. Chris has been going through a rough time and we want him to know we are behind him and wish him the best.

Youth Committee: if you are not already aware of the posting asking our younger members to join the Youth Committee, we would like you to become involved and active. This is a new committee the Local is organizing to assist young workers to prepare for the future on all fronts of the union movement. Let's get involved. Let's get informed. Contact your Plant Chairperson and let them know you are interested.

In Solidarity,
Doug Abel
Plant Chairperson Unit 69

Time Study Course

Last spring, I walked up to my plant chair and said, "They changed another job on the line and it is way too busy to keep up." Like many plants, we are now working under a new operating system, the World Class Manufacturing (WCM) model that calls for cost reductions, and it seems like at least one job is getting changed every week somewhere in the facility.

My plant chair smiled and said, "Well, we don't have a time study representative, do you want to take the course?" Six months later, I pulled into the Unifor education centre at Port Elgin for Time Study course.

Our first day in class, we were told that the purpose of the union Time Study course is to teach us – using the watch method – how to study any job to ensure the work can be completed by a trained worker, working at a normal pace in a safe manner and performing quality workmanship within the time allotted by the employer.

The course taught us how to break a job down into segments so it could be timed more easily and accurately. We were taught how to rate a worker's job performance as compared to a normal pace, how to log and get an acceptable amount of times on a time study sheet, and how to make a diagram of a job layout with all measurements relevant to the job. We touched upon the most common pre-determined work standard methods – MOST, MODAPS, and GM standard data – used in many large corporations and how they can be misapplied. We were given copies of production standards language used in other union contracts to try to bargain into our own collective agreements.

Most importantly, we learned how to get accurate times using our most reliable tool – the decimal minute stopwatch. This was not a union course based on debating or interpreting contracts and language. The watch method is indisputable and simple to use. The proof is in the numbers.

The one missing component from the course was timing material handlers and tuggers. It would have been nice to actually try timing a forklift and their duties. It's a complicated process and the Unifor Time Study course discussion leader has agreed to come in and show me how to time them in the future.

Bringing my Port Elgin certificate back and putting it in front of the engineering department while stating, "You're dealing with me now," may have elicited smiles from them, but they weren't smiling when I used my watch method education to catch a line running two seconds fast, or to prove that an operator's workload was running over 100%. I was able to produce evidence for the overworked individual that helped speed up the rearranging of a work cell that had already been put off an extra two months. I was able to give the membership the actual speeds their lines are to run at and the knowledge that, if they have a dispute with their job's speed, there is someone to investigate it and give them an honest answer.

I also found out, through asking the right questions, that there are no standard work orders for any material handlers in my workplace. I found out who the MOST-certified engineers are, and I learned what the line speeds are supposed to be “officially” set at. I have successfully lobbied for extra time on a press because an additional element, a china marker to verify quality, was added to the job.

The time-study course was incredibly gratifying and I would recommend it to any committee member or steward. It’s a great way to build morale with the membership when they understand that their representatives have a new powerful tool to catch the company playing unfairly with the workloads they are asking them to perform.

In Solidarity,
Chris Becker
Unifor Day-shift Committee-person
Time study representative at CPK Guelph

April, 2015

Newsletter



From the Bull Pen

Greeting Sports Fans!

Spring has sprung and spring training is underway.

This year's special dates to remember are:

Friday, August 21st and Saturday, August 22nd: The 4th Annual Autism Awareness Tournament will be held at the Ponsonby sports field. This is a great cause and a fun time of baseball, so consider putting in a co-ed slo pitch team.

Sunday, September 13th: Unifor Local 1917's 1st Annual co-ed slo pitch tournament. You have probably seen the posters on your plant union boards. Sign up at team or by yourself and we will find you a team. Lunch is provided and there is a playground for the kids.

See you on the diamond.

Steve Cole, The Coach

UNIFOR a Union for everyone!