



Executive
Committee
Local 229

DIGNITY IS A MINIMUM STANDARD; Local 229 Information Pickets a Success! *Story on page 2*

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Dignity is a Minimum Standard; The Campaign Continues!

Despite the rain, Sept 26th Local 229 activists held information pickets at Roseview Manor and Versa Care Centre, to bring attention to the CAW campaign for minimum staffing levels in Ontario Long-Term Care Facilities. The Local Union was joined by CAW Local 1075, and other unions in the city, including the Iron Workers, Public Service Alliance of Canada, SEIU, and the Brick Layers.

The post card portion of the campaign is also doing phenomenally well in the City. Local 229 Volunteers have held five "mall days" to ask the public to sign cards, and they have delivered. Local 229 President Andy Savela reports "In just four short weeks of this campaign we have signed over 5,300 cards, clear evidence that the public is firmly behind our seniors and our campaign." Savela continues, "This would not have been possible without the hard work of so many volunteers, too many to mention, who have really made postcard signing a priority." The Local cards will be sent to Toronto and added to the thousands more from across the province, to be delivered in bulk to the legislature later this year. Signed postcards are still being collected in the Local Office.

Election Results at Superior North Emergency Medical Services and Setterland Group Homes Inc.

In Kenora, at the Setterland Group Home, Brad Slobodian is the new unit chair, replacing Ryan Rioch. Joan Lambert is the new steward.

At the SNEMS stations the new union representatives are as follows;

Unit Chairs; Randy Boomhower in Conmee, Jan Morrison in Schreiber, Ed Fisher in Beardmore, and Henri Vellieux in Longlac. Ed Fisher and Jan Morrison, come with previous CAW experience. Stewards; Crystal Cook in Marathon, Scott Merkley in Terrace Bay, Brian White in Nipigon, Darquise Robinson in Red Rock, Matt Fisher in Geraldton, Chris Millington in Nakina, Jamie Allard in Armstrong and Lori-Ann Albert in Upsala. Elections at the Manitowadge and Shuniah stations are not yet complete. This unit has more than the usual number of representatives, due to its unique geographical area of coverage.

Municipal Elections; More Important than you Might Think!

November 10th is Election Day in all Municipalities across the Province. During the next few weeks debates will be held, and candidates will be given the opportunity to let the voting public know where they stand on issues. Below are some suggested areas that should be of importance to our members.

Ambulance Services; Besides ensuring that ambulance services remain publicly run, out-lying area members should be asking municipal candidates where they stand on providing a real 24 hour ambulance service in their communities, not just on a on-call basis for night time.

Seniors Facilities; Municipalities that own and operate long term care facilities should be able to ensure that they will continue to do so, making sure they maintain public control. Municipalities also have the power to regulate private retirement homes that currently have little or no protections for the rights and safety of residents.

Public Health; Will our local candidates support increased funding to improve the capacity of public health departments to deal with important issues such as infectious disease control and healthy lifestyles promotion?

Determinants of Health; Candidates should recognize and commit to supporting programs that relate to the biggest health determinants such as poverty, housing, and a clean environment.

Municipal politicians have the ability to affect many aspects of our lives. It is most important that we try to elect worker-friendly candidates, like the two CAW members, Kathy Knauff and George Saaranin, who you can read more about on page 4 of this issue.

Lay-Offs at Fort William Clinic

The union committee at Fort William Clinic was notified in September that their staff will be reduced significantly to reduce costs for the group of physicians who will be forming the Family Health Network. The union encourages all members who are patients at the clinic, to please exercise patience with the staff as they balance their increasing workload, and to express their displeasure to their physician.

Local 229 Election Report by Election Committee Chair, George Saarinen

This will be a busy year for the Election Committee. In conforming with the National Constitution, and after consulting with the National Office, we have moved the General Election to May 13, 2004, with nominations to close April 30th. Advanced polls will be held May 7th and a run-off election if required, will be held May 27th.

The Election Committee Nominations will be in late October, with an election, if required to be held at the General Meeting November 3rd. There are ten spots on the election committee, but all vacancies have never been filled.

Local Unit nominations and elections in the out-lying areas will be scheduled for January and February Of 2004. Within the City, they will be held in March and April of 2004. This schedule will allow the Election Committee a more reasonable timeframe in which to perform their duties. Units such as Superior North Emergency Medical Services and Setterland Group Home, which have just recently held elections, will not be repeated in 2004.

The above dates and schedule were ratified at the October General Meeting. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

In solidarity, George

Web Site Update

The CAW Local 229 Web site has had a recent update in the gallery section with pictures from executive council and our information pickets at Versa Care Centre and Roseview Manor. Please stop by and visit the site; www.caw229.com In addition to pictures, you can access newsletters, reports, download forms, Local Union By-laws, and learn about the history of our Local union. We also have several links to other sites of interest to working people. And remember, you can send a direct message to the Ministry of Health in support of our Dignity Campaign directly from our site. It only takes a minute, and supports our seniors in long-term care.

The CAW Ontario Health Care Council will be launching a web site in December of this year. Please forward any suggestions for either site to the Local union office at caw229@tbaytel.net

Decision to Cease Admissions at Westmount Hospital Reversed due to City Bed Crisis

The St. Joseph's Care Group Transition Committee met with management October 8th, to discuss the pending closure of Westmount Hospital. The hospital is scheduled to close in January 2004, when the Care Group will open a new long-term care facility, Hogarth-Riverview Manor. The original plan would have seen admissions at the Westmount facility cease October 7th, to reduce the number of occupied beds for the move, allowing those on the waiting list admission to the new facility. This change of plans will drastically reduce the number of new admissions the new facility will be able to admit. Hogarth-Riverview Manor will open with 96 beds and they have a waiting list of more than 300.

The crisis is a result of the bed shortage at Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, where there are currently 60 Alternative Level of Care (ALC) patients. ALC patients, no longer require acute care, but require a different level of care, usually long term. The Regional Hospital must reduce this number, in order to make their planned move to the new hospital in February. Adding to this disaster is a significant lack of home care services due to funding shortfalls. The Community Care Access Centre currently has 165 people within the City waiting for home-making services. There is no shortage of home-makers, just a shortage of funds to deliver them. Katha Fortier, Local 229 Vice-President worries that in February of 2004, when the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital closes its two sites and moves to the new building, there just may not be enough room to put everyone who needs some type of bed. "We were assured many years ago, when they planned the reduction of hospital beds in the city that services would be available to help people stay at home longer" She continues, "If we fail to significantly increase the services we provide to seniors in their homes, we may quite simply have no place to put them."

CAW Local 229 will be asking for a meeting with Local Members of Provincial Parliament to discuss this situation, and others of importance to Local 229 members, including 24 hour ambulance service in the district.

Municipal Elections

Local 229 has two members running for public office in the upcoming municipal election. The Executive Board and the Communications Committee of the Local, felt it was important to tell you about these members, and about why it is to our advantage to support them. Most of our employers are considered public sector. When the elected boards that run them are labour-friendly, the administration is generally more inclined to work with labour representatives for common solutions. In addition, electing working people to public office, ensures that there are community leaders who share our vision of social unionism that extends beyond the workplace, with important principles such as equality, socio-economic justice, and moral responsibility.

Kathleen Knauff: CAW Local 229 member Kathleen Knauff is running for Westfort Councilor in the upcoming election.

A life-long Westfort resident, Kathleen has been employed as a registered practical nurse at Roseview Manor (formerly Central Park Lodge) since 1979. She has been previously active in the union movement, having served as a Vice-President of the Local Union, Vice-President of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), a Committee Member on the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Women's Committee, as well as a Union Representative.

Kathleen has also been involved in municipal politics, having served two terms as a Trustee on the Thunder Bay District Catholic School Board.

Should Kathleen be elected on November 10, 2003 as Westfort Councilor, she will certainly see that labour is represented at the City Council level. She remarks, "My roots are firmly planted in the labour movement, and I have a solid understanding of the needs of working people." Kathleen continues that, if elected, she will work hard to ensure there is a decent and respectful working relationship between the City and the Unions they deal with. Sister Knauff is also committed to improving health care, senior's rights, water quality, city-run facilities, and "real" job prospects in Thunder Bay.

Please support Sister Knauff by going to the polls on November 10th giving her your vote!

George Saarinen: Local 229 member George Saarinen, aged 44 years, Chair of the School Council of Chairs (Lakehead Public Schools), longtime school council member and parent volunteer, announced his intent to run for Trustee for the Lakehead Public Schools in the upcoming civic election.

George has a renewed enthusiasm and a passion for the best possible public education. He believes our children deserve the best in resources, supplies, and learning aids to allow students to excel to their capabilities. "Our teachers, educational supports, and all support staff, work very hard to provide the best possible education for our students." says Brother Saarinen, He continues, "We need to keep the focus on proper funding for public education to provide the teaching tools and classroom resources, so our children will receive the best possible education."

George is married to Tracy, a nurse at the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital and has two daughters at Sir Winston Churchill High School, Seija in grade 12, and Kaija in grade 10. George works for OPTIONS Northwest as a residential counselor. In Local 229, George is an active member, and serves as Chair of the Election Committee.

Brother Saarinen has always played an important role in the education of his two children and plans to continue to be a part of their learning process. He believes, "It is important to ask questions of teachers and administrators when it comes to your child's education; communication is a very important tool, and all the stakeholders must know what is going on." George feels it is of utmost importance for the Board of Education to communicate to all parents, staff, and students, the future direction of the Lakehead Public Schools. He concludes, "This is a time of great change for our schools and we need to focus on our students and getting them the good resources to ensure the very best public education."

On November 10th, please show your support for Brother Saarinen at the polls.

Do You Have a Story?

Submit any stories for publication in our newsletter to caw229@tbaytel.net, or fax to 475.3128, attention communications.