



# DIRECTIONS

Bulletin from the National Director, UFCW Canada • Vol. IV Nos. 3-5 • June 14, 2004 • ISSN 1496-9009



## *A new chapter in our union's history*

The successful conclusion of the historic five-month strike by tens of thousands of our union's members in California earlier this year coincidentally marked a milestone point in the UFCW's development. With our union's attention and resources devoted to the needs of that strike, a number of planned changes – including the retirement of the international president – had been put on hold until the strike against the Safeway, Kroger, and Albertsons chains was resolved.

After more than 40 years of service to members in the United States and Canada – including several years working in Montréal – Doug Dority has been one of the most influential leaders in the North American labour movement, best known for his unwavering commitment to organizing the unorganized. UFCW Canada leaders gather in Toronto this month to pay tribute to his long career of work on behalf of working people (*more on page 2*).

The vacancies created by Brother Dority's retirement, along with that of executive vice-president Mike Leonard, have resulted in some major changes in the union's five-member international executive committee. Former secretary-treasurer Joe Hansen has been elected international president, and former executive vice-president Marc Perrone was elected secretary-treasurer. Bill McDonough, formerly the UFCW regional director in California, was elected as an executive vice-president, joining Sarah Palmer Amos. In addition, I have been elected to the international executive board. To me, it is a privilege serving members and representing their interests as an executive vice-president in addition to my duties as national director of UFCW Canada.

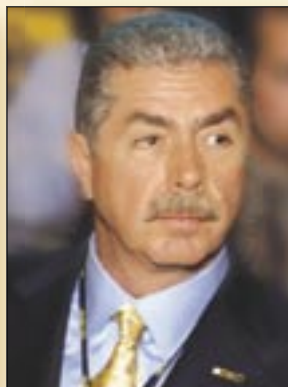
These changes serve to reinforce the UFCW as a leader in organizing the unorganized, while at the same time marking the start of a new era of rejuvenation and revitalization. We all remain committed to the needs of our members as well as the outreach to thousands of workers everywhere in their quest for fair treatment and dignity.

In solidarity,

Michael J. Fraser  
National Director



Above, retired UFCW international president Douglas H. Dority; below (l-r) new president Joe Hansen, new secretary-treasurer Marc Perrone, new executive vice-president Bill McDonough, and retired executive vice-president Mike Leonard.



## Election spells opportunity

Despite the spectre of a possible right-wing government as a result, the June 28 federal election also means a chance for Canada's New Democrats and the Bloc Québécois to gain ground and possibly provide the balance of power in a minority government situation, UFCW Canada national director Michael Fraser says.

"Many Canadians have been waiting for an opportunity to express their distaste for the right-wing agenda that increasingly is permeating our society," he says. "This election is about winning back a caring, socially-responsible government, and adequately funding programs such as health care, child and elder care, and others, sustaining what we and those before us have worked to build."



## New Charter challenge

*UFCW Canada is once again taking the government of Ontario to court in an effort to win back rights for workers in the province's agriculture sector, following inaction by the province's new Liberal government on following the previously-won ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada. The union has joined with three agriculture workers in filing the action, seeking to uphold and enforce the Court's December 2001 ruling defending their right to representation under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. UFCW Canada has been advocating for the rights of agriculture workers for more than 20 years, both for industrial-style workers in provinces where their rights are denied, as well as on behalf of migrant workers from mainly Mexico and the Caribbean working in Canada under the federal Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAW) program (see Support Centres, page 5). This marks the third time in the past year that UFCW Canada has taken government to court in support of agriculture workers, having earlier initiated actions on the exclusion of agriculture workers from the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, and another to challenge the federal Employment Insurance Act, which forces SAW program workers to pay insurance premiums even though they cannot collect from the program. Seen above with UFCW Canada national director Michael Fraser at a Queen's Park news conference to announce the legal action is union legal counsel for the case Paul Cavaluzzo. For details, contact Stan Raper, UFCW Canada national office.*

With the NDP and Bloc growing in support in early election polls at the expense of the governing Liberals, supporters are anticipating the possibility of forming at least the balance of the government.

"It will take a lot of hard work – we're certainly not there yet," Fraser says. "But this election could be a milestone."

In the wake of the Liberal sponsorship scandal and the promise-breaking first budget of the Ontario Liberals, Fraser cautions voters to avoid supporting "new Conservatives" as a way of sending a message to the Liberals.

"Stephen Harper's so-called Conservatives are not the Conservatives of Joe Clark. They're not even the Conservatives of Brian Mulroney! They are mainly right-wing reactionaries who want to tear apart our social fabric," he says.

At the same time, he adds, "We have long known what Paul Martin is and what he represents – the old, privileged, wealth of Canada, mad at a terrible cost to thousands upon thousands of working people. It's time for voters to support someone with the interests of average working people at heart."

UFCW Canada Local 175 member Tim McCallum is the NDP candidate in Ontario's Elgin-Middlesex-London riding. Other notable labour activists in the race as New Democrats include Sid Ryan of CUPE in Oshawa; Irene Mathyssen of the OSSTF in London-Fanshawe; and Peggy Nash of the autoworkers in Parkdale-High Park.

In a controversial move, Prime Minister Martin has appointed several "star" candidates to run for the Liberals, including IWA-Canada leader Dave Haggard and former B.C. NDP Premier Ujjal Dosanjh.

"This election is about people," Fraser says, noting the recent Ontario by-election landslide victory by NDP candidate Andrea Horwath in Hamilton-East has shown the electorate is willing to consider options. "People are opting for change, and supporting the party that supports working people means change for the better."

*For details, contact Brian Noonan, UFCW Canada national coordinator, political action.*

## Political donation changes

UFCW Canada National Council has adopted the recommendations of the UFCW Canada National Political Action Committee on the rule changes on political donations recently put in place by Elections Canada and the *Canada Elections Act*.

Because of new restrictions on union donations that came into effect on January 1, 2004, any and all UFCW Canada donations to federal parties will be made solely by the national office, to a mandated aggregate of \$1,000.00. At the same time, the UFCW Canada National Council urges local unions and chartered bodies to affiliate to provincial New Democratic Parties, wherever possible. Further, the council urges all local unions and chartered bodies to participate in the CLC's Labour Issues Campaign.

*For details, contact Brian Noonan, UFCW Canada national coordinator, political action.*

## Dority feted in Canada

An evening in tribute to retired UFCW international president Doug Dority is scheduled in Toronto on Thursday, June 17 at the Westin Harbour Castle hotel. "It seems fitting that we pay tribute to Brother Dority's 43 years of service to members and workers

everywhere especially here in Canada where he spent part of his career," says UFCW Canada national director Michael Fraser.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, while working from the from Cincinnati and Philadelphia, Dority's organizing and other work as a union representative sent him across southern Ontario, as well as time assigned in Montréal and Ottawa.

**Watch for the next edition of DIRECTIONS for details of this tribute evening.**

## **Sobeys warehouse deal reached**

UFCW Canada Local 175 members at the Sobeys Milton Retail Support Centre in Milton, Ont., west of Toronto, voted earlier this year 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 Local 175 president Wayne Hanley. "Because of the determination and resolve of the membership, the union committee (unit members Learie Philips (chief steward), Paul Santos, John Robinson, and Steve Wright, assisted by union staff Dan Serbin (union rep), Jerry Clifford (Central East region director), and Jim Hastings (executive assistant to the president) was able to negotiate improved pensions, health and welfare benefits, and wages."

Company contributions to the Canadian Commercial Workers Industry Pension Plan (CCWIPP) increase in each year of the agreement, wages increase by \$2.00 per hour across the board, and workers also gained a \$650.00 signing bonus. The ratification followed an earlier vote rejecting the company's original offer and a prior meeting where an overwhelming majority had voted in favour of strike action.

**For more details, contact Cheryl Mumford, UFCW Canada Locals 175 & 633.**

## **Improvements at Pepsi**

For about 125 members of UFCW Canada Local 1288P in New Brunswick, things go better with Pepsi.

The province-wide workforce of Pepsi Bottling Group are back under contract for the next three years, winning wage increases of 50¢ per hour in each year plus 50¢ retroactively. Route Sales workers are no longer paid on commission but will now be on hourly rates. Wages could be adjusted in 2006 according to a COLA formula, triggered at 3% and capped at 5%. Shift premiums in the agreement rise from 55¢ to 75¢. The top wage rate currently (subsequent to the first two adjustments) is \$22.00 per hour for Route Merchandisers.

## **Price Chopper workers see increase**

Workers at the Kitchener, Ont. Price Chopper store have ratified a collective agreement that raises top rates for the 46 full- and part-time workers grow by 6% over the life of the three-year agreement. Workers still in the progression will get increases totalling more than 3%. A signing bonus of up to \$100.00 was also negotiated. There are improvements to the bereavement leave language, and paid relief rates for workers relieving a department manager.

**For more information, contact Rob Armbruster at UFCW Canada Local 1977.**

## **Loeb agreement ratified**

Members at the Loeb McArthur grocery store in Ottawa ratified a renewed collective agreement with wage increases and better pension benefits earlier this year.

Full-time workers receive quarterly lump sum payments totalling \$800.00 per year in addition to an hourly increase of 90¢. Part-time workers gain similar lump sum payments totalling \$400.00 per year along with 90¢ 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¢ per hour. Night shift workers' hourly premium increases to 95¢.



## **UFCW Canada YES! ... again**

**Workers at a massive Loblaw Companies distribution centre in Cambridge, Ont. have voted in favour of UFCW Canada representation – for a second time. About 800 UFCW Canada Local 1000A members at the National Grocers Maple Grove facility voted to keep their longstanding union and to reject a campaign by the autoworkers' union to represent them. "This victory belongs to the members at Maple Grove," says Local 1000A president Kevin Corporon "We have worked very hard for many years to earn the trust and loyalty of National Grocers employees. We appreciate their show of support and we will continue to support them with the best contracts in the industry and the strongest protection against unfair labour standards." UFCW Canada Local 1000A represents 1,700 more members at four other National Grocers warehouses, and more than 20,000 workers at various Loblaw workplaces throughout Ontario. Pictured on voting day are (front, l-r) Roy Etling, national office; Debora De Angelis, national office; Jonathan Lobo, Local 1000A; Dan Smith, Local 1000A member from the Maple Grove facility; (standing, l-r) Derrick Pecko, Local 1000A member from the National Grocers Surveyors Road unit; Vanessa Chuvalo, national office; Bob Linton, national communications coordinator; and Don Taylor, Local 1000A.**



The UFCW Canada Locals 175 & 633 members also benefit from improved pension payments resulting from increased contributions by the company. There are also improvements to members' health and welfare benefits and increased vision plan coverage.

*For details, contact Cheryl Mumford, UFCW Canada Locals 175 & 633.*

## **Improvements for home improvement members**

UFCW Canada Local 502 members at a Rona l'Entrepôt home improvement centre location in Laval, Qué. have ratified a new collective agreement that will see wages rise by more than 10% over the term.

The 176 Local 502 members will also receive an extra half-day holiday on December 26, improvements to some shift premiums, four weeks vacation after nine years (previously 10), a new shoe allowance for part-timers, and a dental plan is to be established this year. Starting wages have been pegged to remain ahead of the province's minimum wage.

*For details, contact Yvon Marion, UFCW Canada Local 502.*



## **Scholarship winners congratulated**

*UFCW Canada Local 500R's top officers, president François Lauzon and secretary-treasurer Tony Filato (l-r, in suits) welcomed winners of this year's Beggs-Dowling-Mathieu Scholarships to the local's offices in Montréal earlier this year. The winners are Alex Boucher (left), a member who works at Métro Belair and Kevin Randall (right), whose mother Hélène Quenneville is a member working at Supermarché Robert Pilon. Alex is studying accounting at Cégep de Joliette, while Kevin is enrolled in human sciences at Collège de Valleyfield.*

## **Montréal marché workers win contract**

Members of UFCW Canada Local 500R working for Marché St-Joseph in Montréal have agreed to a new contract that wins them a retroactive payment in lump sum form worth 3% of their previous

year's wages, plus increases alternating at 2% and 3% for the life of the agreement.

Improvements were also made to vacations (five weeks after 16 years), shift premiums (0¢-90¢-90¢, up from 0¢-80¢-80¢) and work classification premiums (75¢, formerly 70¢). The premium for working as a manager is \$10.00, previously \$9.00, per day, to a maximum of \$50.00, previously \$45.00, per week. Employees 50 years of age and older with at least 10 years of service now qualify for a reduced work week of four days. Paid leave also increases, and the negotiated Christmas bonus rises to 2% from 1.5%.

*For details, contact Tony Filato at UFCW Canada Local 500R.*

## **Agreement at G K Services**

The 24 members of UFCW Canada Local 1977 at G K Services in Cambridge, Ont. have a new three-year collective agreement. The main issue in negotiations was wages, and significant improvements were achieved. Route Sales Representatives will receive a 6% increase while Route Helpers get an 11% hike over the life of the contract.

Another major improvement was in the area of employer-paid RSP contributions. These will increase by 19% over the term. G K Services provides uniforms and mats to area industries such as Toyota. G K workers have been members of Local 1977 since 1999.

*For more information, contact Rob Armbruster at UFCW Canada Local 1977.*

## **B.C. poultry members ratify**

About 500 members of UFCW Canada Local 1518 employed at three separate facilities of Lilydale Poultry in British Columbia have a new three-year agreement, retroactive to July 1, 2003.

"Once again, our local union has negotiated a collective agreement that make these poultry industry workers the highest-paid in North America," says UFCW Canada Local 1518 president Brooke Sundin. "Congratulations to our members at these facilities for their perseverance and support, and of course to Jim Wells and the negotiating committee members at all three plants for a job well done."

The three plants, all in the lower mainland, are a turkey processing facility and a chick hatchery in Abbotsford, and a chicken processing plant in Port Coquitlam. The agreement is a three-year deal that, while including language that addresses the different operations at the three plants, is identical in wage and benefit improvements established for members.

Wage improvements include a 20¢ per hour retroactive increase and an additional 30¢ per hour increase in 2005, plus a \$300.00 lump sum payment in 2004. By July 1, 2005, the base hourly rate will be \$17.25. Pension plan payments will increase from 60¢ per hour to 68¢ per hour, effective December 1, 2005. In addition, the company will contribute another 12¢ per hour to the dental plan, raising that contribution to 60¢ per hour.

*For more details, contact Andy Neufeld, UFCW Canada Local 1518, or visit [ufcw1518.com](http://ufcw1518.com).*

## **Numerous improvements at Westfair Manitoba**

More money, more jobs, and a safer workplace are highlights of UFCW Canada Local 832's recently-ratified agreement with Westfair Foods in Manitoba. Approximately 3,100 members at all

Real Canadian Superstores and Extra Foods in Manitoba, plus a Wholesale Club in Winkler, Man. are covered by the agreement.

Most starting rates will increase an average of \$1.00 per hour over the life of the agreement, including an 18% raise for courtesy clerks. Other workers will qualify for a signing bonus of as much as \$750.00. There are also wage adjustments for some classifications, including pharmacy technicians who now will earn a top rate of \$15.90 per hour. Premium rates have been improved and new premiums created, and the employer will also increase its contributions to the dental and pension plans.

"This agreement contains something for each and every member," Local 832 president Robert Ziegler says. "This was not an easy contract to negotiate. But the union was determined to get substantial improvements as called for by our members. We believe we achieved that."

The agreement came at the eleventh hour after a week of marathon bargaining. Preparations were well underway for an expected strike, with picket signs printed and other strike materials already prepared.

The contract requires the company to create 30 new, full-time bargaining unit jobs at their Real Canadian Superstores and Extra Foods by no later than August 1. All members will see substantial improvements in scheduling, one of the key issues in the dispute.

**For details, contact Grant Warren, UFCW Canada Local 832, or go online to [ufcw832.mb.ca](http://ufcw832.mb.ca).**

## **Bad marks for Charest's first year**

Thousands of labour and community activists took to the streets last spring to mark the one-year anniversary of Québec's Liberal government. More than 10,000 in Montréal, 7,000 in Québec City, and hundreds of others in towns across the province protested a year of force-fed, anti-union, anti-people legislation, arbitrariness, and arrogance from the Charest government.

In one year, Charest's Liberals have unravelled 30 years of social progress. From opening the doors to large-scale contracting out and privatization of public services, to raising the fees for the provincial child care program, to the wholesale restructuring of the health care system, the Liberals have shredded Québec's social fabric.

Protest organizers took some solace in the fact the government seems to have slowed its pace a bit, perhaps in response to the strong public opposition to its policies. [CUPE/CALM/0404]

## **Fighting back the clawback in Ontario**

The resumption of public health care premiums and the delisting of many common medical services in Ontario will result in genuine hardship for many people, says UFCW Canada national director Michael Fraser.

"As usual, government is targeting those who are the most vulnerable: the sick and the poor," he says. "The McGuinty Liberals got into power on promises of protecting health care and families, but they lied and have thrown us back decades in progressive health care reform."

UFCW Canada has joined with other groups in circulating petitions to demand the relisting of services that are no longer covered by medicare in Ontario, and to restore fairness to the province's health care system. A package is being sent to all Ontario local unions, with a request to return signed petitions to the national office for forwarding en masse.

*For more information, contact Bob Linton in the UFCW Canada national office.*

## **Klein dethroned as 'King of Cuts'**

A new study shows that, compared to B.C. premier Gordon Campbell, Alberta premier Ralph Klein is a wild-eyed environmental activist. A new report by the West Coast Environmental Law Association and promoted by the British Columbia Government Employees Union lays bare the excessive cuts to environmental protections by the Campbell Liberals.

The report shows a dramatic acceleration of cuts in B.C.'s

*continues on page 9*



## **Support Centres open for third year**

*There are now five migrant agriculture worker support centres in the growing outreach project sponsored by UFCW Canada, including a first one in Québec. Located in Ontario at Leamington (southwestern), Bradford (Holland Marsh), Virgil (Niagara Peninsula), and Simcoe (south central), and in Québec at Saint-Rémi (southeast of Montréal) the Centros de Apoyo para Trabajadores y Trabajadoras Migratorios provide a place for migrant workers in those regions – chiefly from Mexico – to get information on everything from occupational health and safety to dealing with agencies in the community including banks, insurance, and medical facilities. The facilities also serve as friendly drop-in centres, and all services are provided in Spanish. Shown above opening for the third year is the original Leamington centre, where guests at the ribbon-cutting included (top left, l-r) Father Frank Murphy of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Leamington, which owns the building in which the centre is housed and provides Spanish-language mass each Sunday for area workers; Stan Raper, UFCW Canada national representative and coordinator for the five centres; Rene Vidal, member of UFCW Canada Local 459 and coordinator of the Leamington Centre; and (centre, holding ribbon) Joe Comartin, NDP Member of Parliament from nearby Windsor, Ont.*



**Wal-Mart update**

With dozens of active organizing campaigns at Wal-Mart stores across Canada, four applications for union representation are now before labour boards in three provinces, with another likely soon to follow.

The most recent application is on behalf of employees at a store in Terrace, B.C., where Wal-Mart's heavy-handed response to early organizing efforts resulted in an important ruling by the B.C. labour board in 2003 protecting workers' rights and giving UFCW Canada Local 1518 the right to make a presentation to workers there.

In Saskatchewan, meanwhile, the labour board is hearing evidence from both sides in two cases, chiefly concerning the composition of the respective bargaining units. Employees from stores in Weyburn and North Battleford have both requested membership in UFCW Canada Local 1400. Wal-Mart is arguing that the bargaining unit definitions should be broadened to include, among others, management employees who do not support the union.

In Thompson, Man., where UFCW Canada Local 832 made the first application on behalf of Wal-Mart workers in years in 2003, the local has applied again to the labour board, citing renewed support for the union. The original vote – when eventually counted following objections by the company – resulted in a narrow rejection.

Finally, UFCW Canada Local 503 has said workers at another Wal-Mart store where employees nearly won union representation earlier this year – in Jonquière, Qué. – are still interested in becoming union members, and may get their chance as early as next month. “It’s clear from the first vote that we should pursue this campaign,” says Local 503 president Marie-Josée Lemieux. “The labour code allows for a new vote after three months, so we’re talking as early as July. We should know with more certainty in the coming weeks.”

**For more information on any Wal-Mart campaigns, contact Andrew Mackenzie in the national office.**



**New tool for organizers**

UFCW Canada organizers have a new tool to assist them in organizing members, an information-packed folder entitled *Your Future, Your Union* that answers questions commonly asked about unions and UFCW Canada. The 12-page, full-colour booklet is prepared in a slightly oversized format so that its cover folder can accommodate additional information in pockets on the inside covers. Contents of the booklet include member testimonials, information on programs from education to scholarships, information about the union's structure, and answers on issues such as strike benefits, dues, and the National Defence Fund. “This will be a big help to organizers because it addresses many of the most common questions they routinely are asked,” says national organizing coordinator Shane Dawson. For copies, or more information, contact Shane in the national office. A French-language version is being prepared in consultation with Québec local unions.



## A study in success: organizing new members at Western Waffles



Some organizing campaigns can be difficult, to say the least. UFCW Canada's struggle to win union membership for Wal-Mart workers – pitted against the largest multinational retailer on the planet – has become a near-legendary and inspiring story in the North American labour movement (see page 6 for more).

But even in local cases, like the ongoing effort to unionize the virulently anti-union Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alta. (owned by multinational IBP, unionized in other locations), the fight can be long and provoke bitter reactions.

In rare cases, however, when both sides are willing to act in good faith and with respect for the other, organizing can go like clockwork. "It wasn't without its occasional setback," says UFCW Canada national representative Brian Noonan of the organizing success at Western Waffles in Brantford, Ont., "but, all in all, things went pretty smoothly."

UFCW Canada already had a bargaining relationship with the employer when it opened a new plant in southern Ontario (UFCW Canada Local 247 represents workers at Western Waffles' British Columbia plant), so the employer agreed to respect the wishes of employees rather than fight their application to be represented by UFCW Canada Local 1993 as some employers would. And, because a collective agreement was already in place in B.C., the Ontario agreement didn't take long to negotiate, with similar benefits and minor adjustments to reflect local procedures and concerns.

Members of the new bargaining unit voted for the union, then voted for the contract, and finally voted for their first Shop Stewards under the terms of the contract (far left). By the end of the week, the Stewards were hard at work, receiving Level 1 training from Cam Sherk of the national office, assisted by Noonan (central photos). Receiving their certificates at the end of the course are (l-r, with Sherk and Noonan flanking them) Christine Poag and Donna Nelson, and (seated) Don Rochholz, Doug Conklin, and Duncan Clarke.

Finally, because Local 1993 is primarily an organizing local, once the contract was in place and the Stewards in place, Western Waffles members entered a servicing agreement with Locals 175 & 633, welcoming new full-time servicing representative Chris Fuller (left) to assist them in their day-to-day dealings with management.





## Strike one for dignity

It wasn't about the money. It was *never* about the money.

When about 40 counsellors employed by Family Services of Peel (FSP), located in Mississauga, Ont., sought union membership, it was because their employer insisted on treating them like private contractors with no say in their futures. Instead of raises or promotions – or even simple job security – workers faced arbitrary treatment and unilateral terminations because FSP wanted the “flexibility” of dealing with each contract individually.

The workers, members of UFCW Canada Local 1993, took their message to the street, demanding a first contract and fair treatment. Over a tightly-run five-week campaign, picketers got the message out to the public through a series of flyers and newsletters. Because the FSP offices are located in public buildings, lines were limited to informational pickets. Members used the opportunity to good effect, however, asking the public to support them by calling or emailing decision-makers about the issue, providing names, phone numbers, and email addresses.

“We’ll probably never know exactly how many people called or emailed management,” says strike coordinator Paul Magee, special assistant to the UFCW Canada national director (seen above right on line talking with national representative Richard Pollock).

“What we *do* know is that it had an effect. Management was very frustrated that nobody seemed to side with them, but demanded fair treatment for the workers.” Members also set up a temporary website during the strike (right) to provide more details, and flyers that were distributed all made reference to its address.

In the end, they got what they went on strike for. “Dignity,” says Magee. “Dignity and respect. They now have a contract that gives them security in their work. That’s important because they care deeply about their work, and now they can give the work of counselling people in difficulty the attention it deserves.”

Oh, and they got more money, too.



## Dartmouth Holiday Inn workers join with other Nova Scotia hotel workers in UFCW Canada Local 864

Workers at the Halifax-Harbourview Holiday Inn in Dartmouth, N.S. have voted overwhelmingly to become members of UFCW Canada Local 864. They had previously belonged to the Nova Scotia Union of Public and Private Employees (NSUPE), an unaffiliated union with a declining membership. After discussions with UFCW Canada

members employed at other Halifax hotels, they opted for solidarity.

“Not only do we welcome these workers into UFCW Canada, but we also welcome them to the Nova Scotia Fed and the CLC,” says Local 864 president Keith Northrop. “Their former union was not affiliated with either.”



*continued from page 5*

Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection. It says that with the elimination of 320 positions, the province now lags far behind Alberta and Saskatchewan in staffing key areas of environmental stewardship and protection.

There are only 115 conservation officers in B.C. In Alberta, which is only two-thirds the size of B.C., there are 221. Saskatchewan, with less than one-quarter of B.C.'s population, has 56% more staff devoted to enforcing environmental protection.

The report concludes there are now too few staff to do surprise spot inspections, and little chance polluters will be caught. [BCGEU/CALM/0404]

## **Counting his blessings**

Thousands of visitors will have the chance to discover a remarkable artist this summer as part of UFCW Canada's presentation at the annual Mariposa Folk Festival in Orillia, Ont.

Thomas Canning's vibrant, powerful works will be on display at the festival's Artisan Village from July 9-11 as part of UFCW Canada's partnership with the folk festival to promote fundraising for the Leukemia Research Fund of Canada (LRF). Canning is also making an appearance with his works at the annual UFCW Canada LRF Gala Evening this month.

The self-taught artist, who was born in Newfoundland and Labrador, has lived in Toronto since his teens. Canning has pledged to



donate part of the proceeds of his Mariposa sales to the LRF.

Helping others has become kind of a passion for the 42-year-old artist since overcoming two decades of drug and alcohol addiction in 2001. When he voluntarily entered counselling and began his recovery, only then did Canning realize that both his artwork and addictions had deep roots in a childhood scarred by sexual and physical abuse.

"I was a really bad stutterer as a kid," explains Canning, who today still speaks with a mild speech impairment. "My counsellors say it came from being abused. In school, my teachers thought I was stupid, so they would stick me in a corner by myself."

Canning says he spent his alone time with crayons, drawing "dreamy" scenes. "Sometimes angels came to rescue me," he says. "I kept up with it until I started getting in the drugs, then it disappeared. But when I went into recovery, it all started coming back — along with the nightmares of what had happened to me as a young boy.

"The nightmares are gone now, but luckily my art has stayed with me."

Today, Canning volunteers at Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank, where he splits his day between warehouse work and drawing in a makeshift studio the food bank provides him. The walls of one of the corridors are a gallery for his colourful drawings, which are testament to his own recovery as well as his drive to give back. Both donors and clients of the food bank have purchased his work.

"I feel so grateful for the chance to help others," says the brawny, affable artist. "I've been very lucky and helping others makes me feel great. So I donate half of everything I make on my sales back to the food bank. So far that's added up to a few thousand dollars."

UFCW Canada got involved with Canning after a story appeared about him in a Toronto newspaper. Ironically, Canning couldn't read the article himself because his childhood school



## **UFCW Canada on stage at Mariposa**

*Mainstage at the revered Mariposa Folk Festival this July will be sponsored by UFCW Canada, as will other stages with the national office being joined by Locals 175 & 633, 1000A, 12R24, 1977, and the Ontario Provincial Council in promoting both the union and leukemia research fundraising at the popular event. Held in Orillia, Ont., the three-day festival has an annual attendance of about 25,000. In photo, UFCW Canada national director Michael Fraser was interviewed by reporters at a kick-off news conference announcing UFCW Canada's involvement and the artist line-up for the event, running from July 9-11. "UFCW Canada's presence at Mariposa shows our involvement in the community, and gives us a chance to highlight some of the workplaces in Orillia where UFCW Canada members work, such as Zehrs, A&P, The Beer Store, and the Kewadin Inn," Fraser says. "With nearly 40 different performances already announced, it's going to be a busy weekend for UFCW Canada volunteers selling donated items to raise funds for leukemia research." Performers confirmed for the 2004 Mariposa include Murray McLaughlan, Prairie Oyster, Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, Sue Foley, Jenny Whitely, Jason Fowler, Cindy Church, Easily Amused, and many more. Also featured in the festival's Artisan Village will be UFCW Canada supported artist Thomas Canning (see Counting his blessings, this page). For details and the full line-up, visit [www.mariposafolkfestival.com](http://www.mariposafolkfestival.com).*

isolation left him functionally illiterate.

“Michael Fraser asked me if I would also be interested in selling some of my paintings so they could be auctioned to raise money for leukemia research,” he says. “Going to Mariposa to do this is another dream come true.”

Although he has been through a great deal, Canning appreciates his good fortune. “People say I’m a survivor, but I feel luckier than that,” he says. “I feel blessed.”

## Victory declared in California

The preservation of health-care benefits for the more than 70,000 UFCW members on strike in southern California for five months signalled a successful end to their strike in late February.



## Wal-Town tour visits national office

*Members of the cross-country Wal-Town public awareness campaign tour – sponsored mainly by the UFCW Canada national office and UFCW Canada Local 333 – recently stopped in Rexdale for meetings with UFCW Canada national director Michael Fraser and Bob Linton, national communications coordinator. The tour began April 29 in Jonquière, Qué. and worked its way across Canada to Courtenay, B.C. on May 25. A project of the überCulture Collective from Concordia University in Montréal, the nine-member Wal-Town team set up in the parking lots of Wal-Mart stores across the country to share its message with store customers, while making a documentary film about the project which it hopes to have ready for release by the end of this year. “The one message we have for people to understand how Wal-Mart has become the giant retailer it has,” says überCulture co-founder Ezra Winton, who was part of the Wal-Town team, “and that’s through exploitation of labour, violation of human rights, and the dismantling of small communities throughout Canada and the United States.” Seen during their stop in Rexdale are (l-r) filmmaker Sergeo, Linton, Johanne Savoy, Danielle Dalzell, Tom Price, and Fraser. For more information, contact Bob Linton in the national office.*

“The men and women on the picket lines are genuine heroes,” international president Doug Dority, now retired, said at the end of the strike. “Their sacrifice for affordable family health care has motivated and activated workers everywhere. I am honoured to be part of their union, and I am humbled as well as inspired by their dedication, strength, and selflessness.”

The face-off with supermarket giants Safeway, Kroger, and Albertsons – which allied with several other supermarket chains to help fund the lengthy fight – hinged around employer demands for severe cuts to health-care funds and pensions as well as other concessions. UFCW negotiators, backed by the support of members of the eight California locals involved, were able to resist employer demands in all areas. Successes include maintaining affordable health care, protecting retirement, and preserving income and working conditions for current workers. Several contract improvements were also negotiated.

*For details, contact Brian McArthur, UFCW Canada national collective bargaining coordinator.*

## Locals 175 & 633 honoured

The Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) held its annual conference in Edmonton in May, awarding a number of union publications in various categories for excellence in their areas. UFCW Canada Locals 175 & 633’s *Checkout* magazine is the sole recipient for UFCW Canada, winning top honours for





best photo taken by a staff member (a separate category recognizes rank-and-file contributions). The photo, of a firefighter teaching a youngster how to use his hose at a Durham (Ontario) Region leukemia fundraising event in 2003. The photo was taken by Locals 175 & 633 staff representative Matt Davenport.

**For more information, contact Cheryl Mumford, UFCW Canada Locals 175 & 633.**

## Dennis McGann Bursary

Also at the CALM conference, it was announced that a bursary honouring the memory of Dennis McGann has been established to encourage socially progressive communicators.

The \$1,000.00 annual bursary is supported by CUPE (of which McGann was a staff member), NOW Communications (the agency he co-founded), the Columbia Foundation, and CALM.

Dennis McGann was a greatly respected communications specialist in trade union and progressive movements across Canada. His agency, NOW Communications, was an important advisor to the NDP government British Columbia in the 1990s. In the 1970s, McGann was a founder of CALM, and served for a number of years on its executive council.

Also in the 1970s, McGann came up with the idea of creating a video production of Tommy Douglas's famous *Mouseland* fable about Canadian politics, and created the original "slide show" version of *Mouseland* using plush animals for an NDP display at the Pacific National Exhibition. When UFCW Canada produced an updated version of *Mouseland* in an animated version in 1993, McGann was invited as a guest-of-honour when the video premiered at a CLC convention in Vancouver. That version, inspired by McGann's original idea, was named top labour video by both CALM and the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA).

The Dennis McGann Bursary will be awarded to a student enrolled in communication studies at a public Canadian post-secondary institution. **For more information, contact: Columbia Institute, 1200-1166 Alberni Street, Vancouver BC V6E 3Z3. Telephone 604-408-2500, fax 604-408-2525. On the web, [columbiainstitute.ca](http://columbiainstitute.ca). The deadline is August 1.**

## Atlantic office moves

The UFCW Canada national office responsible for operations in the Atlantic provinces has moved, along with the Halifax-area offices of UFCW Canada Local 864. The new mailing address is:

300-1550 Bedford Hwy  
Bedford NS B4A 1E6

The office also has a new email address, but telephone and fax numbers remain unchanged, as they do for Local 864.

**For more information, contact Mark Dobson, UFCW Canada national coordinator for the Atlantic provinces.**

## Conferences curtailed

Due to costs incurred in relation to the Safeway strike, various

programs and initiatives of the UFCW and UFCW Canada have been scaled back for the time being.

Included among these are two annual national conferences – those of UFCW Canada legal counsel and UFCW Canada communicators – that will not be held this year as tentatively scheduled.

**For more information, contact John Evans, UFCW Canada national general counsel, or Bob Linton, UFCW Canada national communications coordinator.**

## Canoe fable

A Girl Guide troop challenged the management team of a big corporation to a canoe race to raise money for charity. Both teams



## Breaking ground in Montréal

*UFCW Canada's eleventh union training centre is on its way, as leaders and guests got together in March for an official sod-turning ceremony in eastern Montréal's cold, hard ground. The Centre de formation de l'alimentation et du commerce du Québec (Québec Grocery and Commercial Training Centre, or CFACQ) is located on boulevard Crémazie between Christophe-Colomb and Chambord. On hand for the ground-breaking were (l-r): Tony Filato, secretary-treasurer of UFCW Canada Local 500R; national director Michael Fraser; Carole Bourdages, general secretary of the Montréal school commission, with which the local is partnering in the CFACQ project; Local 500R president François Lauzon; Montréal mayor Gérald Tremblay; Sylvain Lachance, municipal councillor (Villeray); Anie Samson, municipal councillor (Jarry); and Paolo V. Tamburello, mayor of the Villeray/St-Michel/Parc Extension district. CFACQ project director Danielle Beaudet says that when the centre opens this fall, there will be three programs in place with a total of 29 training modules: Food Handling Safety, Basic Skills Competency, and Product and Customer Service. Employers involved in the training centre are Provigo/Loblaw, Métro/Super C, and Sobeys/IGA. "It is with enthusiasm and pride that we work towards getting the CFACQ up and running," says Lauzon. "This is a unique and innovative project."*

