



United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 Newsletter

Issue 10

Local 115 Website: <http://local115.una.ab.ca>

December 2004



Message from the President

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and Happy Holiday season. Thank you to all for your support and help during the past year in this very busy position as your President.

Local 115 is a very busy UNA local supporting approximately 3200 members of RN's, RPN's and social workers. My goal has always been to advocate, represent, communicate, educate, and encourage participation of the members. This year has been a year of building our committees and membership involvement. I feel that with the Executive we have been involved in improving communications to the members and promoting the initiatives of UNA. This year we developed an extensive Ward Rep system to our over 100 units, clinics and satellites. In February, May and September we held meetings with the Ward Reps to provide information and education. Local Meetings were held 8 times this year. There is always a struggle - what time is best meeting time for members and 4 PM was the decision for this year. We did a blitz in the year to sign up all dues payers for our Local. In return we went to meetings with a 42 voting delegate entitlement.

Communication to all members is very important to me and therefore making trips to the satellites this year to Lethbridge, Olds, Crows Nest Pass, South Calgary

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URL: <http://www.wcb.ab.ca>

Workman's Compensation

Workman's Compensation is a non-profit insurance system designed to protect workers and employers from the full impact of work-related injuries and illness. It is fully funded by employers. Injured nurses can receive Workman's Compensation, but not all employers in Alberta are covered by WCB insurance.

The goal is to protect employers and workers from the uncertainty, cost and delays of legal action by providing no-fault coverage. The goal is to get workers back to work.

I attended a three day seminar about occupational health and safety from October 7-10; sponsored by the

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Alberta Worker's Health Center. I was able to spend a day at the Workman's Compensation Workshop. I met several people who had experience as employees being on workman's compensation. The most positive experiences came from those who had noticeable injuries; especially those requiring surgery. Others expressed some frustration with less obvious injuries such as muscle and soft tissue injuries.

Perhaps the discussions that had the most impact on me was the personal impact that being off work can have on various injured workers. The frustration of suddenly not being able to work each day and adjusting to being at home was a common concern. Loss of self esteem and depression while trying to get the needed treatment occurred often. The families of those injured were also affected with the uncertainty of the process. Getting financial affairs in order and adjusting to the wage earner being at home caused worry and fear of the unknown. Sometimes pain was unmanageable which led to the injured to resort to analgesics and possible addiction. The person who at one point was able to provide for himself and his or her family faces the uncertainty of being able to return to the original job. Without any notice, the worker is faced with a complete life style change. Some expressed concern that some bosses and co-workers question the validity of their injuries.

After hearing these concerns, I realized the importance of being less judgmental and more emotionally supportive of our injured or ill colleagues.

Another emphasis was on prevention. Safer work sites, sufficient staff, and decreasing overload were named. It was felt that a minority of people actually abuse the system.

While we are fortunate to have a system where employees suffering from work related injuries and illness can receive benefits and rehabilitation while off work, we must remember that the majority of these people would much rather be healthy and able to work. Increased sensitivity by all involved is definitely something to consider. ❖

Cheryl



Negotiations

DRAFT of the PHAA Provincial Agreement is now available on the UNA Website and UNA Ward Binders.

The DRAFT does NOT include LOCAL CONDITIONS, which still apply to some particular worksites. The UNA Negotiating Committee is holding further meetings with PHAA to resolve some areas of the agreement that may be unclear and to confirm a final Agreement. When the Agreement has been finalized, booklets will be printed and distributed. A DRAFT copy of the PHAA Provincial Agreement will be added to your unit UNA info Binders located on each UNA Local 115 unit. ❖



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URL: <http://www.afl.org/>

AFL basic union steward course held at BVC

The AFL basic union steward course held at BVC was great. It was very informative. We learned how to assess if something is an actual grievance and the steps to filing one. I would recommend the course to anyone as it will give you more knowledge about the grievance procedure, how to approach your supervisors, how to find things in the collective agreement and you get to meet a whole bunch of new people from different unions all over the province. It was actually fun. ❖

Denise

Health Centre and Okotoks occurred. We continue to visit all satellite sites and communicate to them as we do the other units. Great that satellite members went to UNA- AGM as delegates.

Thank- you to Al Perreault the Editor of our Newsletter and Local 115 Web page. Together we developed the foundation for these terrific communications for all members. Local 115 was the first UNA local to set up a UNA Local Web page and it is terrific- many compliments from people about what a great tool for communication it is.

As the CHR continues to change players and policies we are continually enforcing the Collective Agreement. The struggles and organizing for negotiating a Collective Agreement that took 18 months to settle, created many things for us to work on within the Local in regards to communication and participation. We are so happy for all nurses that a ratified CA now exists. On June 8th I organized members to man the Ratification Vote for 12 hours and satellites, and the subsequent counting of ballots. We had a good turnout with over 1200 members casting a vote.

The local executive has met for monthly Executive meetings to prepare and plan the business. I am very fortunate to work with 4 wonderful nurses on the Executive that are extremely hard working, energetic, enthusiastic and most of all full of empathy and professionalism in performing their Executive positions. Thank you to Bruce, Lisa, Ross, and Laurie for the wonderful work you do. I frequently receive calls and thank you from members for the hard work the Executive does.

The 3 committees have full membership and meet monthly in Prep- meeting and then with management. We met weekly with our LRO to discuss issues and grievances were filed by our LRO- Donna Byrne and the Executive and Committee members presented them to the Employer at Step 2 and 3. Thank you to Donna for the wonderful work you do.

With the Local Executive I attended all UNA Provincial Workshops- How to run a Local, PRC, Grievance, and OH &S and the new Contract Interpretation. New committee members attended and over 20 new Local 115 Ward Reps attended the UNA Ward Rep Workshop

I attended the following meetings as your representative- April-AARN -AGM, in June & Nov. I attended the UNA Board Meeting as an observer, the April 19th- UNA President's Meeting to discuss Negotiations, UNA- Reporting meeting - May 31/04, UNA- AGM in Oct./04,

Monthly region 3- Calgary President's meetings and then the new Region 3 with all locals involved. In regards to promoting opportunity to workshops and education to members we sent grievance Committee members to 2 discipline/accommodation workshops. The OH &S Committee attended a national OH & S Conference in Calgary about strategies for the future of OH & S. PRC member went to 1 week school on Human Rights, Grievance Comm. member to school on Duty to Accommodate. And a draw from the membership had a member attending a 1 week school on Conflict Resolution.

Each month I attended the PRC and OH &S committee meetings with the Employer. I am happy to report that the PRC is functioning very well. Only 2 outstanding PRC's will go forward to 2005.

Joint OH &S Committee is a bit more of a challenge- it is a much bigger group and we are trying to make the health and safety concerns of members a priority. Grievance Committee has been working hard gaining education and experience with the grievance process, collective agreement and Duty to accommodate members of our local. Thank you to the wonderful members of these committees for your hard work this year and your continued commitment to the members of the Local. I was privileged this year to attend some educational opportunities: AFL/CLC- OH & S Level 1, Labor education on Progressive Discipline and Labor Law Review, OH & S strategies and AFL- Labor Law.

Following an extensive battle to protect the Health and Safety of all people on Unit 27, the unit was closed in January and will reopen end of Feb. /05 as a totally demolished, remediated and reconstructed unit. The health struggles still continue for many of our members from that unit and we continue to work with them.

During the year I participated in many calls from media to speak on issues pertaining to the Local and nursing issues. The summer of 2004 was busy for me and the Executive with a new CA ratified there were many changes and education to communicate. Seniority changes, communication and work related to this. Thank you to Lisa for organizing this.

It has been a wonderful opportunity meeting many wonderful people in our local. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. May the spirit of Christmas be in your heart. ❖

In solidarity - Michelle M. Senkow RN, BScN

President - UNA Local 115

UNA member wins in Lethbridge

Congratulations to Bridget Pastoor, UNA member of Edith Cavell Nursing Home, who won the Lethbridge East Seat! Bridget ran for the Liberal Party. Bridget, who has worked many years in LTC, will be a good advocate for Long term care issues.

Also many thanks & congratulations to all UNA candidates.

In solidarity,

Karen Craik

Secretary Treasurer UNA

Nurses accept deal!

Nurses have voted to accept mediator's recommendations for a contract with the long-term care Employers who had not settled since the province-wide agreement was concluded last June 9th.

A strong majority of the nearly 500 nurses at the Locals voted for the agreement, which is approximately equivalent with the provincial deal. The main monetary items, salaries and premiums are exactly the same as the provincial agreement, giving the nurses salary increases of 3.5% in the first year and 3% in the second and third years of the contract.

"These nurses have waited over five months since their colleagues had their new agreement settled," says UNA President Heather Smith. "In the end we have what is substantially the same agreement."

"Registered nursing in long-term care must not be treated as something secondary," Heather Smith said. "Albertans should be closely watching the standards of care we provide to our vulnerable citizens. They should be asking candidates about what's happening to seniors. People in long-term care have to pay the biggest deductible going and at the same time the standards are dropping. I'm sure Albertans will not stand for reduced care for our elders."

The collective agreement nurses accepted today will be retroactive to April 1, 2003 when the previous agreement expired. The nurses and the Employers are to inform the mediator by today if they accept the contract terms.

The Bethany Care Society continues to insist on

bargaining separately for its Cochrane facility and was not included in the mediator's recommendations. Earlier this month the Alberta Labour Relations Board asked the Society to go back to negotiations in good faith.

"We hope today's deal will pave the way to a speedy settlement with Bethany Care for its Cochrane location as well," Heather Smith said.

The long-term care facilities affected by the new agreement include most of those in Capital Care in Edmonton, the Bethany Care Society in Camrose and Calgary as well as St. Michael's and St. Joseph's in Edmonton and St. Michael's in Lethbridge. The Carewest Colonel Belcher in Calgary is also part of this Continuing Care Employers Bargaining Association (CCEBA) group.

❖

A Global Workplace-Challenges and Strategies for Occupational Health and Safety

(Oct 7-10, 2004 hosted by the Alberta Workers' Health Centre)

Are we satisfied with the past and current impact of our work on our health and on the health of our communities? Union brothers and sisters from across the Country, the USA, and the UK came together to: 1. revisit some of those struggles and the historic compromises we have made in health and compensation; 2. redeem what we want our work and communities to look like; and 3. to get ourselves on the track we need to be to get to that dream.

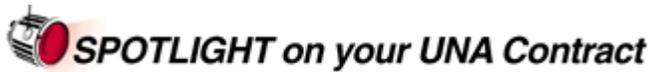
The educational sessions provided information like current employer practices, historical struggles and gains, impact of globalization, new regulations, WBC systems, toxic contamination of chemicals, and emerging issues. The workshops empowered us to address issues in our workplaces, develop a vision for change, share successful strategies, and develop tools collectively to make the change. This successful conference provided networking, sharing of experiences and desires, learning, support, and encouragement. ❖

Diane

OH & S Concerns:



There are many renovations and construction activities occurring within the Foothills Hospital Site. If you experience or have any concern about your health and safety, please call the Employer OH & S Hotline at 234-7799 and your Local 115 union office at 670-9960. ❖



Fairness in Vacations— Article 17 in our Collective Agreement ensures that vacation time is scheduled fairly

The Vacation Planner

- Your manager must post a Vacation Planner on your unit by January 1st of each year. You submit in writing the time period you wish to take your vacation(s) by March 15th.
- The manager must post the approved Vacation Planner by April 30th.
- Seniority provides the guiding principle for allocating vacations.
- the Employer may not “carve out” a specific time period in which Employees are not able to request vacation e.g. Christmas and New Years. The vacation year includes the whole calendar year and you are entitled to request vacation anytime throughout the year.

- Vacation requests after April 30th must be submitted in writing to the manager. They must respond within 14 days of your request.
- If your vacation request was not approved (or not responded to or delayed) by your manager, you have 10 working days to contact your UNA representative to raise your concerns regarding your vacation request and to file a grievance, if necessary.
- Your manager may not cancel or reschedule your vacation unless there is a critical, unforeseen emergency and the Employer can demonstrate that a bona fide attempt was made to address and resolve the emergency situation.
- If your manager does cancel your vacation, you are entitled to receive double time (2X your basic rate of pay) for all shifts worked during the period of vacation cancelled by the Employer. In addition, the Employer shall reimburse all non-refundable costs (e.g. airline or other tickets) related to the cancellation of the vacation.

Vacation entitlement depends upon your years of employment. To calculate the amount of your vacation entitlement, please refer to Article 17 of the Collective Agreement.

- If you do not use all your vacation entitlement during the calendar year you may make a request in writing to carry it forward to the next vacation year, which must not be unreasonably denied.

Article 17.03 (b)(i) “Where the number of Employees indicating a preference for a specific time period exceeds the number of Employees that can be allocated vacation during that period, vacation time is to be granted in order of seniority.”

Facility and Community Agreements 2001-2003.

*Other UNA Agreements often have different provisions. Check your Agreement or with your Local for details. ❖



United Nurses of Alberta

Local 115 Contacts

(President - Michelle Senkow is ex-officio to all committees. Please call the local office to speak to her about any of these committees or concerns)

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