



United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 Newsletter

Issue 21

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

November 2005



Message from the President

October has been a busy month with many PRC's, grievances and concerns from Local 115 members.

The UNA- AGM was held in Edmonton and Local 115 was represented by it's 44 delegates. The meeting was full with interesting discussion and education. Many new members attended for their first time and truly said that they better understand what the union does for them and found the experience to be professionally rewarding. After listening to the striking workers from Lakeside Packers speak to the assembly and explain their poor working conditions we were all touched and truly felt fortunate to be members of UNA.

Congratulations to Bruce Chatterton-Local 115 1st Vice-President who was elected to the UNA Executive Board. Great job Bruce.

I would like to extend a THANKYOU to Local 115 Secretary-Laurie Hermann for her very hard work for our local- good Luck Laurie always.

Many staffing issues have been filed as PRC's in the last few months and I must remind you that if you are involved in any situations at work which involve short-staffing or situations which concern you please call our office to discuss, we cannot help you unless we are aware of the situation.

LAPP - Local Authorities Pension Plan costing is provided by the Employer - if you have been on Mat Leave or have taken LOA's and have not received your statement yet that was to be received prior to April

30 - a regional grievance has been filed. Call our office if you have not received your costing statement. Problems with payroll continue and if your cheque or statements are incorrect call Payroll and our office to discuss.

Thank you snow for waiting till after Halloween so that the kids could enjoy. ❖

Take care,

Michelle M. Senkow RN, BScN

President - UNA-Local 115

Local 115 AGM Meeting

Date: November 9, 2005

Time: 1600 - 1800

Place: AGW 4

Agenda: Local Annual Budget Approval, Executive and Committee reports, and Local 115 Elections.❖

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Message from the President
- 1** Local 115 AGM Meeting
- 2** UNA Net
- 2** Lakeside Strike
- 3** Creative bargaining tackles nursing shortage
- 4** UNA Survey Results
- 5** Local 115 Contacts



Are you on UNA Net?



UNA Net is a private communication system available only to UNA Members. Current information regarding contract negotiations, your local and UNA events is available on UNA Net. You'll also have the opportunity to present your opinions and thoughts about negotiations as well as professional issues. Join us and communicate with your fellow registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses in Alberta.

What to do if you require an account?

Send an email including your name, address, local number, and your UNA ID number to systems@una.ab.ca. They will need to know what operating system is on your computer (Windows or Macintosh) and if you have high speed or dial up access to the internet.

Once your membership has been verified you will be given immediate access to the system.

Logging in with software or a browser

The UNA Net is accessible using a web browser or client software.

To log in with your web browser, go to <https://www.unitednurses.org/login> and enter your User ID and Password.

Even better though, the client software provides a desktop application that is optimized for fast, streamlined access to the First Class server. It is easy to install and use, by choosing the software download html link.

Windows & Macintosh Software Link:

<http://www.unitednurses.org/clientDownloads/>

Technical Support:

The technical support team is available by email systemsupport@una.ab.ca or by phone toll free at (800) 252-8384 during regular office hours. ❖



UNA contributes \$20,000 to UFCW strikes at Lakeside Packers

After hearing the dramatic story of conditions in the Lakeside packing plant at the Annual General Meeting, UNA presented the workers with \$2,000 in cash donations collected at the event, and a \$20,000 cheque.

"It's shameful that in this province that people have to go into such a bitter strike to try to get their basic working rights protected," said UNA President Heather Smith. ❖

Walk a Mile in Our Shoes...

On October 12, workers at the Lakeside Packing Plant in Brooks went on strike to get a first collective agreement.

Since being certified in August of 2004, workers have been unable to get the plant's owners, Tyson Foods of Arkansas, to agree to a contract. Lakeside is the largest beef processing plant in Alberta, and has a track record of aggressive union-busting tactics.

From November 4th to 15th, five workers from Lakeside Packers will be walking from Brooks to Edmonton to demand that the Alberta Government intervene to help resolve the strike at Lakeside.

Show your support for these workers and their struggle for dignity and respect as they arrive at the Alberta Legislature at the end of their journey.

Rally at the steps of the Alberta Legislature Tuesday, November 15, 2005 - 12:00 Noon to 1:00 pm.

For more information about how you can support these workers and put pressure on the government to help end this strike, visit www.afl.org

For more information about conditions at Lakeside Packers and the issues that have led to the strike, please visit their informational web site at: <http://www.terribletyson.com>. ❖

Creative bargaining tackles nursing shortage

Nursing shortages lead to stress, burnout, and early retirement, which puts more stress on younger nurses who lose the benefit of older mentors, and so the spiral goes. Can collective bargaining be an instrument of change to staunch the bleeding of Canada's nursing workforce?

Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions, believes union-employer agreements have a critical role to play. "In a shortage, we have to be creative," she says. "The traditional approach of simply increasing the number of students is not working."

Recent surveys show that 30 per cent of nurses under age 30 want to leave the profession, Ms. Silas notes, and at age 45 they are already starting to count the years to retirement. "The approach today needs to be on how to keep experienced nurses, how to motivate them to stay on."

Judith Shamian, president and CEO of the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), agrees that maintaining the link between younger and older nurses is vital to the profession, in all of the varied environments where nurses work.

"We need to deal with the issues of working conditions and job satisfaction at both the beginning of a nurse's career and at the later, more experienced stage. The challenges in the community and home health field are somewhat different than the hospital sector. The staff in the home and community sector often work in isolation with limited opportunities to build bridges between the novice and the expert. At VON, we are currently working on mentorship programs where some of these issues will be addressed."

According to Ms. Silas, some creative successes in collective bargaining include:

- In New Brunswick, union contracts now allow for phased-in retirement. At age 55, nurses can opt for part-time work, keep their benefits, and begin to collect a pension. This has the double benefit of opening up places for new graduates, while retaining the skills and mentorship of experienced nurses.
- In Alberta, some locals have borrowed a page from operating room protocols, which require a new nurse to work alongside (not replace) a more experienced nurse

for several months. This arrangement is being written into general contracts: Hiring a new nurse creates an additional position for the first year, over and above current staffing. Ms. Silas reports that, of 30 new grad placed in Alberta experiment, 28 stayed on after the first year.

This kind of innovation challenges some of the norms of collective bargaining - traditions such as seniority must be viewed more flexibly, for example, But any progress will only come through joint efforts of unions and employers, adds Silas. "The workplace belongs to both, and if we don't have buy-in from both sides, no amount of innovation, ideas or money will solve our problems."

Linda Silas has plenty of experience with the challenges of innovation in collective agreements. While a union leader in New Brunswick in the late 1980s, she won her members Canada's first nursing contract securing full benefits for part-time and casual employees.

"We made it liveable to be a part-timer. They now have health and dental benefits, paid vacation, life insurance, sick leave, and pensions - everything full-time nurses have," Ms. Silas says.

Years later, that achievement has turned out to be "a double-edged sword," she adds. "It was the right thing to do for the people we represented, but it also led to employers pushing for more nursing positions to go part-time, because it actually costs them less."

Fully half of all nurses work part-time or casual now, a substantial increase in the past decade, Ms. Silas says. That "casualization" of the nursing workforce is also a focus of concern in a recent report from a national coalition of nursing stakeholders - "Building the Future: An integrated nursing strategy for nursing human resources in Canada." ❖

Local 115 UNA Web Site



Please have a look at our site on the web, and send us your feedback. Our URL is: <http://local115.una.ab.ca> ❖

Nurses show increasing satisfaction with their work although concerns persist about staffing levels and quality of care

UNA releases survey results at start of provincial nurses' meeting

The shortage of nurses and heavy workloads remain major issues facing Registered Nurses according to a phone survey of United Nurses of Alberta members. Results also showed nurses continue to have concerns about quality of care in an understaffed environment, but also that most nurses are happy with their career and prepared to recommend it to young people looking for an occupation.

"That's a change," said UNA President, Heather Smith. "Just a few years ago, nurses were telling their children and friends not to go into the profession, but our survey showed that now over 80% of nurses would recommend nursing to others."

UNA is releasing selected survey results at the opening of the organization's provincial Annual General Meeting in Edmonton, Tuesday, October 25, 2005.

The nurses' union commissioned the study in part to look at nurses' views on the Local structure of the organization. Delegates at the AGM are considering how to modify UNA's structure to deal with the region-wide bargaining units legislated in 2003 by Bill 27.

The survey of over 1,000 members was conducted for UNA in August by Viewpoints Research from Winnipeg. It also showed that more nurses believe the quality of care is declining rather than improving and many nurses expect care quality to erode further.

The survey indicates that about 5,000 nurses will be retiring or leaving the profession over the next five years. "That's 20% of our entire nursing workforce," Heather Smith points out. "The Health Regions face a daunting recruitment challenge to open the hundreds of hospital beds that they announced last week," she said.

"Inadequate staffing is a legacy of the destruction in the 1990s," Heather Smith said. "Building new beds alone will not address wait times or concerns about patient safety. We need more nurses but we will not have truly sustainable retention and recruitment until nurses can be assured they will be working in an environment which does not compromise ethical, quality patient care."

The survey also showed nurses are highly satisfied with the performance of their union. Over 80% reported they were very satisfied or satisfied being a part of UNA.

"We were very pleased the results showed nurses are confident their organization is on the right track," Heather Smith commented.

"We are doing our best to make sure Registered nursing is a profession of choice for young Albertans. Our province needs to attract thousands of nurses and we have a part in that."



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)

Executive Members for 2004-2005

President	Michelle Senkow	msenkow@una.ab.ca
1st Vice President	Bruce Chatterton	bchatterton@una.ab.ca
2nd Vice President	Don Richardson	drichardson@una.ab.ca
Treasurer	Ross Pambrun	rpambrun@una.ab.ca
Secretary	Laurie Hermann	lhermann@una.ab.ca

Membership Secretary for 2004-2006

Diane Mak-Kaplan dmak-kaplan@una.ab.ca

Grievance Committee for 2004-2005

Don Richardson drichardson@una.ab.ca
Amy Li ali@una.ab.ca
Colleen Wagner cwagner@una.ab.ca

PRC Committee for 2004-2005

Charlotte Parkinson cparkinson@una.ab.ca
Heather Dean hdean@una.ab.ca
Carrie McDonagh cmcdonagh@una.ab.ca

Occupational Health & Safety Committee for 2004-2005

Diane Mak-Kaplan dmak-kaplan@una.ab.ca
Dawn Black dblack@una.ab.ca
Dianne Schwab dschwab@una.ab.ca

Newsletter/Web Site 2004-2006

Al Perreault aperreault@una.ab.ca

United Nurses of Alberta (Southern Alberta Regional Office)

Suite 300, 1422 Kensington Road NW, Calgary AB T2N 3P9.

Local 115 - (403) 670-9960

(403) 237-2377, (800) 661-1802. Fax (403) 270-5749. Website: <http://local115.una.ab.ca>