



Published by the United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 for our members

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Message from the Secretary

Spring is in the air and politics are everywhere!

Alberta is facing a Provincial Election in the very near future. The writ was dropped this morning. The election will take place on April 23rd.

As one would predict, the political parties are making some very outrageous promises in order to garner support. Everything is on the table, from increases in spending on health care and education to new roads and schools, with no increase in taxes and still a balanced budget! Sounds impossible, it really is! All kinds of shenanigans are being used to gain time on the airwaves and space on the front pages of the major newspapers. Even inappropriate pictures on campaign busses are floated as means to get “free” publicity.

Alberta’s entire history is one of electing governments and re-electing them for many decades to follow. Sadly, this has led to a great deal of apathy in the elective process. Only about 40% of eligible voters cast a ballot, with very few young people becoming engaged. As a result the status quo is maintained, and the apathy increases.

The upcoming election will have a huge impact on all citizens and all levels of public services. The move to commercialization, privatization and deregulation of services from electricity to health care and education is moving rapidly forward with little opposition from the general public who frequently remains in the darkness imposed by the “spin doctors”.

Politicians love to use language to confuse the public. Right wing politicians

love to use phrases such as “we fully support public health care”. What they do not say, is they support the public paying for healthcare, but the private sector delivering that care. That makes a huge difference. Privately delivered care looks at the bottom line, the profit margin, not a high quality of care. Medicare in the US is a prime example, where the costs to the public are the highest in the world, while the outcomes are among the worst.

It is our responsibility as citizens of a democracy to become informed and engaged in the democratic process. Without the voters asking questions and holding politicians to account, new laws are passed that can adversely affect us all. A real example of this is the privatization of seniors’ care in this province. The recent scandal of an elderly woman with dementia who was “dumped” into the ER after her family had paid exorbitant amounts of money for care, is only one of many stories that happen weekly in Alberta. Private facilities have the ability to demand any amount of money from residents and families for care that is often appalling. Now, the present government is vowing to remove the “cap” on the amount such facilities can charge as an attempt to “encourage the private sector to build more such facilities”. Would it not be better for everyone if the government built and maintained these facilities for public use? This is just one of the many issues facing Albertans today. Without the active involvement of the public, these issues just continue to pile up.

With all of the “bafflegab” out there, how can an individual get to the truth? Again, it is by asking the hard questions, face to face with the politicians.

Local 115 is working very hard to break through some of this confusion by sponsoring the delegate forum on

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Vacation approval delayed, pending or 'up in the air'?

At most UNA sites, the Employer must inform you of approval or denial of your requests on the vacation planner by April 30th. You have a right to be able to plan your life with your family.

If there is a delay in approval beyond the deadline, or if the Employer says it is pending, you should consider your vacation denied and initiate a grievance immediately.

If you believe vacation time has been inappropriately assigned, you may also seek to file a grievance. For example, if you apply for a week block vacation and the Employer approves Monday and Tuesday, but not Wednesday, and approves Thursday and Saturday, but not Friday, that is effectively a denial of your vacation. You should grieve this type of denial.

The grievances should be filed within ten days (excluding weekends or named holidays) of April 30 or from the day you were informed of vacation decisions, whichever is earlier.

The Collective Agreement does not provide for a standing, or pending vacation request. If circumstances change such that a previously denied vacation period becomes available, you will need to submit a new vacation request for consideration.

Contact your Local executive or Labour Relations Officer if you have a grievance.

For more details on how vacations should be handled see the Joint Statement on Vacations on the una.ab.ca website linked from the Collective Agreements page.



United Nurses of Alberta

Vacation

Employers cannot pay out vacation

Some health Employers tell nurses that if they do not take their vacation, they will pay it out. But under UNA Collective Agreements Employers are NOT permitted to pay out unused vacation hours.

Vacation is earned one year to be taken in the next year (or in the months after it is earned). The vacation year for most Employers runs from April 1 to March 31 and Employees who do not use up their full vacation entitlement can request in writing that the unused time be carried over to the next year and their request cannot be unreasonably denied.

Employers are not permitted to make arbitrary rules like: no more than five days can be carried over; all unused vacation must be paid out, etc. That would be unreasonable denial.

Employees who have attempted to schedule vacation but have had their request(s) denied, cannot be reasonably denied a request to carry over that vacation time to the next year. Employers could be justified in denying a carry over if an Employee has NOT attempted to schedule or use their vacation hours. Even then, however, the Employer is not allowed to simply pay out the hours.

– Article 17.03 (c) Facility and Community Agreements

Different Rules For Overtime

Employers normally MUST pay out banked overtime hours, unless it is mutually agreed to carry the hours over after March 31.

SPOTLIGHT on your UNA contract



Questions?

Contact your United Nurses of Alberta Representative:

• Provincial Office: (780) 425-1025 or 1 800 252-9394 • Southern Alberta Regional Office: (403) 237-2377 or 1 800 661-1802 • www.una.ab.ca •

UNA MEMBERS URGED TO

OPPOSE ANTI-UNION FEDERAL BILL

A bill now before Parliament that purports to be designed to increase the "transparency" of trade unions is in fact an attempt to make it harder for unions to represent their members effectively and to cost them money.

"Bill C-377 is clearly part of the continuing U.S.-style attack on trade unions and the rights of Canadians to freedom of association that we have already seen in the federal Conservative government's interference in the collective bargaining process at Air Canada and Canada Post," says United Nurses of Alberta President Heather Smith.

"Because of this, we urge UNA members to write or call their Member of Parliament to indicate their opposition to this unfair and anti-union Conservative legislation," she said.

The private member's bill by British Columbia Conservative MP Russ Hiebert - which in fact has the support of the federal Conservative government, including a slick public relations campaign complete with its own web domain - unfairly targets unions with a series of complex and expansive measures that aim to compromise their ability to bargain effectively in contract negotiations and to advocate for their members and the public.

If passed into law, Bill C-377 would not only infringe on Canadians' funda-

mental right to freedom of association, guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but also on our right to privacy and freedom of expression.

Among the effects of this bill - which would apply only to unions, and not other member-supported groups, companies and organizations doing business

with the government, or groups attempting to influence public policy - would be the following:

- Requiring unions to release all financial information to the Canadian Revenue Agency, the minister and, through the minister, to the public
- Making privileged information available to businesses with which the unions are negotiating and a government with a proven track record of interfering in the collective bargaining process. The goal of this provision is clearly to put the 4.3 million Canadians who are union members or in the families of union members at a disadvantage when dealing with corporations and governments.
- Requiring unions to report the amount of time spent by their staff on "political" activities - which are not really political activities at all, but are defined by the bill to encompass all activities not strictly and narrowly defined as negotiating and administering contracts. These reports alone are estimated to result in an additional 17.5 million hours of paperwork each year for Canadian unions.
- Requiring similar public reports on legal activities - a clause intended to force unions to publicly reveal their legal strategies when defending members.
- Making unions report the names, addresses, pay, pensions and benefits of

all union staff.

The bill also includes disproportionate and outrageous financial penalties for failure to immediately obey the law.

Organizations with known anti-union political agendas - such as some employers' associations, lobbying front groups and "think tanks" that are vocally backing the legislation - would not be subjected to similar draconian requirements for "openness."

Unions, which are among Canada's most democratic and open institutions, support transparency - but not measures that are in fact designed to cause harm to working people and middle-class families, and that do not apply to other organizations that engage in lobbying and membership activities.

Like most unions, UNA practices a budget process that is open and transparent to its membership. UNA's budget is introduced and open to scrutiny by members before it is approved by at each annual general meeting.

If the government persists with this legislation, Canadian taxpayers will also be forced to pay for the government's legal efforts to counter the inevitable court challenges to the bill's constitutionality.

"While the federal Conservative government is supporting this bill, we are hopeful that an outpouring of opposition from working Canadians will make them rethink their backing for this effort to hobble unions and attack middle class Canadians," Smith said.

"Instead of attacking hard-working Canadians, their families and their unions, the federal government should be addressing the real problems that working Canadian families face, such as unemployment, poverty, high education costs and access to decent pensions," Smith concluded.

Attention UNA Ward Reps and Activists!

United Nurses of Alberta Local 115

Local 115 thrives on member participation. We are a membership driven organization, and we couldn't be here without you. To thank you for the work you do everyday to keep our Local strong, we are holding an appreciation dinner to honour you. Amanda Freistadt from the Canadian Labour Congress will also be joining us to talk about the topic of Unions: Past, Present, and Future to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Alberta Federation of Labour this year. This is an opportunity to meet fellow UNA activists and your Local Executive team.

The dinner will be held on May 10th. Mix and mingle with hors d'oeuvres begins at 5:30, dinner at 6pm, and the education portion at 7pm. In order to attend, please contact the Local 115 office to register in advance. We have spots for approximately 25 members on a first-come-first-served basis, and preference will be given to those who did not attend the previous appreciation event in January. We hope to see you there!



For more information please contact the Local office at local115exec@una.ab.ca or 403-670-9960

Important dates and deadlines for 2012

Visit the UNA Local 115 website for more Calendar events!

May 2 - Deadline to submit constitutional amendments and policy resolutions to the Local office

May 2 - Deadline to submit your name to enter a draw to attend the South Central District meeting occurring June 7th

May 7 to 11 - Nurses' Week

May 9 - Local meeting to vote for constitutional amendments and policy resolutions

May 10 - Nurses' week booth in FMC SSB lobby and the Nutman location

May 10 - Ward Rep appreciation dinner

May 16 - Deadline to submit constitutional amendments and policy resolutions to Provincial office

May 31 - Deadline to submit nomi-

nations for Provincial negotiating committee

June 6 - Deadline to submit demand setting proposals to the Local office

June 13 - Local meeting to vote for demand setting proposals

June 14 to 16 - Project 2012 celebrations in Edmonton

September 5 - Deadline to submit nominations for voting delegates to Provincial AGM

September 12 - Local meeting to vote local delegates to Provincial AGM

September 14 - Deadline to submit demand setting proposals to Provincial office

October 3 - Deadline to submit nominations for voting delegates to

Provincial Demand Setting

October 10 - Local meeting to vote local delegates to Provincial Demand Setting

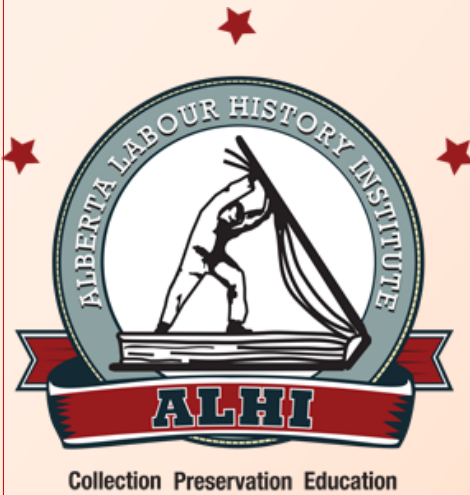
October 23 to 25 - Provincial AGM in Edmonton

November 27 to 29 - Provincial Demand Setting in Edmonton

Note most deadlines end at 16:00 on the date indicated. Contact the Local 115 office for more details on any of these events at local115exec@una.ab.ca or 403-670-9960.

Project 2012

The Alberta Federation of Labour: 100 Years of Struggle and Solidarity



Oil & Lincoln McKay Chair, History, University of Calgary), Paul Moist (National President, Canadian Union of Public Employees), and Bryan Palmer (Canada Research Chair, Canadian Studies, Trent University).

The Alberta Federation of Labour's official centenary celebrations will take place at Fort Edmonton Park in Edmonton on the afternoon and evening of 16 June, and conference attendees are welcome and encouraged to take part in this event as well.

2012 Book Project: A Comprehensive History of Alberta Labour

This book, to be available in early 2012, will be a comprehensive history of workers' struggles and workers' lives in Alberta, from the period of First Nations settlements to the present-day Alberta. The history of the Alberta Federation of Labour will be foregrounded. But this will be far more than an institutional history since it will combine interviews with labour leaders and rank-and-filers with the documentary record and with existing accounts, academic and non-academic, of trade union and working-class history in Alberta. A History of Workers in Alberta will portray Alberta's radical labour past, as well as the challenges labour has faced in different periods. While documenting labour's considerable successes in the province, it will also assess its challenges and failures, including the reasons for its inability to organize certain sectors of workers.

The plan is to have a book that is written in popular language and that motivates workers to think about ways of consolidating and enlarging the labour movement and its influence in Alberta life. At the same time the book will have academic credibility and considerable breadth. Produced as a collaboration of the AFL and the Alberta Labour History Institute, the book's general editor is Alvin Finkel, much-published professor of history at Athabasca University and long-time ALHI executive member. Authors include both academics with ties to the labour movement and AFL staff members. The book will be generously illustrated.

The labour history conference from June 13-16, 2012, is aimed at bringing together labour activists, public history organisations, and history workers to talk about working people's history and the future of labour history. The conference will have several components: 1) story circles featuring Alberta activists on topics such as labour organising and protest from the 1970s to the present, workplace health and safety, women in the trade union movement, and human rights at work; 2) academic papers on labour history in Alberta and beyond; 3) an exhibit area for public history organisations to share their work; 4) a labour history concert featuring Alberta singer-songwriter Maria Dunn; 5) a film festival of labour history movies; 6) a session on the morning of 16 June for labour public history organisations to share practices and ideas. Keynote speakers include Elizabeth (Betsy) Jameson (Imperial

Local 115 Initiative!

Local 115 plans on sending members to the Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI) conference in Edmonton from June 14 to 15. Since we are already up there, we might as well stay another night to take in the celebrations for the Alberta Federation of Labour's centennial in Fort Edmonton Park on June 16th! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Labour in Alberta, we hope you will join us.

For more information please contact the Local office at local115exec@una.ab.ca or 403-670-9960

UNA Local 115 Reaching Out To Members

(Message from the Secretary —
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April 16th at 7 pm, in the FH Auditorium.

We have invited candidates from all political parties to take part in this panel discussion. The delegates will have a few moments for introductory remarks, followed by an opportunity for participants to ask questions and to challenge the responses.

I encourage you to become as engaged and informed as you can. Please come out to the town hall and bring your family and friends. It is only through this and other public debate that we can go into the voting booth knowing that we are fully informed.

Town hall was a great success! See our Facebook page for photos, etc.

Ruth Duffy

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Local 115 Survey



The Local 115 Executive is here to serve you. We also want you to feel engaged with the Local and with UNA. To assist us to meet your needs, we have created a survey in hopes of learning how to better communicate with you and help you become more involved. We appreciate that you may be suffering from survey overload, but please take the time to help us help you. There are only 10 questions and it should take less than 10 minutes to complete. We look forward to your input and feedback.

Find the survey online: <http://svy.mk/local115> Or contact the Local Office to get a paper copy. Contact us at:

local115exec@una.ab.ca or 403-670-9960

**Survey Deadline
June 1st, 2012**

At Your Side, On Your Side



- ⇒ Parking Reimbursement for attending Local meetings
- ⇒ Professional Advocacy Stipends available
- ⇒ Door prizes at Local meetings
- ⇒ Sending member observers to AGM and DSM
- ⇒ Draws to attend South Central District Meetings
- ⇒ PRC Lunch & Learns
- ⇒ Expanded PRC committee and mandate
- ⇒ Ward Rep appreciation nights
- ⇒ Local AGM December 12, 2012 with guest speaker
- ⇒ Project 2012 celebrations
- ⇒ * Some conditions apply, ask the Local 115 Executive for details