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CUPE Joint Bargaining News

LOCAL 79

www.cupelocal79.org

Issue #3

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Early TCEU members: The local has existed continuously since 1917. CUPE Local 79 was chartered in 1942. Between them, the two unions have worked for more than 150 years to build the collective agreements we have today. Now the city is trying to take away those gains .

Bargaining Primer

Collective bargaining is a method of determining conditions of employment through direct negotiations between the union and the employer.

Conciliation is a normal part of the process and a step that has been taken in every round of bargaining with the City of Toronto. An outside person from the Ministry of Labour attempts to help the parties reach a negotiated settlement.

If a voluntary agreement cannot be reached, one or both parties can ask the conciliator to issue a "no board" report. There can be a legal **strike** or **lockout** 17 days later. During those 17 days, the parties can enter into **mediation** and make another effort to reach an agreement.

The vast majority of collective agreements are reached without a strike or a lockout. In fact, CUPE members settle 98% of all collective agreements without a strike.

Recession is no excuse for gutting contract language

Despite what you might read or hear in the media, there is a lot more at stake in this round of bargaining than money. The City has tabled concessions at both Local 79 and TCEU Local 416 bargaining tables with very little justification.

Our employer cannot get away with using the recession as an excuse to gut our collective agreements of the decent working conditions that we have negotiated over almost a century.

The City has tabled concessions on items that do not cost one penny. These clauses in our contracts do, however, work to bring fairness to things like hir-

ing practices and sick time. There are enough concessions on the table that there is "something for everyone."

The conciliation process has now started after your bargaining teams filed their requests on March 27. This is a normal step in the bargaining process and one that may also help us to move past these concession demands.

We believe it is in the best interest of both parties — and the people of Toronto — that we make steady and timely progress toward renewal of our collective agreements. At the same time as we continue to negotiate, however, we have to make prepara-

tions for further action.

Both of our locals have created strike committees, which are coordinating with each other and communicating with you about strike preparations. Picket captain training has begun.

We do not want a strike. We are at the table to achieve negotiated settlements. But, if strike action is necessary, we will be ready!

In solidarity,

Ann Dembinski
President,
CUPE Local 79

Mark Ferguson
President
TCEU CUPE Local 416

City council approves 2009 budget

Toronto City Council approved the 2009 budget on March 31.

The majority of councillors understood the need to maintain and improve services for Toronto residents, especially during difficult economic times.

Some of the new spending

in the budget is for additional staff to help process social assistance applications, which are increasing as jobs are lost.

The issue of a proposed wage freeze for non-union staff was not part of the budget debate. Since the proposal was made, both Local 416 and Local 79

have heard from many managers who are unhappy with the position taken by their association, COTAPSA, supporting a freeze.

For our part, you can count on your unions to continue working for a negotiated settlement at our bargaining tables.