



OFL/FTO

# PRESIDENT'S ACTION UPDATE

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Dec. 13, 2010

CANADA'S LARGEST LABOUR  
FEDERATION ADVOCATING FOR  
ONE MILLION WORKERS

SID RYAN - PRESIDENT



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

National economies and the workers who actually produce real wealth are embroiled in one of the most historic showdowns ever to take place. The greed of financiers and bankers is creating worldwide upheaval. Citizens of Ireland, France, Greece and Portugal are waging huge struggles against what amounts to a take-over of their nation state and its political agenda by the same people and interests that created the 2008 global economic meltdown. Our keynote speaker at the OFL Health & Safety and WCB Conference, Linda McQuaig, noted that in the last few decades, the concentration of income in the United States, Britain and Canada has reached levels not seen since the late 1920s. There's been a coup, a master-

ful one, that has replaced the power and entitlements of citizens with control by the world's elite. We've seen the results of this in corporations' demands at the bargaining table for concessions on wages and benefits. In particular, the pension entitlements we've won over years of bargaining are under attack by employers who want to turn them into nothing more than glorified savings accounts. 900 pensioners and 900 workers, members of USW Local 1005, are on the front lines of this struggle. They've been locked out by U.S. Steel in its attempts to eliminate indexing for pensioners and close the defined benefit plan to new hires. Local 1005 has called on the OFL for its support and solidarity and we're ramping up to do just that. We're organizing a mass mobilization, in Hamilton, for Jan. 29. PLEASE hold the date. We intend to kick off 2011 with this fight at the forefront of our endeavours.

In Solidarity,  
Sid Ryan, OFL President

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## PEARL SAWYER, 2010 RECIPIENT OFL-ODRT AWARD

Congratulations to Pearl Sawyer, UFCW Local 1000A Executive Vice-President, this year's winner of the OFL-ODRT Workers' Compensation and Disability Prevention Rights Award. Pearl had no idea of what was coming. Only midway through OFL President Sid Ryan's remarks did she realize it was her biography that was being recounted. Pearl is an OFL Executive Board Vice-President and, for more than 15 years, has co-chaired both the Health and Safety and WCB Committees. Her work on behalf of her members, the OFL and the labour movement has changed prospects for workers.

Thank you, Pearl, for your tremendous contribution fighting for justice and dignity for injured workers.



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## FINANCIAL APPEAL FOR FARM WORKERS

136 Ontario farm workers have not received pay for over a month and are returning home with empty pockets. The Simcoe area farmer left for the U.S., saying he was bankrupt. These are dire circumstances and we urge all locals to donate as

much as you can to help these low-waged, and now impoverished, workers. Please make checks out to: **Agricultural Workers Alliance**. Send to: 300-61 International Blvd Toronto, M9W 6K4. For further information, Stan Raper, 416-675-1104 x 2232

**OFL: WE'RE G R O W I N G !**

25,832 new members have come into the OFL since January! And there's more great news on the horizon. **CAW** National President Ken Lewenza has called for full affiliation from all Ontario locals, starting Jan. 1. The CAW had previously reaffiliated 15,000 members through its national office. We close out this year welcoming our Brothers and Sisters from the following locals: **CAW Local 1106**, 300 health care workers in Kitchener and area; **CUPE Local 966**, 3034 community and municipal workers in the Peel region; **CAW Local 707**, 3024 production and skilled trades workers at the Ford Assembly Complex in Oakville; **CAW Local 1075**, 424 members at the Bombardier Thunder Bay plant; **CUPE Local 1571**, 473 custodial and maintenance workers with the York Catholic District School Board; **ATU Local 113**, and its 2500 new members; **CUPE Local 132**, 1077 municipal long term care workers in the Durham region.

**SHANNEN'S DREAM**

A powerful campaign to end the Harper government's discrimination against First Nations' children launched last month. OFL Executive Vice-President Terry Downey and OFL Vice-President representing Aboriginal Peoples Joanne Webb joined federal NDP MP Charlie Angus, unions, Aboriginal and community organizations to demand funding and immediate action to eradicate sub-standard school conditions. The catalyst for the campaign was young Aboriginal activist, Shannen Koostachin, who died tragically in a car accident last year at the age of 15. She had never seen a real school and spent all of her primary years in a makeshift portable set up on a badly contaminated brownfield. "It is unforgiveable the federal government continues to allow these sub-standard conditions to exist," says Downey. "No First Nations' child should have to endure these barriers to their fundamental human rights."



**“HELL, NO” LOCAL 1005 TELLS U.S. STEEL:  
Hamilton Day of ACTION Jan. 29**

USW Local 1005's determination to stop U.S. Steel from gutting pensions and benefits of 900 workers and 9,000 retirees is garnering massive support from Ontario's labour movement. Locked out by U.S. Steel Nov. 6, L.1005 members are standing firm against the company's demands that the existing defined benefit pension plan be closed to new employees and replaced with a defined contribution retirement savings plan. The company also wants to end indexing of payments for current retirees. U.S. Steel's actions have put Canada's foreign investment policy in the spotlight. Every promise it made when it took over Stelco in 2007 has been broken. We'll be sending out information regularly and keep you updated.



**HAMILTON DAY OF ACTION JAN. 29. CALLING ALL UNIONS, LABOUR COUNCILS, RETIREES, STUDENTS, COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS. Sponsored by the OFL, CLC, USW Local 1005 and Hamilton and District Labour Council. See flyer.**

### **KILL A WORKER, GO TO JAIL**

Oct. 13, Police 23 Division Superintendent Ron Tavener made the long-awaited announcement that C-45 criminal charges were laid against Metron Construction, its owner Joel Swartz and others associated with the Christmas Eve deaths of four migrant workers. OFL President Sid Ryan was present for the scrum and told the media this was the first step in stopping the carnage in Ontario workplaces.

The next C-45 court date is in two days, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. The next Labour Ministry court appearance is scheduled for Feb. 8, 2011. We'll be at both and will report back on the details.



### **HEALTH & SAFETY AND WCB CONFERENCE HUGE SUCCESS**

More than 500 delegates attended last month's conference organized by the OFL and Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups. It featured top-flight speakers and newsmakers, including: Tony Dean, Chair of Ontario's Expert Advisory Panel; Harry Arthurs, Chair of the WSIB's Funding Review; Terry Ison, Professor Emeritus, Osgoode Hall Law School; Hugh Mackenzie, Economist and Researcher, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Linda McQuaig, journalist and author, and others. The conference was designed to get workers up to speed – fast.

Final recommendations of the Expert Panel - the most comprehensive review of Ontario's prevention and enforcement systems in the past 30 years - are due this week; a new one-year review of the Workers Compensation system has been announced, along with consultations; WSIB legislation and policies also need our attention.



**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:  
DEC. 6, NATIONAL DAY OF  
REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION**

As well as commemorating the 14 young women whose lives ended in an act of gender-based violence that shocked the nation, December 6 represents the day to recommit ourselves to fighting for action from federal and provincial governments. Every minute of every day, a woman or child is sexually assaulted in Canada; each week, 1 to 2 women are murdered by a current or former partner; violence against Aboriginal women continues to mount with 582 missing and murdered Aboriginal women so far; homicide is the #1 killer of women in the workplace. No more words. It's time to act. The OFL is

calling for all legislative and political measures, federally and provincially, to be viewed through the lens of women's safety and economic security.



OFL Secretary-Treasurer Marie Kelly and Executive Vice-President Terry Downey at Dec. 6 Toronto Philosopher's Walk ceremony.

**RETIREMENT SECURITY MEETING WITH THE PREMIER**

Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>, OFL President Sid Ryan, CLC President Ken Georgetti, and Secretary-Treasurer Hassan Yussef met with Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty for discussions on retirement security. We have already had huge success, winning Ontario's support for using the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) as the main vehicle for achieving our goal. We've called for a doubling of benefits to ensure a better minimum pension for all Canadians and a 15% increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement of the Old Age Security pension to lift all seniors out of poverty immediately.

**UNITE HERE LOCAL 75 HYATT HOTEL BOYCOTT**

If you have meeting space booked or room reservations at the Hyatt Hotel, please go elsewhere. A North American boycott action is currently underway. In Toronto, approximately 150 workers, mostly immigrants and people of colour, continue their fight for job security, better health and safety protections and economic parity with other downtown hotels. Delta Chelsea workers just won a strong contract after a two-week strike, followed by agreements at two Toronto-area Hilton Hotels. For more information: [achhabra@unitehere.org](mailto:achhabra@unitehere.org)



**NEW PUBLICATIONS**  
ECP SOLIDARITY  
Sept. 15 - 17, 2010

CLOSE THE 29% GENDER PAY GAP.  
**Don't Make Me work for free**  
Pay Up Now  
**NOW AVAILABLE**  
PAY EQUITY RESOURCE MATERIALS

An Activist Guide For Dealing with Difficult Employers  
**Kill a Worker Go to Jail!**

**CONSULTATION PAPER**  
Ontario College of Trades  
**Transition Board Apprenticeship Ratios**