



**P.6 ONTARIO
PENSION TENSION**



**P.4 ELECTION
TRAINING COMING TO YOU**



**P.10 GAIREY
RETIRES WITH GRACE**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

WINTER 2015



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1



**SID RYAN MEETS WITH
NDP'S ANDREA HORWATH
TO PRESENT THE OFL'S
TOP CAMPAIGNS**

SPECIAL OFL CAMPAIGN
2015 FEATURE INSIDE

**OFL CONVENTION
NOV. 22-27
P.19**

MEET THE OFL OFFICERS

President



Patrick "Sid" Ryan

Secretary-Treasurer



Nancy Hutchison

Executive Vice-President



Irwin Nanda

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR**

The Ontario Federation of Labour represents 54 unions and one million workers. It is Canada's largest provincial labour federation.

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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR**

**VOL. 5 NO. 1
WINTER 2015**



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February 3, 2015

Sisters and Brothers,

@SIDRYAN_OFL



Last summer, working people mobilized during the Ontario Election like never before and, together, we delivered a devastating blow to the anti-worker agenda by shelving Tim Hudak's electoral ambitions. Replicating that mobilization at the federal level to stop the Harper Conservatives in the 2015 election isn't going to be easy, but it couldn't be more important for workers and our families.

While Tim Hudak brazenly tried to bring American anti-unions laws to Canada through the front door, Stephen Harper and his reactionary gang of Tories have been methodically working to implement an even more aggressive agenda through the back door.

Chief among Harper's duplicitous tactics is the use of massive "omnibus" budget bills that bury hundreds of devastating legal and regulatory changes that have reshaped Canada's economy and environmental protections without proper parliamentary examination. His other favourite tactic is stealth. Despite enjoying the powers of a majority government, Harper's Tories have masked major legal changes that could gut workers' rights and union security as private members' bills in order to sidestep the full public scrutiny, debate and all-party consideration that is afforded to government bills.

Harper's consistent strategy is to stifle dissent while reshaping Canada as a low-wage, pro-corporate economy.

The OFL and Canadian Labour Congress have teamed up to make the federal election the central focus for labour organizing in 2015. Despite early speculation that Prime Minister Harper would call a spring election early this year, plummeting oil prices and various other factors now have the pundits and bookmakers banking on an October 19 election. Whatever the case may be, Canadians will be going to the polls in 2015 and the labour movement only has a matter of months to mount a campaign.

Our federal election strategy is the central focus of the OFL action plan featured in the first section in this report. It brings together our campaigns for better pensions, labour law reform and income equality. Beginning in January, we started hosting a series of Election Preparation Conferences that will roll out across the country. In April, the OFL will be partnering with the Ontario Common Front to host a massive Anti-Poverty Assembly that will bring together a labour-community alliance to catapult income inequality into the centre of this election. At the same time, the OFL is focused on a dual stream of initiatives designed to shore up protections for workers through provincial initiatives such as support for an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan that is modeled on the Canada Pension Plan, and better benefits for workers who are injured on the job.

By organizing simultaneously to defeat the anti-union agenda and to elevate standards in minimum wage, childcare, health care, workplace protections and retirement security, the labour movement has positioned itself as the champion of every worker and every family. We won't stop campaigning until every candidate who puts corporate interest ahead of working people and the public interest is drummed out of office.

Delivering on this threat requires the support of every union and every worker. There is no question that "Battleground Ontario" is the key to success for any potential majority government. That means that Ontario workers have a unique opportunity and a special responsibility to be mobilized, united and coordinated in our campaign for a more just and equitable society. Union protections are an important pillar of such a society and together with our community partners we will fight, not just to secure existing collective agreements, but to extend unions rights to every worker.

I am counting on you to join in this fight so we can celebrate an incredible victory for working people at the upcoming 2015 OFL Convention in November.

In solidarity,

Sid Ryan

Sid Ryan, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour

Sign up for the OFL's new e-blast updates by texting the word "OFL" to **647-496-5602**



Follow & Retweet the OFL on Twitter at: **OFLabour** and **SidRyan_OFL**

WORKING TOGETHER

ELECTION PREPARATION CONFERENCES

WILL THE NEXT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

BATTLEGROUND ONTARIO

LABOUR LAUNCHES PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO DEFEAT THE ANTI-WORKER AGENDA

Working people in Canada are facing some of the most difficult challenges in history but 2015 marks a pivotal year of opportunity as well. With a federal election guaranteed to take place no later than October 19, 2015, the CLC and OFL have teamed up with local labour councils to host a series of Election Preparation Conferences across Ontario.

Our plan is to bring together seasoned campaigners and new activists from a wide range of communities and workplaces to share the experience they have while learning the latest and best practices for effective campaigning – from outreach and training to social media. Our goal is to show union members how to mobilize their workplaces and communities to bring out the vote against the negative and powerful politics of greed.

Why Labour needs to be active in the next election

Harper has been on the attack against Canadian social programs, rights and values since his government was elected. Working people were targeted when the Conservatives have unfairly legislated unions back to work, and then tried to undermine unions' ability to organize through legislation such as C-525

and C-377. The federal election is our chance to electorally shift power away from the Conservatives and advance the interests of working people by forming a more egalitarian, inclusive and activist government.

The federal election is our chance to electorally shift power away from the Conservatives.

Will there be an early election?

The unstable economy and the falling price per barrel of oil have put the Conservatives off-balance, and they are desperately hoping for improved economic news before they have to call an election. Decreased tax revenues and the expensive income-splitting announcement will certainly worsen the nation's finances, and have already forced the Conservatives to delay the release of the federal budget in order to try to avoid the bad news.

Recent polls show support for the parties is volatile, and Harper's number have been improving. The NDP and Liberals are focusing on the troubled economy to undermine Harper's public perception as a good fiscal manager.

The list of Canadians who want change is growing; the labour movement is joined by many groups including veterans, Aboriginal people, scientists, environmentalists and peace supporters, doctors and charity leaders, to name a few.

It's time to elect a government for working people

The Ontario Federation of Labour's goals are threefold: to have a new government elected that is supportive of working people and the labour movement, to increase our members' democratic participation in the electoral process, and to use the election to create better public understanding of the labour movement's important contribution to Canada.

The OFL will work with the CLC to put Ontario-specific election research in the hands of our affiliates and activists. This will include tracking of labour-related party announcements, issuing rapid media responses, and tracking public opinion polling.

Just as we did with the dramatically successful Workers' Rights and subsequent #StopHudak campaign, the OFL will create education materials for members, including leaflets, social media graphics, and email

WORK FOR YOU & YOUR FAMILY?

bulletins. Our focus will be on earned media coverage of labour movement issues during the election campaign, and the inclusion our perspectives on the parties' platforms and announcements on major media outlets.

We will also be coordinating affiliates and mobilizing our activists at the grassroots level. The OFL is already working closely with the CLC to organize eight Election Preparedness Conferences where OFL President Sid Ryan is addressing many of the assemblies, and our staff people are training thousands of labour activists on election campaign tactics. Ontario Labour Leaders' meetings will be held in the coming months to forge a coordinated plan and share analysis.

Let's get ready for the campaign

The OFL Federal Election Strategy is already underway with the first very successful CLC-OFL Election Preparedness Conference being held in the province. In the coming weeks we will be calling our unions together to share perspectives on the federal election as it affects Ontario.

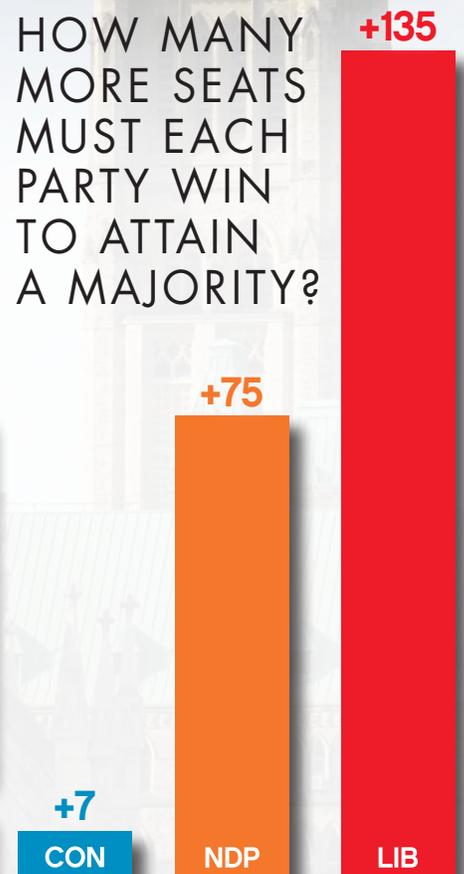
Together, we defeated Tim Hudak in the 2014 Ontario Elections ... and we can do it again!

CURRENT SEAT DISTRIBUTION

| | National | Ontario |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| Conservatives | 163 | 72 |
| NDP | 95 | 19 |
| Liberals | 35 | 12 |
| Others/Vacant | 15 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 308 | 106 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| New seats in 2015 | 30 | 15 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|

HOW MANY MORE SEATS MUST EACH PARTY WIN TO ATTAIN A MAJORITY?





OFL FIGHTS FOR BETTER ORPP IN THE FACE OF BUSINESS OPPOSITION

The campaign for retirement security is ramping up in Ontario this year with the pre-Christmas tabling of the much-anticipated Bill 56, *Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014*, by Associate Finance Minister Mitzie Hunter. Hot on the heels of the bill's first reading, the Ontario Government released a comprehensive Consultation Paper for the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) and, in January, announced the first of the eight public consultations slated to travel across the province. The OFL and CLC have been working in lock-step to carefully craft labour's response to the proposed made-in-Ontario pension plan and to press the government for vital improvements that would ensure the plan is fully compatible with the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). As expected, the ORPP is meeting with stiff opposition from corporations and bankers.

OFL President Sid Ryan heralded the tabling of the Bill and the launch of the public consultation process as an incredible opportunity to bring retirement security to every worker.

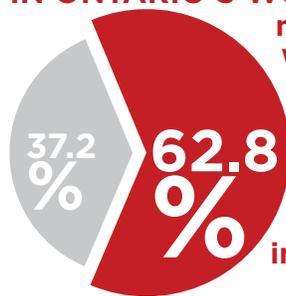
"The proposed ORPP marks the beginning of public deliberations on retirement security that Ontarians have been demanding for over twenty years," said Ryan. "It also exemplifies the utter failure of the Harper government to defend the future of Canadians."

Despite public demand, provincial support and sustained lobbying from Canada's labour movement, the Harper government has repeatedly rejected the call for an expanded CPP. The result is a desperate situation where the 70 percent

of Canadians without a workplace pension can expect to languish on sub-poverty CPP benefits when they should be enjoying their golden years. The average Ontario retiree receives a meager \$6,800 a year from the CPP.

The OFL and CLC signaled their support for the ORPP initiative by presenting the labour movement's pension priorities in an op-ed that ran in the Kingston Whig Standard the

IN ONTARIO'S WORKFORCE
nearly 2/3 of workers lack a workplace pension.



That proportion rises to 3/4 in the private sector.

Peterborough Examiner on the morning that the consultations rolled into town. Ryan travelled to Kingston for the very first consultation where he attended the round-table consultation beside NDP MPP Jennifer French, to call on the government to ensure that the ORPP guarantees pension protection for every Ontario worker.

The labour movement secured an early victory against the corporate lobby when Finance Minister Sousa confirmed that Pooled Registered Pension Plans (PRPPs), which amount to glorified savings plans, would not be deemed comparable to the ORPP. However, the business community

has made it clear that they are going to fight the ORPP at every step of the way and, if they can't stop it, they will push a series of exclusions that would prevent all but a fraction of the three million eligible workers from accessing the program.

At the Kingston and Peterborough consultations on January 22, the local Chambers of Commerce stacked the hall to throw sand on the plan. One employer in Kingston threatened to "lay off some employees and cut donations to charities like the United Way" if the ORPP is adopted. Other interventions from the business community were similarly hostile.

Ryan called out these employers for standing in the way of progress. "It is no surprise that the business lobby and banks don't support the ORPP," Ryan told the packed consultation hall. "The business community has never supported progressive social programs. From universal health care, to childcare, to ending child labour, you have opposed it all. This government must act in the public interest, not corporate self-interest."

The small but vocal opposition from business must inspire the labour movement to redouble our own campaign and mobilize support around our core pension priorities. After all, the Ontario government has one shot to get pensions right and the labour movement is committed to helping them do just that.

The OFL will be releasing a comprehensive written submission on the ORPP in early February. Check the OFL website for updates.

For information about upcoming consultation dates, visit: www.ontario.ca/ORPP

ONTARIO PENSION SHOULD MIRROR CPP

By Hassan Yussuff & Sid Ryan, Guest Columnists

The 17,500 Target workers laid off last week face some tough choices. Many worked part-time, meaning their access to Employment Insurance is limited, and if they do qualify, benefits will be low. Just to make ends meet, some will have no choice but to tap into the group Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) and Deferred Profit Sharing Plan (DPSP) - plans Target said were there for their retirement.

Trade-offs like this are the norm for many Ontario workers today. It's almost impossible to think about retirement - let alone save for retirement - when you don't have a job, are worried about losing your job, or work two or more part-time jobs just to get by. For most low-income workers, a dignified retirement seems entirely out of reach. Even those Ontarians who earn middle or even high incomes worry about living a much lower quality of life in retirement.

Employers, large and small, have been either unable or unwilling to step up and provide the secure, adequate workplace pension plans their employees need. That's left three out of every five Ontario workers - three out of four in the private sector - with no pension plan at work.

This is why the labour movement stands behind the Ontario government's plan for an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. A large-scale publicly-administered pension plan that employers and employees pay into equally is the best way to tackle the retirement security crisis.

Of course we agree with the Premier Kathleen Wynne - and other provincial premiers across the country - that expanding the Canada Pension Plan would make the

most sense for all Canadian workers. But the federal government is refusing to take that step. And without that national plan, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan makes a lot of sense.

Now we just need to see the Ontario government get it right. For starters, this plan must mirror the CPP so that when we do win an expanded CPP, it can be folded seamlessly into the CPP. However, the current proposal for the ORPP would exclude millions of Ontario

Expanding the Canada Pension Plan would make the most sense for all Canadian workers. But the federal government is refusing to take that step. And without that national plan, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan makes a lot of sense.

- Hassan Yussuff & Sid Ryan

workers, making that transition a source of confusion and uncertainty for workers and employers.

Even without an expanded CPP, the ORPP's exclusion of millions of Ontario's workers is unfair and a recipe for red-tape. It excludes, for example, many workers who are in low-paid precarious work, but who do have pensions. Think of those employed in light manufacturing, or the workers - mostly

women - who work in nursing homes and community social services. Some of those workplaces do have pension plans, but average pension benefits typically add up to less than \$250 a month. That pension is better than no pension, but it's not enough to live on, and those workers need the top-up offered by an inclusive ORPP.

As Premier Wynne and her government kick off public hearings on the plan this week, let's hope they truly listen to what all workers stand to lose, and have to say. Let's hope she and her government stand up to employers trying to get out of paying their share, and to banks and insurance companies worried about losing out on fees and some of their profits. Let's hope that, for the sake of all Ontario's workers, Premier Wynne and her government seize this opportunity to set a powerful example for all of Canada by designing a robust, inclusive and comprehensive plan that truly confronts Ontario's retirement crisis.



Hassan Yussuff is the national president of the Canadian Labour Congress, the voice of 3.3 million working Canadians. Sid Ryan is the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, representing one million Ontario workers.



MAKING LABOUR LAWS WORK FOR WORKERS

The window to achieving labour law reform seems to open only once in a generation, and in the coming months the Ontario government is expected to launch a much-needed review of the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* and the *Employment Standards Act*. The OFL has brought affiliates together to consolidate our priorities and develop a collective plan to build the political will to transform these priorities into law.

An Opportunity for Change

In an unprecedented move, Premier Kathleen Wynne posted her mandate letters to her new ministers on the government's website, allowing the public access to the directions and priorities she has set for her cabinet. In her letter to Labour Minister Kevin Flynn (a former New Democrat), she named his priorities as, "Engaging openly with Ontarians to consider actions that will support labour and employment law reforms...[and] Leading a review of Ontario's system of employment and labour standards."

However, everyone is guessing when this review will take place, and what scope it will have. Meetings between the OFL and Minister Flynn have yielded little information to date, suggesting either the plans for the review are being kept secret, or such work has yet to begin.

Either way, with some changes already accomplished through Bill 18, now is the time for the labour movement to press harder to overhaul Ontario's labour laws and employment standards.

The Work is Just Beginning

The OFL met with the Minister of Labour to begin a dialogue on the need for labour law reform and our committee is already rolling up its sleeves on a set of proposals.

The OFL's main goal is to make it easier to organize workers into unions, in order to lift more workers and their families out of poverty. Our plan will focus on card check certification, first contract arbitration, successor rights, worker protection following organizing drives, and other measures.

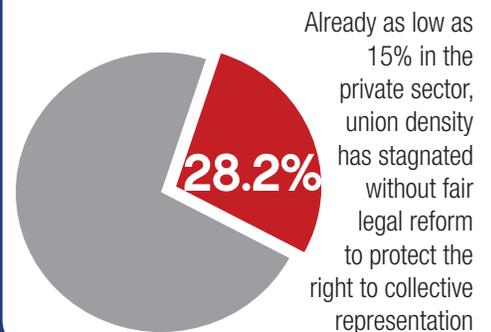
Labour law reform is not glamorous, and it risks provoking a backlash from employers. We will be framing labour law as a long over-due updating of antiquated laws. The new economy requires new rules to protect the growing number of workers that labour in a non-standard work. Protecting vulnerable workers from abusive employers is an important role of the government, and unions are a key part of the solution.

Stay tuned to the OFL website for updates on the government's review process.

Ontario must modernize labour laws to reflect the reality of the modern workplace

The unionization rate in Ontario has flat-lined – remaining virtually unchanged over ten years. In 2012, only 28.2 percent of Ontario's workforce was unionized, beating out only Alberta for lowest union density in Canada. Coupled with the rise of non-standard employment and precarious work, the challenge for unions to organize vulnerable workers is undisputable.

Ontario's Union Density





SOLIDARITY AGAINST INEQUALITY

ONTARIO COMMON FRONT TO HOST ANTI-POVERTY ASSEMBLY

The Ontario Common Front's mandate is to support local campaigns with provincial coordination and resources; garner media attention in local communities through highlighting the negative fall-out of cuts to jobs and social programs, while also providing alternatives; and move the Ontario government to adopt legislation and policies that create greater economic and social justice for everyone.

The Ontario Common Front was formed in the spring of 2012 from a diverse coalition of over 90 community groups and labour unions that represent millions of Ontarians. The coalition has held many assemblies to advance its key goals of reducing poverty and challenging inequality in Ontario – especially austerity policies brought in by the Ontario government. Building upon its successful mobilization at the 2014 People' Social Forum, the Ontario Common Front is planning to bring community and labour activists together to challenge the Liberal government.

The "Solidarity Against Inequality" campaign

will be launched at The Ontario Common Front Anti-Poverty Assembly on April 17-19, 2015 at OISE in Toronto, bringing hundreds of community and labour activists together to develop an action plan against inequality.

SAVE THE DATE

Anti-Poverty Assembly

April 17-19, 2015
at the Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education (OISE)

***Free for all ***

The event will include representatives from marginalized and racialized communities, from anti-poverty groups and unions, to share stories and to build alliances.

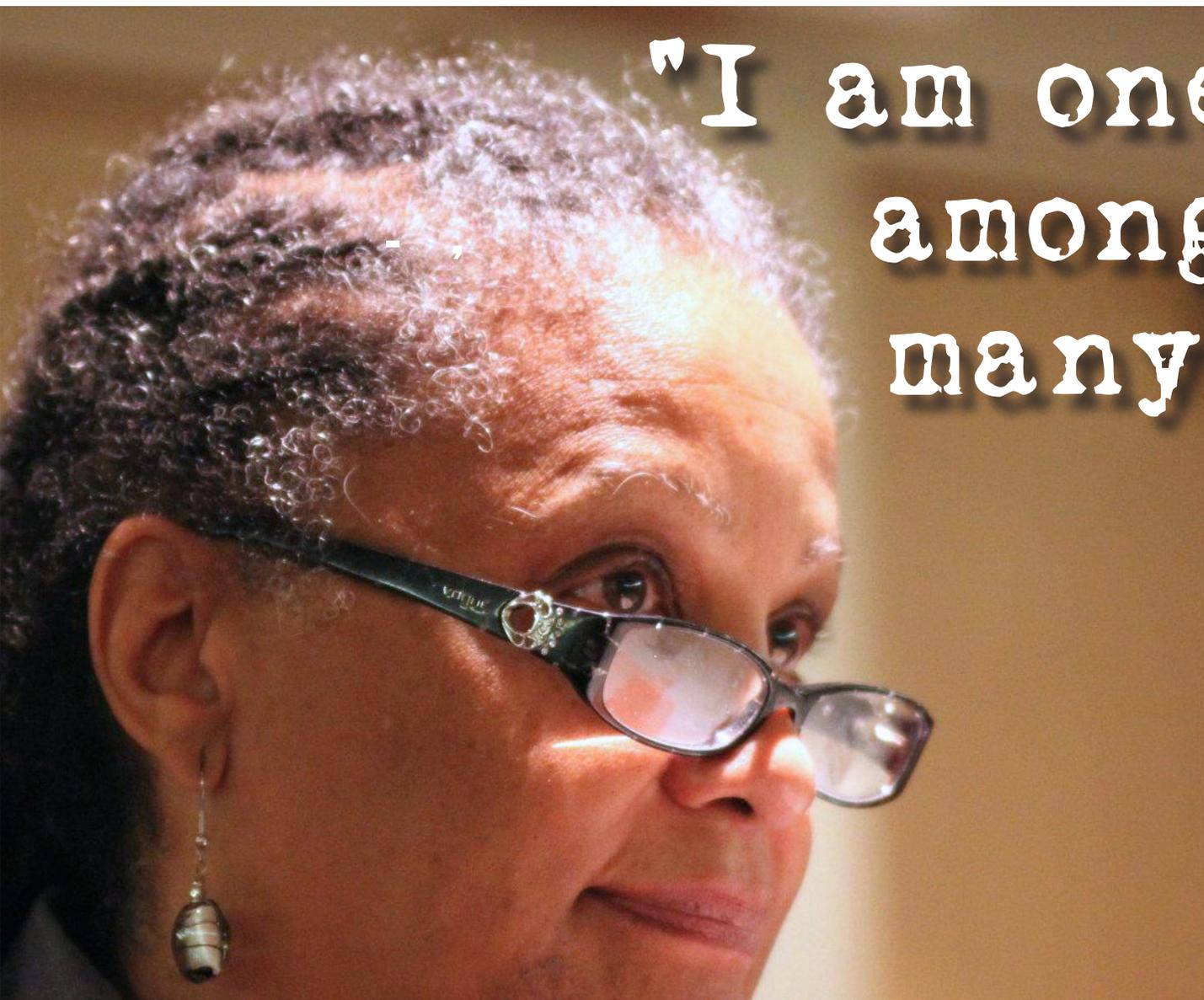
The OFL will update the successful report "Falling Behind: Ontario's Backslide into Widening Inequality, Growing Poverty and Cuts

to Social Programs," released by the Ontario Common Front in 2012. This is sure to earn wide-spread media coverage.

Our outreach will include our affiliates, labour councils, and allies, with special attention on broadening our reach to include new communities.

A key objective of the Assembly is to develop a concrete action plan that will guide the work of the Ontario Common Front. Many new campaigns and initiatives may emerge from this action plan, and will inform the agenda of the OFL Convention in November.

The steering committee for the Assembly is meeting regularly, and outreach is under way. The program of speakers and break-outs is being drafted, and pre-event consultations is being planned. The organizers have identified that follow-up to the Assembly, and fulfilling the action plan that will be created, is a top priority.



"I am one
among
many"

OFL HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTOR JANICE GAIREY RETIRES

The OFL said goodbye and good luck to lifelong union and equity activist, Janice Gairey, who retired this January. While her tenure as an OFL Director was only 11 years long, Janice's career as a labour activist and union organizer spans four decades. However, her ongoing work as the Ontario Chapter President Emeritus of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) and her new position on the Executive of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) guarantee that Janice's labour activism is far from over.

"Janice has been a torchbearer and a fearless fighter for human rights," said OFL President Sid Ryan. "Janice has kept our movement honest and demanded that we practice the principles that we preach."

Janice has been a torchbearer and a fearless fighter for human rights. She has kept our movement honest and demanded that we practice the principles that we preach.

- Sid Ryan, OFL President

With a family with a history of civil rights activism dating back to her great, great grandfather's escape from slavery through the Underground Railroad, Janice's activism is in her blood.

She started her career as an Educational Assistant working with students with developmental delays at the William J. McCordic School in Toronto and quickly moved up the ranks

in her own union, becoming Vice-President of CUPE 1874. Janice went on to work as a Project Coordinator for the Toronto & York Labour Council before settling into her first position with the OFL, as a Regional Coordinator of the Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST) Program.

After funding for the workplace literacy program was cancelled by Premier Mike Harris in the mid-1990s, Janice worked her way through a series of positions in a variety of unions, including SEIU, CUPE, HERE, ACTWU and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council's Labour-Community Services, before she landed back with the OFL in 2003 as the Education Director.

In 2007, Janice became the OFL's Human Rights Director to replace the recently retired



Janice put her heart and soul into learning and understanding our traditional ways and she became a true sister to all of us.

- Joanne Webb, OFL Vice-President for Aboriginal Workers

Janice is as dedicated a friend as she is an organizer. She is an ear to advise, a hug to rejuvenate, and a kindred spirit in the struggle that at times seems so insurmountable.

- Rev. Terrance Melvin
CBTU International President



Before Janice came along, the CBTU Ontario Chapter was walking tall, but when she left, it was jumping sky high.

- June Veecock
Retired OFL Human Rights Director & Former CBTU Ontario President

June Veecock and, like June before her, Janice amplified the OFL's human rights work through her work with the CBTU. As the longest-serving president of the CBTU's Ontario Chapter, Janice earned a reputation within the CBTU International for bringing the largest delegations in the Chapter's history and for bringing forward some of the hardest-hitting resolutions.

However, Janice's equity activism reached far beyond her own community. Under her leadership, the CBTU formed a formal alliance with the Latin American Trade Unionists Coalition (LATUC) and the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance (ACLA) that is sure to long outlast her tenure. She also became a champion of Aboriginal issues and worked closely with the First Nations, Inuit and Metis community.

As a proud mother of five and grandmother of 18, family was an important focal point to Janice's activism and it was the essence of "people first" leadership style. She devoted her attention to developing other activists and supporting them to become the next generation of leaders.

"Janice is a formidable role model and her contributions to the trade union movement and her community shines as a beacon for others to follow.

- Bromley Armstrong, Lifelong Labour Activist & Canadian Civil Rights Leader

A very humble leader, Janice often avoided the limelight. However, on the occasion of her receipt of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council's Bromley Armstrong Human Rights Award in 2012, Janice was asked to deliver some remarks from the podium. Her words spoke volumes about her leadership and added further justification for her receipt of the award. She said, "At this stage of my life, I am doing this work for my grandchildren and for my community and no one in any position of power or privilege is going to stop me."

Read this story online for more quotes from prominent labour leaders about Janice's legacy and impact. www.OFL.ca/index.php/JaniceGairey



WSIB CEO LOSES \$400K BONUS

Under significant pressure from the OFL and the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups (ONIWG), the Ontario Government stripped Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) President and Chief Executive Officer David Marshall of his \$400,000 contract bonus when he was reappointed this January. The Board decision to cut Marshall's contract from five to two years, freeze his pay and cancel his bonus came after a sustained campaign by ONIWG and the OFL to expose Marshall's five year track record of scandals and explicit attacks on injured workers.

In November, the OFL released a bombshell report uncovering millions of dollars in WSIB rebates being awarded each year to companies that had been found guilty of offences that

resulted in workers being killed in on-the-job accidents. The report was the lead story in the Toronto Star and sent shock waves throughout the media that put the WSIB communications department into a tailspin.

The WSIB should scrap its experience rating system in all its forms.

- Joel Schwartz, Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario

"The WSIB is re-victimizing workers and their families by handing offending corporations millions of dollars in premium rebates," said Sid Ryan, OFL President at the media conference. "These CEOs shouldn't be receiving rebates – they should be going to jail."

The OFL report, *Rewarding Offenders: Report on How Ontario's Workplace Safety System Rewards Employers Despite Workplace Deaths and Injuries*, documented a shocking pattern of WSIB payments and served up an indictment of the WSIB's much maligned "experience rating" system. Authored by labour lawyer Joel Schwartz, the report demonstrated that over the three year period between 2011 and 2013, 135 employers who had been convicted of offences under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSa) were granted rebates on their premiums by the WSIB. Astonishingly, 78 of the 135 (almost 58 percent) received nearly \$15

million in rebates in the very same year they had committed their offences.

In one case, a 57-year old electrician employed by Goldcorp Canada Ltd. was killed in a workplace accident in 2011. The company was fined \$350,000 after pleading guilty to not implementing proper safety procedures, but the next year it received a \$2.7 million WSIB premium rebate, an astounding amount seven times higher than the fine for killing the worker.

In full damage control mode, the WSIB quickly countered that a handful of the rebates had been reversed since the OFL accessed the Board's files through a Freedom of Information request, but it could offer no defence or explanation about the scores of other rebates that had been granted.

These scandalous rebates were made through the WSIB's controversial "experience rating" programs, which are intended to provide a financial incentive to employers for improving worker's health and safety. Instead, the program provides incentives for companies to suppress claims. The OFL used the evidence exposed in the report to bolster demands for the WSIB to "scrap its experience rating system in all its forms" and reinvest the resulting savings into workplace health and safety, as well as compensation for injured workers and their families.

Several weeks later, the OFL joined ONIWG for an annual Christmas protest at the Ministry of Labour to demand justice for injured workers. The OFL thrust the WSIB back into the spotlight



with the release of new data demonstrating that under Marshall's watch at the WSIB, workplace fatalities had spiked by 36 percent and reached a five-year high.

Against this backdrop of scandal, the Wynne Government's re-appointment of Marshall came as a blow to injured workers, who had learned only a few weeks earlier that their benefits were slated for a meager cost of living adjustment of only 0.5 percent.

"The Wynne Government has turned its back on injured workers by re-appointing the head of the administration that has trampled on our rights for the past five years," said ONIWG President Eugene Lefrancois.

"Despite this deep-seated sense of betrayal, injured workers can take some solace in knowing that their efforts contributed to the loss of Marshall's contract bonus and job security," said OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison.



OFL TO HOST COMPENSATION CONFERENCE IN JUNE

2015 is the 100th anniversary of Ontario's original "*Workman's Compensation Act*." To mark this historic event, the OFL will be working with partners in the injured worker community to host a Compensation Conference on June 1 and 2, 2015.

The conference will also serve to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Injured Workers Day (June 1) with a rally at Queen's Park planned to launch the Conference.

The conference will focus on renewing the OFL's 2004 "Platform for Change" document and will serve as the basis for intensive lobbying for workers compensation reform.

Details will be announced in the coming months. For more information, contact Laurie Hardwick at 416-571-3087 or LHardwick@ofl.ca



BRAMPTON BOSSES GET JAIL TIME FOR WORKER'S DEATH: OFL CALLS FOR CRIMINAL CHARGES

The OFL applauded the mid-January Ontario Court conviction against furniture retailer, New Mex Canada Inc., for a 2013 workplace tragedy that claimed the life of a worker. The conviction saw a \$250,000 fine levied against the company for *Occupational Health and Safety Act* violations but Justice Jill Fletcher took it one step further when she slapped two of the company's directors with 25-day prison sentences. However, the OFL said there must also be criminal consequences.

"For years now, the OFL has been demanding jail time for employers convicted for putting workers' lives at risk, so yesterday's prison



sentence is music to my ears," said OFL President Sid Ryan. "Workplace fatalities have risen 36 percent over the past five years and the only way to stop this carnage in the workplace is to put negligent bosses behind bars."

This conviction follows an OFL "Kill a Worker, Go to Jail" campaign, launched shortly after the Christmas Eve tragedy in 2009 that shocked workers across the country. The collapse of a swing stage at a west Toronto high-rise resulted in four workers plunging 13 stories to their deaths and a fifth was seriously injured. In 2012, Metron Construction received Ontario's first criminal conviction for workplace negligence and a fine of \$750,000.

However, no Ontario employer has ever been sentenced to serve jail time for such a criminal conviction. The OFL will continue to campaign for killer bosses to go to jail.

ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION PROTESTS HOSPITAL CUTS AT QUEEN'S PARK

The OFL joined the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), affiliates and thousands of community supporters at a mass rally at Queen's Park on November 21, 2014 to protest deep cuts to Ontario hospitals.

Since winning a majority last summer, the Wynne government has been forging ahead with the most aggressive plan ever to strip local community hospitals of services through cuts and privatization. The OHC issued a province-wide call to mobilize against the cuts, arguing without exaggeration that community hospitals as we know them are being totally dismantled.

Despite the deepest hospital cuts of all peer jurisdictions in Canada and internationally, the Ontario government has implemented a plan to systematically closing down outpatient



services: physiotherapy, labs, pain clinics, fertility clinics and so on. Their next step is to bring in private clinics and to cut as many surgeries and diagnostic tests from local public hospitals as possible.

The OHC arranged for hundreds of people to

be bussed to the rally from across the province to join thousands more from the GTA. Armed with a larger-than-life puppet of Premier Kathleen Wynne, the protesters descended on Queen's Park to demand a rollback of corporate tax cuts and greater investment in hospitals and community care.

OHC Executive Director Natalie Mehra called for Ontarians from every walk of life — local businesses, seniors, care workers, health professionals, students; all of us who care about equal access to health care based on need not wealth — to fight to save our

community hospitals.

"Our communities have struggled and fundraised and volunteered and built our local hospitals for more than a century," Mehra said. "And we must never let them be dismembered and hived off for private profit."

OFL ABORIGINAL GATHERING ATTRACTS 100 INUIT, MÉTIS, FIRST NATIONS & ALLIES



The OFL and its affiliates have a long history of activism and lobbying with the Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit peoples. The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) held its 3rd Aboriginal Educational Gathering from November 28 to 30, 2014. The Gathering reached out to labour and community activists from the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, as well as supporters.

Nearly 100 delegates from as far away as Winnipeg, Manitoba met to develop a collective plan for action-oriented change, while finding peace and solace in traditional medicines and spiritual teachings.

Participants attended facilitated sessions on "Self Identification," "Traditional Medicines" and "Political Action." All of the OFL Officers attended the event and President Sid Ryan welcomed delegates with remarks addressing the OFL's action and commitment to working alongside the Aboriginal community to advocate on issues like the Stolen Sisters, Line 9, boiled water alerts and ongoing land and resource disputes.

A special thanks to the OFL's placement student from York University, Angela Perna, for creating the "Self-Identification" teaching session and, above all, the OFL Aboriginal Circle for coordinating such an amazingly successful event.

Featured here: OFL Vice-President Representing Aboriginal Peoples Joanne Webb and Executive Vice-President Irwin Nanda.



The OFL's #Out4Equality Conference drew over 80 LGBTQ activists, union leaders and allies from November 20 to 22 in Toronto. They came together at the Ryerson University Student Centre to empower, support and mobilize LGBTQ members in our workplaces and communities across Ontario.

The conference began with participants joining hundreds of community members for the annual

Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil at the 519 Church Street Community Centre in Toronto. This annual event marked and commemorated trans members of our communities who have been murdered for being who they are. This event served as a memorial, a protest and an opportunity for reflection.

OFL President Sid Ryan opened the #Out4Equality Conference, outlining the

leadership role unions have played in advancing equality rights. Brother Ryan's remarks were followed by an interactive panel discussion with union leaders about the impact that austerity cuts have on equality.

A powerful keynote address was delivered by Sister Junic Wambia, a lesbian from Uganda, who related her experiences in the struggle to survive as an LGBTQ person in her country. She shared stories of secret meetings, emergency hotlines, hidden safe houses, buddy systems for travel, a constant fear of arrest, public stonings, police beatings, pseudonyms, torture by inmates, and worse. She urged us to continue to write letters, to pressure governments to push for change, and if possible, to support organizations including Sexual Minorities Uganda and the Rainbow Railroad.

OFL Executive Vice-President Irwin Nanda wrapped up the conference with the commitment to bring the conference recommendations forward as a plan for action.

The OFL's Solidarity and Pride Committee would like to extend a thanks to Brother Pablo Godoy, OFL VP Workers of Colour; UFCW for his truly amazing Spoken Word Summary.

FIFTH ANNUAL MARCH 8TH PROJECT OFL POSTERS & PINS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2015

For over 100 years, March 8 has been recognized around the world as International Women's Day (IWD) and has been marked as a day to celebrate women, reaffirm women's rights and strive for full equality. As part of its celebration of IWD, the OFL has produced a beautiful poster and pewter pin that can be ordered by unions and community groups.

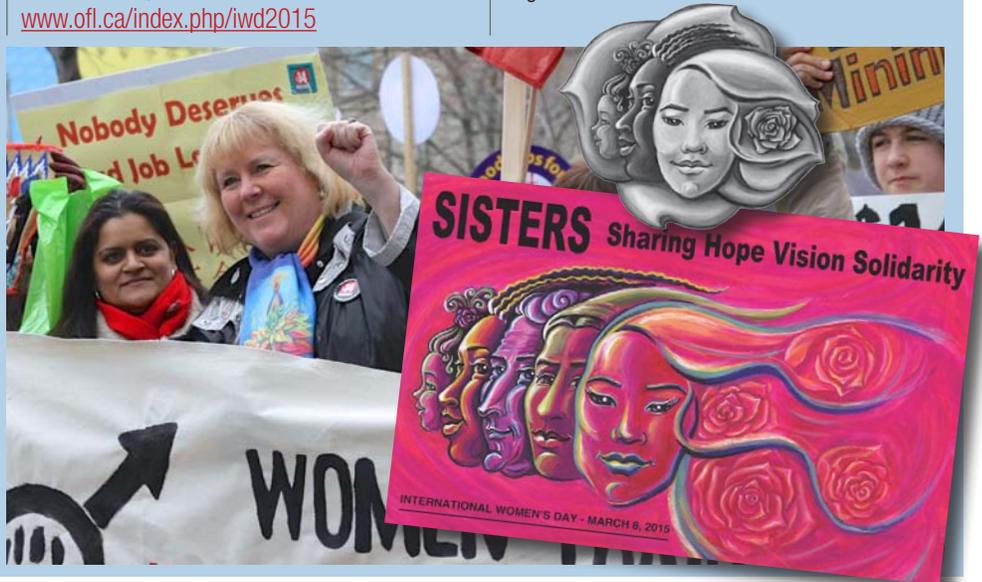
The OFL's 2015 March 8th Project materials were designed by acclaimed artist Giovanna Colalillo and carry an empowering theme that celebrates sisterhood and solidarity within the labour movement – **SISTERS Sharing Hope Vision Solidarity**.

"In every workplace and in every community, women are bonding together to put equity on the agenda and to lift our sisters within our unions and in our communities," said Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison. "We aren't going backwards! This poster is bold and unequivocal. There is no doubt that women workers will be proudly showing sisterhood solidarity for years to come."

Unions or community groups that ordered more than 500 pins before the February 10 deadline will have their logo added to this year's poster. Those who missed the deadline can still order posters and pins, by submitting the form on the OFL website: www.ofl.ca/index.php/iwd2015

The pins are sold at cost, plus a \$0.25 contribution that will be donated to the Equal Pay Coalition.

Stay tuned for more information on International Women's Day events being organized in cities and towns across Ontario.



THE OFL TEAM

OFL DIRECTORS

Joel Duff, Communications Director
Vern Edwards, Health & Safety Director
Laurie Hardwick, Organization Services Director
Carrol Anne Sceviour, Human Rights Director
Antoni Shelton, Director of Government Relations & Liaison to the President
Elizabeth Smith-VanBeek, Director of Administration
Steven Staples, Director of Research and Education

OFL & ODRT STAFF

Judy Chow, Executive Secretary (Secretary-Treasurer & Administration)
Sue Fratric, Secretary / ODRT Administrative Assistant
Paulette Hazel, Secretary
Brian Morgan, DocuTech Operator
Kathy Neumann, Executive Secretary (President, Exec. V.P. and Exec. Director)
Ethiraju Ramachandar, ODRT Secretary / Bookkeeper
Devika Singh, OFL Secretary/Bookkeeper
Sylvia Stewart, Secretary

ODRT DIRECTORS

Colin Argyle, ODRT Director, Promotions, Supply & Services
Vern Edwards, Health & Safety Director
Clarence MacPherson, ODRT Director, Operations and Communications

JOIN THE BEER CAN BOYCOTT

The OFL swung support behind the United Steelworkers (USW) shortly before Christmas for a nation-wide beer can boycott designed to end a 17-month standoff with Crown Metal Packaging in Toronto.

Despite doubling its profits in 2012, the U.S.-based company that makes cans for all the major beer companies and many craft brewers, rewarded its most productive workforce with massive concessions, including up to 42-percent wage cuts for new workers, that triggered a bitter and protracted strike.

In the months that followed, Crown has attempted to break the union by recruiting replacement workers to operate the Toronto plant. It has also made new, objectionable proposals to the striking employees, most notably replacing many of them even if a settlement is negotiated.

In other words, many of the workers would have to agree to give away their jobs as a condition to settle the labour dispute.

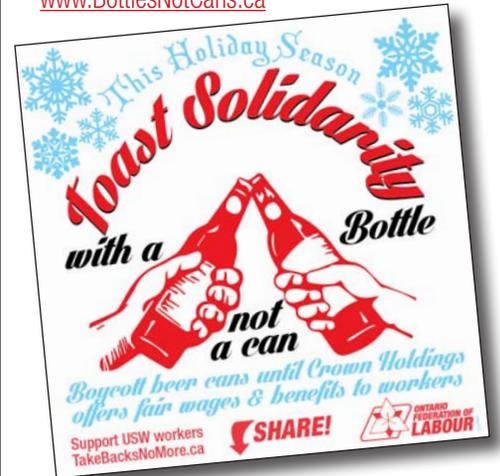
In November, the USW ramped up their campaign by calling on consumers to buy their holiday brews in bottles, not cans.

The OFL gave the campaign a social media boost with sharable holiday-themed images to promote the boycott online and helped to mobilize for a series of mass leafleting days-of-action at local beer and liquor stores across Ontario.

Support from affiliates and the public in the coming weeks will play a vital role in winning a prompt and fair settlement to this strike.

For more information, visit

www.BottlesNotCans.ca



OFL STATEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

During this reporting period, the OFL issued the following statements:

November 20:

Transgender Day of Remembrance

December 3:

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 6:

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

December 10:

International Human Rights Day

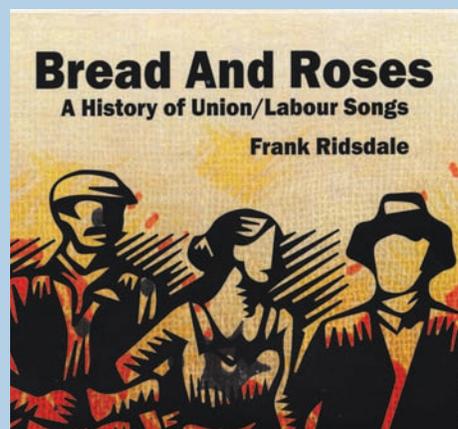
December 18:

International Migrants Day

February 1:

Black History Month

LONDON LABOUR SINGER BELTS OUT CLASSICS



A collection of traditional labour songs released in 2014 by award-winning roots rocker, singer-songwriter, Frank Ridsdale, brings new life to timeless classics. With his band of London, Ontario musicians, Ridsdale is "recreating and honouring the original spirit of the troubadours and folk heroes of the early labour movement like Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie," writes London Free Press columnist James Reaney. However,



this collection features romping recordings of recent labour songs as well, including Billy Bragg and even a Ridsdale original. "We need the inspiration that workers and unions got from hearing and singing those songs again today," said Ridsdale.

The album was backed by Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union.



VICTORY! CUBAN 5 ARE FREE AT LAST

On December 17, the government of the United States did what it repeatedly swore it would never do: it freed the last of the Cuban 5. After 16 years of public outcry against their unjust imprisonment, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Gerardo Hernández were finally released from U.S. jails to join René González and Fernando González, who had already served their full prison terms.

This historic pivot in U.S. policy was reportedly part of prisoner exchange for Alan Gross, a subcontractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development, who was arrested in 2009 for spying for the U.S. and supporting insurgents.

The Cuban 5 have been long celebrated as heroes of the revolution and became icons of the anti-imperialist movements in the Americas. They have always maintained that they were unjustly arrested for monitoring violent right-wing Cuban exile groups responsible for American-backed attacks inside Cuba. The OFL and Canadian labour unions have long supported the worldwide campaign to “Free the Cuban 5,” a movement that René González termed “the jury of millions.”

Cuban President Raúl Castro cautioned that opening prison doors “does not mean the heart of the matter has been resolved” as long as the

“economic, commercial and financial blockade, which causes enormous human and economic damage to our country.”

President Barack Obama took to the airwaves in December to announce that Washington and Havana were resuming diplomatic relations and admit that the U.S. has tried and “failed” for more than five decades “to push Cuba toward collapse.”

While the release of the Cuban 5 is only one step, it represents an incredible victory for the social movements that came together to support the cause of freedom and to demand a better world. For now, let labour join the Cuban people is chanting: “Volvieron! They have returned!”



ONTARIO UNION RETIREES GET ORGANIZED

GUEST COLUMN BY OFUR PRESIDENT SUZANNE CLANCY

In 1993 the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR) affiliated with the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC). For much of the last 20 years, it has been a rather hands-off relationship, with an OFUR delegate attending twice yearly national meetings and sending two delegates to CURC biennial conventions. That all changed in the spring of 2013 when CURC National decided that all CURC Area Councils

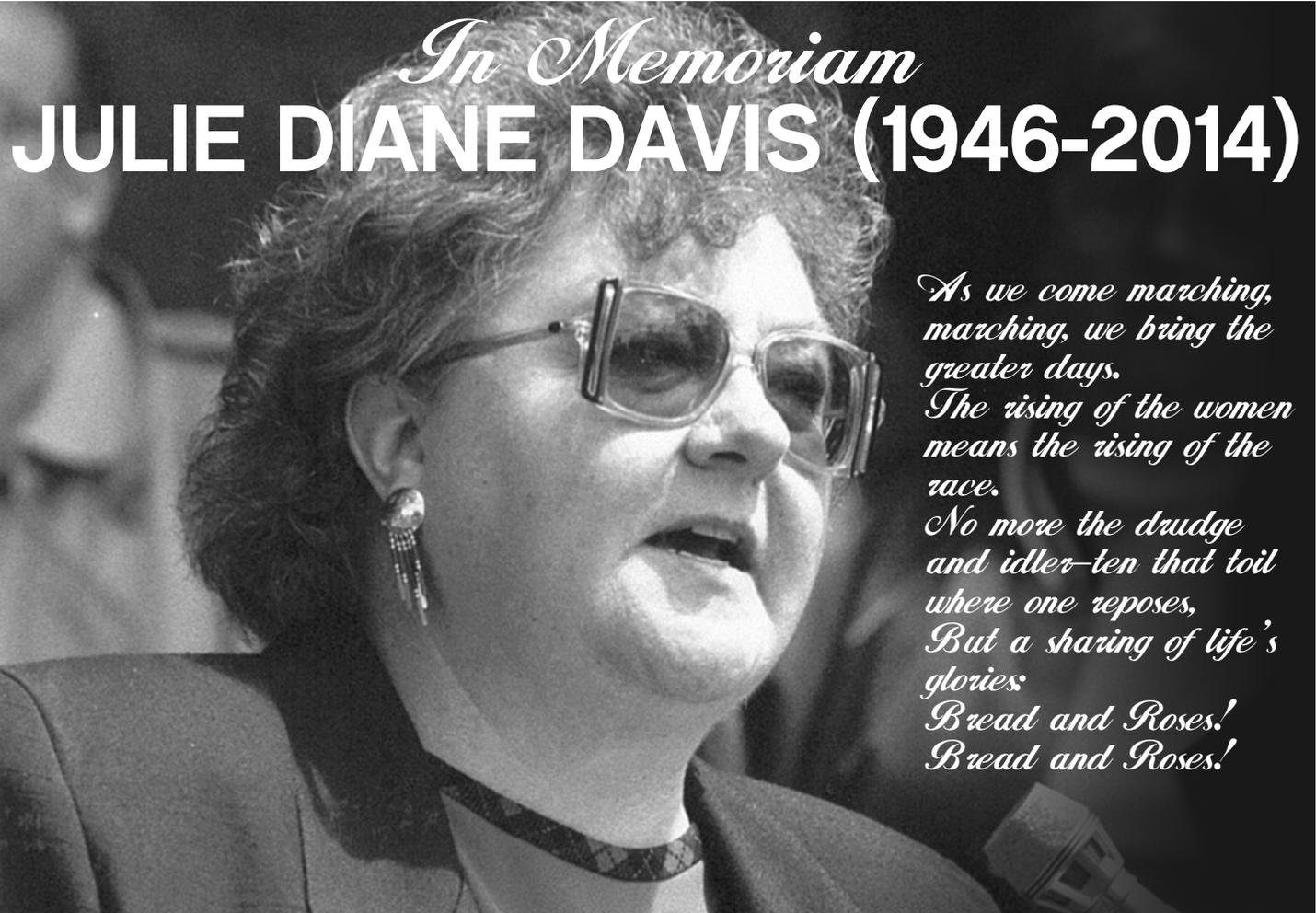
would now become the responsibility of their respective provincial federations. This was done in the hope of relieving some of the workload of the overburdened all-volunteer CURC executive. Several of the current OFUR Council members are pulling double-duty as presidents of their CURC Area Councils, while also working hard at increasing membership, raising awareness of retiree issues and lobbying for change. Each Area Council has its own set of bylaws and holds regularly scheduled membership meetings.

Over the last two years, CURC Area Council members, under the leadership of OFUR, have

held fundraising events, community meetings and presented pre-retirement courses in London, Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa. They have also attended numerous demonstrations and lobbied local, provincial and federal politicians of every stripe.

In early January, OFUR mailed annual renewal notices to all its affiliates. Support from retiree groups across the province is vital for OFUR and the Area Councils to continue their great work. OFUR is calling on each affiliate to encourage their retirees to join OFUR or to renew their affiliation and stay active in the struggle.

For more information, contact OFUR President Suzanne Clancy at (905) 547-6207 or sclancy3@cogeco.ca



In Memoriam
JULIE DIANE DAVIS (1946-2014)

*As we come marching,
 marching, we bring the
 greater days.
 The rising of the women
 means the rising of the
 race.
 No more the drudge
 and idler—ten that toil
 where one reposes,
 But a sharing of life's
 glories
 Bread and Roses!
 Bread and Roses!*

On November 14, 2014, workers across Ontario were saddened to learn of the passing of our adored labour leader and trailblazer for women's rights, Sister Julie Davis. She was 68 years old.

Born in Brantford, Ontario, Julie Davis' commitment to improve the lives of working people began in the 1970s as a steward for OPEIU. Later, she steadfastly served the members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees from 1974-1986, as a Staff Representative, Health Care Sector Coordinator and finally as the Managing Director Regional Services and Organizing.

It is impossible to name all of Julie's many accomplishments. During the 1980s when the women's movement was making great gains and challenging gender discrimination and inequality, Julie was at the forefront of the struggle.

She inspired a generation of women labour activists when she broke through the barriers of the traditionally male-dominated labour movement in 1986 to become the first woman officer elected to the Ontario Federation of

Labour. She served as the OFL's Executive Vice-President from 1986 to 1988 and Secretary-Treasurer from 1988 to 1995.

"I look back on my years working with Julie at CUPE with fondness and admiration for her dedication, compassion and integrity," said OFL President Sid Ryan. "Today, as the President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, I see her influence everywhere, especially the strong commitment to diversity and representation of equity-seeking groups in our campaigns, and around the table of our own Executive Board."

Her commitment to social justice extended into politics, where she became active in the Ontario New Democratic Party. She was elected President of the Ontario NDP, and chaired the NDP's historic 1990 election campaign that swept the party to power under Leader Bob Rae. Afterward, Julie explained their victory in simple terms: "people were fed up and the NDP provided the alternative."

Julie's ties to labour, human rights, and the NDP remained strong throughout her life. She joined the board of Ed Broadbent's

International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, and served as the labour representative on the NDP's federal council during Jack Layton's leadership.

"Julie was adamant that social justice could be achieved only when trade unionists joined forces with other advocates and she was instrumental in organizing and sustaining countless coalitions. She also believed and supported grass-roots mobilization and encouraged many activists in and out of the labour movement in their work," wrote CUPE's Fred Hahn and Candace Rennick in tribute to her legacy.

In 1988, Julie was awarded with the YWCA's Women of Distinction Award and in 1995 she received an Honorary Fellowship (Politics and Public Administration) from Ryerson Polytechnic University.

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Labour, our officers and 54 unions representing 1 million workers in Ontario, the OFL extended heartfelt condolences to Julie's family, and all of the Sisters and Brothers in our movement whose lives she touched.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB: BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

Events will be held across Ontario throughout the month of February to recognize Black History Month. Contact your union to get involved in local activities.

FEB. 27-MAR. 1: OFL EQUITY PLAN OF ACTION 2015 EDUCATIONAL

The annual OFL equity plan of action educational will bring together the OFL equity vice-presidents, committee members and community allies. The Educational will be held at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, from February 27 to March 1.

For information, contact Paulette Hazel at 416-443-7667 or PHazel@ofl.ca

FEB. 14: WOMEN'S ANNUAL MEMORIAL MARCHES

This February 14, the OFL is calling on affiliates and activists to join in Women's Annual Memorial Marches and demand a national inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. Community marches are listed at: womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/national

MAR. 8: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Events will be held across Ontario around March 8 to recognize International Women's Day (IWD). Contact your union to get involved in local activities.

APRIL 17-19: ANTI-POVERTY ASSEMBLY

The Ontario Common Front and the OFL will be hosting a province-wide Anti-Poverty Assembly in Toronto from April 17-19 to draft a labour-community campaign against poverty.

Visit OFL.ca and WeAreOntario.ca for details.

APR. 30: OFL'S LABOUR HONOUR ROLL NOMINEES

Each year, the OFL adds five retired or deceased trade unionists to the OFL Labour Honour Roll. These are activists who made a significant contribution to the trade union movement. The deadline for nominations is April 30.

For information, please contact: Sylvia Stewart at 416-443-7677 or SStewart@ofl.ca

MAY 1-3: OFL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The OFL Women's Leadership Summit will be held at the UNIFOR Family Education Centre, Port Elgin from May 1 to 3, 2015.

For information, please contact: Sue Fratric at 416-441-2731 or SFfratric@ofl.ca

MAY 30: SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY ACTIVISM AWARDS

The Ontario Common Front is inviting community and labour allies to recognize

community activists at the Sagan Banquet Hall (7180 Edwards Blvd, Mississauga, Ontario).

For information or tickets, contact Paulette Hazel at 416-443-7667 or PHazel@ofl.ca

JUN. 1-2: OFL/ONIWG COMPENSATION CONFERENCE

The OFL and the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups will mark 2015 as the 100th anniversary of Ontario's original "Workman's Compensation Act" with a Compensation Conference on June 1 and 2, 2015.

For information, please contact: Laurie Hardwick at 416-347-9732 or LHardwick@ofl.ca

SUMMER: PRIDE EVENTS

Starting in June and running through the course of the summer, events will be held across Ontario to recognize LGBTQ Pride. Contact your union to get involved in local activities.

NOV. 22-27 - OFL 13TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

The 13th biennial convention of the OFL will be held at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel from November 22-27, 2015.

DEADLINE FOR RESOLUTIONS: October 26
DEADLINE FOR CREDENTIALS: November 9

Stay tuned to the OFL website for more details: OFL.ca/index.php/convention-2015

LABOUR & HUMAN RIGHTS DATES

| | |
|---------|--|
| Feb | Black History Month |
| Feb 20 | World Day for Social Justice |
| Mar 8 | International Women's Day |
| Mar 10 | Bottle Water Free Day |
| Mar 21 | International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination |
| Mar 27 | Anniversary of the OFL (1957) |
| Apr 8 | Day of Pink (Anti-Bullying Day) |
| Apr 22 | World Water Day |
| Apr 23 | Anniversary of the CLC (1956) |
| Apr 28 | Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job |
| May | Asian Heritage Month |
| May 1 | May Day |
| May 17 | International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia |
| Jun 1-7 | Sexual Harassment Awareness Week |
| Jun 1 | Injured Workers' Day |
| Jun 12 | World Day Against Child Labour |
| Jun 21 | National Aboriginal Day |

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Spring Training:
May 3 to 8, 2015
(OFL Building, Toronto)

Conference Seminar (Level III):
March 8 to 13, 2015
(Bayview Wildwood Resort, Port Stanton)



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