



CTV INTERVIEW WITH  
SISTERS FROM COPE  
LOCAL 96



COPE LEADERS  
GETTING READY TO  
MARCH WITH LABOUR



COPE 527 SISTERS AT  
THE OFL RALLY FOR  
DECENT WORK & PAY

# NEWSLETTER



## OFL RALLY FOR DECENT WORK & PAY

Welcome back to day 2 of the COPE Ontario Annual General Meeting. Thank you to all our members who joined us at the OFL rally for Decent Work and Pay! We were excited to have so many participants available to represent COPE Ontario here in Toronto for such a very important cause - we need decent work and pay now. A \$15 minimum wage is just the start of what we need to see happening in Ontario. A living wage for Toronto is considered to be \$18.52 an hour according to Living Wage TO, and \$16.50 an hour in Thunder Bay according to the Lakehead Social Planning Council, for two different geographic comparators. As former National President Simon Berlin highlighted in his opening remarks, the politicians, journalists and business owners opposing the \$15 minimum wage increase are making far more than \$15 an hour themselves. It is time for the government to stand up and demand that working people live above the poverty line. We were proud to march for Decent Work and Pay with our OFL & CLC brothers and sisters. End the precarious work cycle and demand \$15 and Fairness now!

The AGM resumed after the rally with a fantastic COPE Ontario Panel leading an informative evening of conversation and discussion around precarious work, marginalized workers, fair wages, decent work and the OFL campaign. Thank you to our panelists and moderator for their opinions, experiences, research, hard work and contributions.

## *Important Legal Changes to Combat Sexual Harassment, Glenn Wheeler*



Important legal changes to combat sexual harassment at work and elsewhere are now in effect. Under Bill 132, employers had until September 8, 2016 to update policies and procedures to deal with sexual harassment at work.

The changes affecting employers are contained in amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), one of several laws being changed under a provincial government initiative. According to stats provided by the province, “28 per cent of Canadians say they have been on the receiving end of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours or sexually charged talk while on the job.” According to the province, “sexual assault victimization rates are five times higher for women under the age of 35.”

Bill 132 amends OHSA to expand the definition of “workplace harassment” to include “workplace sexual harassment,” which includes vexatious and unwanted comments against a worker because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, as well as sexual solicitation and advances.

Furthermore, an employer is required to put in place policies and procedures so that a worker who believes he or she has been the victim of workplace sexual harassment can report it and have the complaint investigated. Identifying information about the individuals involved will not be disclosed unless it is necessary to provide a remedy or if required by law.

Employers will be required to review the policy at least once a year and educate workers about the contents and procedures. If there is a Joint Health and Safety Committee, it will assist in the development of the policy and procedures. An inspector can order an investigation to be carried out by an external investigator at the expense of the employer.

Because the OHSA provides minimum benefits for Ontario workers, unions can rely on the new provisions as if they were contained in the collective agreement. In other words, even if your collective agreement does not contain policy and procedures covering sexual harassment, you can rely on the OHSA as if it was part of your agreement.

## *Welcoming our 30 New Members at Saugeen Credit Union, Bert Poulin*

It is with great pleasure that we welcome 30 new members from the Saugeen Credit Union locations in the Bruce Peninsula to COPE Ontario.

In February 2015, during negotiations with Northern Credit Union (NCU), we discussed upcoming credit union mergers with the employer. After some lengthy discussions, it was agreed that any new employees in future mergers would fall under the COPE Agreement at Northern Credit Union because of our recognition and jurisdiction clause.

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, the employer notified us that the merger was official and that Northern Credit Union had acquired the Saugeen Credit Union locations in four different municipalities. We immediately requested a meeting with NCU to discuss the integration of these new members into our existing Collective Agreement. We successfully negotiated a Letter of Understanding (LOU) that would protect and benefit these new members during the transition period, as well as providing any members who decided to terminate their employment with a fair severance package.

This LOU also included site visits to all the locations, allowing us to meet with the employees and introduce them to our Union. They were able to voice their concerns and issues and speak with me, all during working hours. We also scheduled a membership meeting that evening as a “Meet and Greet” to discuss their fears, concerns and what COPE could provide for them. This was a huge success with all but one new member unable to attend. The new site steward was also elected that evening.

I would like to welcome our new Sisters and Brothers to our great union and I hope that they grow with us as strong activists within COPE and in the broader labour movement.

