



# Bargaining Bulletin

## CAW Local 555, Unit 1

### Issue #1 March 20, 2009

#### Meet the team...

Barry Diacon  
Unit 1 Chairperson

Angie Bijak  
Unit 1 Workplace  
Committee

Beth Couchman  
Unit 1 Workplace  
Committee

Chris Due  
Unit 1 Workplace  
Committee

Helen Murray  
Unit 1 Workplace  
Committee

Ron Smith-  
CAW National  
Representative

Matt Root  
Local 555  
President

Mike Groom  
Local 555  
Executive Assistant

#### Greetings!

Welcome to the first issue of our CAW Local 555 Unit 1 Bargaining Bulletin!

During the bargaining process, your bargaining team is committed to keeping all unit 1 members as informed as possible.

In future issues we will be making announcements and passing along any developments that may occur during the bargaining process.

#### Pension Consultations

On Friday, March 20, Barry Diacon represented Local 555 at a public consultation in Toronto on the pension system. This was sponsored by the Federal Department of Finance: <http://www.fin.gc.ca/n08/09-023-eng.asp> Although the topic was mainly about pensions in federal jurisdiction, any changes in that area would set precedents for the provincial jurisdictions. Many labour groups and pensioners attended to express their concerns about the proposals which would weaken pension funding rules and potentially enrich corporations at their expense. Four panelists made formal presentations, one of which was by Sym Gil, the Director of Pensions and Benefits with the CAW. The Canadian Labour Congress calls for:

1. A federal system of pension insurance

2. Changes to federal bankruptcy laws that put workers' interests first

3. A doubling of Canada Pension Plan

benefits, and a 15% increase to public Old Age Security pensions.

Barry made a contribution from the floor to observe that the current deficit situation of many university pension plans originated with a Revenue Canada rule which prohibited employers from contributing to their Pension Plans if the surplus was more than two times the current service cost. This was the legal underpinning of the contribution holidays which lasted at McMaster from 1988 to at least the year 2000. McMaster and other universities became accustomed to budgeting without having to account for pension contributions. The accumulated contribution holidays and pension surplus distributions inevitably came home to roost with the universities lately wondering how they can afford those pension contributions which they at one time had no problem budgeting for. The limit on contributing to a Pension Plan which is in surplus was done to limit the hiding of profits. Barry observed that this rule made no sense for non-profit organizations like universities. Other contributors made similar comments that allowing more contributions in good times would have better prepared the Pension Plans for the current financial crisis.

CAW  TCA  
Local 555



**Reminder:**  
**Local 555 General Meeting**  
**Friday, March 27, 2009 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**  
**Divinity College room 136**

### **Rally for Manufacturing in Hamilton**

Members of the Local Executive including Rosemary Viola, Matt Root, Nancy Wells, Nancy Clark, and Barry Diacon attended a rally and demonstration on Saturday, March 21 in support of the workers at US Steel/Stelco and the manufacturing sector in general. Numerous speakers at the rally attacked the wholesale decisions to shut down manufacturing facilities in Canada, putting thousands of Canadians out of work. Songs and poems from laid-off workers and children of laid-off workers were presented and drew rousing cheers from the assembled multitude. The anguish and anger of the affected families was clear. We in Local 555 are cognizant that many of our members have spouses or relatives who work in the Steel, Auto, and other manufacturing industries and are directly sharing in the emotions and financial repercussions that this catastrophe is wreaking on the community. This makes it all the more important that in this round of bargaining we do our best to protect the rights and benefits that our members and families are relying on.

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### **Notice to Bargain**

On February 18, 2009, we notified the university of our intent to bargain a new collective agreement. Our current agreement expires on June 15, 2009. In return, the University has proposed a schedule for bargaining. We are discussing what works for both parties. Info sharing sessions are scheduled for April 7 to 9.

**A Unit 1 Proposals Meeting will occur on April 21, 2009 from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. in the CIBC Hall on the 3rd floor of the McMaster Students Centre.**

The Bargaining Team gathers proposals from a number of different sources, most importantly from the membership survey and assembles it into a set of proposals for presentation to the members of Unit 1 at the meeting on April 21, 2009. At this meeting members can propose modifications, additions, deletions to the proposals. Once the fine-tuning is completed, members present at the meeting will vote to approve the proposals for the team to take into bargaining.

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### **Who can I contact?**

Have something to say about the current round of bargaining?

Please send your questions or comments to:

[bargaining@cawlocal555.ca](mailto:bargaining@cawlocal555.ca)

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### **Survey Reminder**

If you have not completed the 2009 bargaining survey please take a minute to do so. We have had over 800 responses so far! The survey will be available until March 26, 2009. We want to hear from you!

You can find the survey at:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=8dgxuH1vdo4pXxJWt8wLdw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=8dgxuH1vdo4pXxJWt8wLdw_3d_3d)

The password is: contract2009

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