



Quick Update for February 24th, 2023

Returning to Work after Injury – Lately, we’ve had a few instances of members of the employer’s Wellness Team calling members at home and offering them return to work modifications without any union representation. After hearing about another instance of this happening this week – Patrick Cumbo immediately sent an email to Wellness demanding that this practice stop. All of our members are entitled to union representation in cases of investigations, discipline and any meetings to do with returning to work, especially if there are modifications to your schedule. If you are asked to “answer a few questions” by your supervisor and hear “we don’t need to involve the union” - those are giant red flags. Just like the ones you didn’t pay attention to when you dated that ex of yours. Same thing goes for Wellness – members should not be accepting or rejecting work modifications without talking to your doctor and having one of our elected reps with you in a meeting. If management pushes and insists they speak with you – simply tell them that you are represented by a union and a collective agreement and you’re not saying anything else until a rep is with you.

Retirement Planning – While it’s not a CUPE sponsored event, there is an upcoming retirement planning workshop being hosted by RTOERO District 13 for Hamilton Wentworth & Haldimand on April 15th. This event is geared and directed towards those who work in Education. It’s at the Courtyard Marriot on Upper James and I’ll attach the flyer at the end of the update.

Where Was I? – I always find it interesting and sad how some people just seem to wake up in the morning and want to stir up drama and conflict. We had a union meeting planned for last Sunday and I wasn’t there. How dare I miss a meeting? If I’m encouraging people to attend and then not even bothering to show up myself? Yeah, real comments actually made about me not being there. I know I don’t have to do this, but I’ll say this – I have two wonderful daughters who struggle with things from time to time. One was really struggling last week and it was time to put the dad hat on and go visit her at school and help work some issues out. No apologies, family first. We have over 500 members. We need 23 for a meeting.

Local Bargaining Update –



Bargaining started off as it usually does, all nice and good and now that things are heating up and getting down to bigger issues instead of language changes and pronouns – it's not so fun. Depending on who you listen to, if the employer is tabling concessions for our members we should just walk away from the table. I can tell you the only way we will ever walk away from trying to secure a deal for our members is if we have exhausted every option and tactic to avoid that. Yes, the employer tables concessions that work better for them than us. NEWSFLASH – we do exactly the same thing. We table proposals that work better for our members than the employer. If the employer walked away every time we proposed something good for us and lacking for them – we would never get a deal done because nobody would be at the table.

Why is it taking so long? That's a complicated answer. We have 7 excellent people at the table looking out for your best interests, plus a very good National Rep. Some days we get more done and accomplished than others. Some times we don't all agree on what we should be proposing or responding and it comes down to a majority vote for us. Some times we look for help and guidance from CUPE National and it may take some time to get a quality answer. I just spent two days going over 50 years of contracts to track language changes that all have to do with one issue so I could write a brief for CUPE National lawyers so they can give us advice on how to proceed because words matter in a contract. Especially one that will be what dictates our work environment for the next 4 years. Bargaining dates are limited so it's not as easy as "just book a week with them and get it done". Believe me when I say everyone on the bargaining team would be very ok with that but with 8 other groups wanting to bargain with the employer – dates can be tough to come by.

What concessions are they asking for? I can tell you this much – your ability to work overtime and bank it as lieu time to keep your work/life balance in check will be staying intact. We solved that nugget last week. Investigations & timelines – currently the employer has 10 business days to investigate complaints made against our members and issue discipline or not. They wanted an unlimited timeline for investigations. So it would be possible that 6 months from now you could be asked to attend an HR meeting about something you said to someone today and still catch a discipline for it. Although it seems like an automatic HELL NO from us, we have an obligation under the law to consider each and every proposal so that we're bargaining in good faith. And we do. So when we respond to these proposals, we back up our response with facts, past experiences and even data from other Locals.

When is this going to end? I wish I knew and had an answer for you. I'd like this to be done. I expected it to be done already. You could use your retro pay and so could I. But, in my position my job is to look out for what's best for the Local and knowing the words and language we agree to are going to be in place for the next 4 years – we need to get it right and make sure it's for the good of the Local and everyone in it.

We could have agreed to all the employer proposals and told you it was in your best interest and maybe you'd have your money by now. But, for the next 4 years (and longer likely) more of our members would be paying more taxes on all your overtime, many more would be facing discipline letters and days off work for incidents they might not remember by the time an investigation happens and who knows what else the employer still wants to propose? I know it's frustrating and seems like it's never ending but it's a process and your team is putting in the work to get you the best deal possible.

Our next confirmed bargaining dates with the employer are March 10th and 20th. Depending on progress and where we're at after our meeting on the 20th – we may be asking members to attend a bargaining information meeting to discuss next steps with everyone and explain things in greater detail. I'm well aware that whatever I say in these updates is shared with management within minutes after being emailed out, so there is a limit on what I'm going to share here. Some people just can't stop themselves from trying to be the best source of information for their supervisor because they think that makes them special.

Have a great weekend everyone – a few of us will be giving up our weekend and will be in Toronto attending the CUPE Spring School and taking courses to further our knowledge on mental health issues, health & safety, WSIB injuries and more so we can help and represent our members better.

Cheers,

Blake

Thinking about retirement?

Free!

For anyone who

- Works in schools and school boards, early years, post-secondary
- Wishes to learn about retirement planning
- Wants a workshop tailored to the education community



Learn about

- Financial planning
- Health benefits in retirement
- Retirement and lifestyle planning

Attendees receive

- Retirement planning booklet
- Chance to win exciting prizes
- Free RTOERO membership until retirement !

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QUESTIONS?

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When

Saturday April 15, 2023

Check-in & refreshments: 9am

Workshop: 9:30am - 11:30am

Where

Courtyard by Marriott Hamilton

1224 Upper James Street

Hamilton, ON

L9C 3B1

Vous songez à la retraite?

Pour toute personne qui...

- travaille dans les écoles et conseils scolaires, pour la petite enfance et les institutions postsecondaires
- désire se renseigner sur la planification de la retraite
- veut assister à un atelier spécialement conçu pour le secteur de l'éducation

Gratuit!



Venez vous renseigner au sujet

- de la planification financière
- d'une assurance santé pour la retraite
- de la planification de la retraite et du mode de vie

Les participants reçoivent

- un manuel de planification de la retraite complet
- la possibilité de gagner des prix intéressants
- l'adhésion gratuite à RTOERO jusqu'à la retraite

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Quand

samedi 15 avril 2023

Inscription/rafraîchissements
à partir de: 9h00

L'atelier: 9h30 à 11h30

Endroit

Courtyard by Marriott Hamilton
1224 Upper James Street
Hamilton, ON
L9C 3B1