



More than 100 years of experience, activism and spectacular victories between these three legends. Congrats!

Setting the stage for 2015



reduce the proportion of seasonal work in their local economies.”

Caron also talked about his party's efforts to fight Bill C-377 which seeks to impose unreasonable financial reporting on unions, not, as the Conservatives claim, to improve transparency.

“This bill reflects the conservatives' standard negative view towards labour. The NDP is absolutely in favour of transparency, but on the condition that it is applied evenly to all key players and without prejudice.”

The Harper government does not stop with this bill. There are many other plans to undermine workers' hard won rights gained through collective bargaining like sick leave and pensions, as well as our ability to unionize, negotiate and strike.

The NDP are promoting a vision for Canada that includes opportunities for all Canadians, not just the wealthy. In their run up to the next election, the NDP will be talking about their record in provincial governments which demonstrates that fiscal and social responsibility are not mutually exclusive goals.

“We don't have to choose between prosperity and solidarity. It's a false choice. We can have both!”

On Wednesday, Guy Caron, the NDP MP representing Rimouski-Neigette – Témiscouata – Les Basques, shared his party's plan to reverse the damage done by the Conservatives to Canada's economy and social programs.

Contrary to what the Conservatives claim, they are leaving a legacy of sustained high unemployment, an increase in precarious employment, and few opportunities for youth in this country. The changes made in 2012 to the Employment Insurance program are one of the chief concerns of the people in Caron's riding and in many other parts of the country that are working to diversify their economies and increase job opportunities.

“MPs' offices are brimming with people who are desperate. The solution that's been developed by conservatives is there to address a workforce shortage in Alberta and Saskatchewan – but it works against regions that are trying to

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A woman's place is... at the table!

With more than half the PSAC membership made up of women, empowering them to take on leadership roles in the labour movement was a point of interest at yesterday's women's caucus.

While legislation to deter workplace discrimination has done a great deal to propel women into leadership roles, there are still many examples where women are under-represented as decision-makers. In Canada, we need look no further than our own House of Commons where men outnumber women three to one.

To remedy such situations, some countries have legislated quotas to ensure an adequate representation of women. Since 1994, Costa Rica has been actively working to achieve this goal. They started by asking political parties to voluntarily increase the number of women running for office. Then, by 2002, a law passed requiring that 40% of elected positions be occupied by women.

According to a study by Mark P. Jones, associate professor of political science at Rice University in Texas, the number

of women in Costa Rica's municipal governments "was unmatched by any other democratically elected national legislature in the world."

Until just recently, Costa Rica was among the handful of countries headed by a democratically elected woman.

But legislation is just one of many tools women can use to have their voices heard. When there is diversity among an organization's leaders, more perspectives can be considered so it becomes easier to make sustainable and equitable decisions.

The UNE's national equity representative for women, Hayley Millington, believes a great deal of progress can come from women empowering other women.

"I'm a strong proponent for mentoring," said Millington. "Some of us are like lions, but our roar may be a little less loud. When you're mentored by another strong woman, that confidence starts to grow and you start to feel like you can break that ceiling."

Honouring three amazing journeys

Yesterday, three of UNE's most dedicated members were proclaimed lifetime members, the highest honour that our union bestows to its activists.

Garry Larouche admits that over the course of the last year, he's been acknowledging a series of lasts: a labour-management meeting, a national executive meeting, this convention, this last trip.

"I know I will be missing a lot of this – something I really enjoyed and that I'm really passionate about," he said.

Having served on seven rounds of bargaining, Larouche spent countless days away from his home and family, traveling the country on behalf of the membership. Now he plans to spend some quality time with his wife and children. He is also eagerly awaiting the arrival of his first grandson.

Our union's first ever female president was at a loss for words – perhaps for the first time, she joked – after being proclaimed a life member. Heather Brooker recounted that her first

union meeting did not go well. She was told quite curtly that if she didn't like the status quo, maybe she should get involved.

"I don't think he knew who he was talking to at that moment!" she quipped to hearty laughter from the audience. Brooker's award will hang in a place of honour in her new home, alongside another plaque she was given by colleagues in Harare, Zimbabwe, in appreciation of her efforts to fight for their rights.

Sister Brooker has also been credited with encouraging Steve Houston to run for a regional position in our union.

"When I first became a member, I thought, 'Why would I get involved with those old windbags?' And then I became one," joked Houston, during last week's national executive meeting. "I thought 'oh yeah, that's why: 'cause they're really cool.'"

"Everything I learned about human rights, I learned from this union. And for that, I'm so grateful."

IN THE HALLS

With the 2015 election on the horizon, what actions will you be taking to bring the issues that really matter to working people to the top of the political agenda?

"One of the things that I'm going to talk about is how all Canadians are affected, not only those in the labour movement; and also about the cutbacks in the public service and how it's affecting many Canadians and the service that we provide to Canadians as well," *said Garry Larouche, Ontario*

"Tell everybody to vote the Conservatives out," *declared Andy Yung, British Columbia*

"Everything that I've learned at this convention, I will take back to my members. Everything that I learned at the women's caucus will certainly be brought forward, as all of our staff are female," *said Jocelyne Bigras, NCR*

"I think it's crucial to encourage people to get to the polls because voter turnout is really low," *remarked Carole Bouchard, New-Brunswick*



ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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Comments? Send an email to: communications@une-sen.org

