



Sister and Brothers.



Since this is my first report since returning from the Christmas holidays I would like to take a second to wish everyone a Happy New Year. I hope everyone got some well-deserved rest as it was much needed. Most members put in a substantial amount of days and hours of work last year so anytime we get a chance for holidays or some time off we need to take advantage of every opportunity we get.

Everyone that has attended a meeting or read my reports the last couple of months has heard me talk about the importance of Canadian's venturing into the Trans Pacific Partnership or (TPP). This new trade agreement has the potential to jeopardize some 20,000 manufacturing jobs in Canada. As we know, it was the Conservative government that initiated into this agreement and left this pile of rubble for the Liberals to try and salvage something out of this mess. John Oliver was elected as the MP for Oakville and he has been lobbying strongly to either veto or alter the pact the way it currently reads. Mr. Oliver contacted me in late January and asked if I would be willing to put together a round table of union members who would be willing to meet with the Minister of International Trade Chrystia Freeland. This was a first, never before has a minister ever taken the time to come to a local union hall and meet with members from a local union. Obviously I jumped at the chance. We were able to put together about 30 people around a table to discuss in our view the downfalls of the TPP agreement. Not only did we talk about manufacturing but also the effects this agreement would have on agriculture as well as pharmaceuticals. Minister Freeman was very receptive to the members in attendance and certainly wanted to hear everyone's views and opinions. She explained specifically the trials the Liberal government is having with the agreement the previous conservative government signed. Canada has 2 choices either sign the agreement and hope the USA or Japan veto it to reopen negotiations or pull out. Since meeting with us back in January the Liberal government has decided to sign the agreement. There was a ceremony in February in Auckland New Zealand. Canada now has 2 years from the date of signing to either pull out or adhere to the terms of the agreement. Our only saving grace could be that either the USA or Japan decide to veto the agreement or we will need to lobby the Liberal government to pull out completely. One thing is obvious so far MP John Oliver realizes the importance of manufacturing especially automotive in the Oakville area, hopefully he will continue to be a strong ally in our corner. I will certainly keep you posted.

The 1st of March is quickly approaching and moving forward our main focus is collective bargaining in September. Your local leadership took 3 days in January to go over all articles in the master agreement as well as Exhibit B, Appendix R and pension language. The leadership came up with approximately 150 new or changed amendments to the existing language. We had our general membership amendment meeting on February 28th and although the leadership covered most amendments the membership did come up with some great new amendments. The meeting lasted about 3.5 hours and approximately 450 members attended. What a great turnout just goes to show the membership is involved and concerned about what the future has to bring. It was brought up at the meeting that we publicize our amendments online for all to read, unfortunately I think everyone understands the unfair advantage that would put us in going into bargaining. On behalf of the bargaining team I would like to thank the membership for

their huge show of support, it did not go unnoticed and certainly gives us a huge boost of confidence moving forward. As I stated at the meeting I will keep everyone posted on any new happenings as w

The week of February 23rd Mark Luey the skilled trades chair along with Darren Caerels, Phil Josic, Chuck Paladino and myself attended the Canadian skilled trades conference in Toronto it was a great couple days very informative on new technology and the future of skilled trades in Canada. The guest speaker for this year's event was ex NHL star Thereon Fleury. Thereon gave a very moving speech detailing the trials and tribulations of his life. You could hear a pin drop as he was addressing the crowd. I think most people especially those that follow hockey know a little about his life but when you hear him speak about his life it really makes you think.

Our next Ford Council meeting has been scheduled for early April. This is when we will bring all master agreement amendments together with the rest of the other Ford Locals. This will set the framework for all master amendments. It will be our intention at Ford Council that the National Union target Ford as the lead moving into 2016 bargaining. We believe it always better to lead bargaining. Ford Motor Company has made billions of dollars the last couple years and it's time our membership be compensated for our hard work, our new membership need major improvements, local 200 in Windsor needs new product and as we all know cost of living allowance and wages have been frozen for far too long. We will not forget about our retirees who have been lobbying hard for the re-instatement of P-Cola either. We believe there is room for improvement covering everything from benefit's to wages to working conditions. Our greatest ally as we move forward into this round of bargaining is each other. If we are strong and we stay united and support our local and national bargaining teams we will be successful. These companies thrive on separation and division amongst its members. This is a time we need to unite and come together as a union. Legally we must vote on a strike mandate no sooner than 30 days prior to the end of the current collective agreement. This meeting will occur at the end of August. It will be crucial to send a strong strike mandate to Ford Motor Company telling them we are prepared to strike if we cannot bargain a good agreement for our membership. I will keep you posted

During my campaign for president back in 2014 one of my commitments to the membership was to try and communicate as much information as possible. Since then we have launched a new website which has been an instrumental tool in getting information out to our members and now I am happy to say Local 707 has been successful in launching a new mobile phone app. We spent several months discussing this dynamic step forward at our executive board meetings and finally we have made it happen. I would like to thank the executive board for their support. They were the first step in the process to make everything move forward. Special thanks to our Education Chair Billy O'Neill who took care of most of the technical issues, a great job done by all. I hope by now most of you have had the opportunity to download the free app onto your phone. This app gives us the opportunity to send instant information to our membership anytime and from anywhere. Now we can send information not only on our computers but also on our phones. There have been a few glitches experienced when the app was first launched but we are slowly working out the bugs and I'm confident it will be a fantastic resource for the membership moving forward. Please if you haven't downloaded the app yet, do so and make sure your union sister's and brother's know about the app. Feel free to send us any feedback on the app to the union hall we would love to hear everyone's input. We seem to be having the most problems with the Apple product's as the Androids and Blackberry's seem to have less glitches. We are working diligently to fix the problems and I am confident everything will be worked out soon.

There was a rally held this month at city hall in Hamilton protesting against CHCH television for their unfair treatment of workers who lost their jobs. CHCH permanently laid off over 100 workers back in December of 2015. They have cut their on air time from 80 hours per week down to 18 hence trying to justify the permanent layoffs. CHCH has offered no buyout or severance packages to any of these employees. Most of these employees have been long service people who have given big chunks of their lives to CHCH. I would like to thank the members of local 707 who took time out of their busy schedules to come out and support our sisters and brothers at the rally, I am sure there will be more to come as CHCH doesn't seem to be backing down stay tuned.

March 2nd I had the pleasure of attending the International Women's Day dinner held at the Burlington Convention Center. I would like to thank the sisters of the women's committee for inviting me it was nice to spend a couple hours of social time with them, thanks again. The international women's day rally is scheduled for March 5th in downtown Toronto and I am sure many of our members will attend. Special thanks to our women's committee they have taken on many endeavors over the last couple years all for the good of local charities and the betterment of living and working conditions for women everywhere great job sisters.

I would like to take a moment to thank Steve Gardiner for all his hard work and dedication to the United Way Campaign these past few years. Steve has worked diligently to keep the campaign as successful as it was when he took over from Sister Sue Teepel. Steve has decided to focus on other avenues inside the plant. Again brother thanks for your commitment and dedication to the campaign your efforts will be missed. On that same note I would like to announce that Sister Shauna Canton will now chair the United Way Campaign, she was Steve's co-chair last year and is certainly more than qualified to take over the reins and I am confident she will do a fantastic job. Good luck Shauna

On a final note hopefully winter is coming to an end, I think for the most part we can't complain it has been a very mild season compared to the last few we have had, here's looking forward to a great spring followed by a warm dry summer. As always any comments or questions please do not hesitate to call anytime.

In Solidarity

Dave Thomas
President L707