

# BARGAINING BULLETIN #5

To be honest, we didn't expect to be writing another bulletin just yet. As we reported in our last bulletin we were taking a break for July, prepared to resume bargaining with dates proposed throughout August.

Our last meeting with the employer was on July 3<sup>rd</sup> with an understanding that they would let us know by July 8<sup>th</sup> if they were filing for conciliation. We were somewhat surprised when we received an email from the Employer on Wednesday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, informing us that they have unilaterally filed for conciliation.

**What does this mean?** Let's start with the legal process of conciliation.

**Conciliation** is a service offered by the Ontario Ministry of Labour to help unions and Employers resolve their differences to reach a Collective Agreement. Either party, separately or jointly, may apply to the Ministry to have a conciliation officer assigned to them who will work with the parties to help them reach an agreement. The conciliation process is a mandatory first step before the parties can be in a position for either a lock-out or a strike.

If the conciliation process does not bring the parties into agreement, either party can request from the Minister what is known as a "no-board" report. In effect, the issuing of a no-board report initiates a countdown; on the 17<sup>th</sup> day following the issue of the report, the parties are in a legal strike/lockout position. While the 17 day requirement is necessary for either party to be in a position to strike (if a strike vote has been taken) or to be locked out, it is not inevitable that this will happen. It is important to be aware that NUFA has not yet called for a strike vote.

Our team does not think that we are at an impasse; indeed, we planned to break for the remainder of July and to resume bargaining in August.

**What does this mean for us?**

Now that the application has been filed with the Ministry of Labour, we await the appointment of a conciliator and the negotiation of mutually agreeable dates. We assume that it will likely take a few weeks before a conciliator can be secured and dates can be scheduled that work for both our team and the Employer. The conciliator will work with and push both sides towards reaching an agreement. They will also review the work that both parties have done to date, including movement and what each side has proposed. It is also worth mentioning that the Employer's current Chief Negotiator, our Provost, Arja Vainio-Mattila, will be away for most of August and so the Employer has indicated they will be using their lawyer, John Brooks (who has not been at the table thus far) to act as their Chief Negotiator. It should be noted that he was their Chief Negotiator in the previous round of bargaining.

Rest assured, your bargaining team remains committed to negotiating a fair Collective Agreement with the Employer. We will keep you updated on the process as it unfolds.

If you have not yet sent in your alternate email/phone numbers, now would be a good time to do so.

