

Report of the Regional Executive Vice President National Capital Region to Regional Annual General Meeting June 2019 (January 26 - April 30, 2019)

OVERVIEW: FOCUS ON GRASSROOTS, EFFECTIVE POLITICALLY AND BRINGING OUR UNION TOGETHER

In October of 2018, the National Board of Directors (NBoD) announced a new strategic plan whose three pillars went to the very heart of the work a union needs to do for its members. As a member of the Alliance Executive Committee and NBoD, I strongly support the three aims of that plan. Those three aims are as follows:

1. A focus on the grassroots: Everything in the union should be considered in light of how it will engage and support members ultimately. In particular, PSAC and this region are committed to working at the grassroots level to make sure members are informed and feel that they are part of the decision-making and interests of the union's daily business. I have consistently emphasized the importance of local visits and meeting with groups and individual members and that focus has paid off in many places where locals have become more active and aware of the needs of their members and how what they do contributes to the cause of PSAC, which always has been their cause.

2. Becoming more politically effective: PSAC represents one of the largest stakeholder groups for any government. We often hear that the government has not taken a certain direction so as to avoid conflict with PSAC. But we can do better. Our campaigns against privatization have a sophistication and depth that has led to a series of successes. Other work in lobbying has yielded relationships in this region and beyond that will pay dividends in the future if we stay the course and develop our political ability as an organization. The most important aspect of that is what I call Waking the

Sleeping Giant. The sleeping giant is our membership. When they participate in campaigns, express support for their brothers and sisters and comrades and make clear that they are watching and active to decision-makers it is power. That is why becoming more politically effective also requires us to focus on our members and the potential power that lies in activating them politically. In this region, we are seeing the signs of that growth and activism. It is too early to call it militantism, and we have more work to do, but the progress is everywhere.

3. Working together better: This can be both the easiest and most difficult of the three challenges the NBoD has set for ourselves and you and I as leaders. It means putting aside squabbles, avoiding finger-pointing and taking responsibility to improve and grow the strength and effectiveness of our bonds as unionists. When members hear excuses and blame, it only weakens their esteem for PSAC, its components and its locals. Working better together is something that I now see almost everywhere I go, and I like to mention it during speeches so that members understand that we are focused on building the best union we can to support and advance their issues and their cause. We owe them no less than that.

PART 1: ACTIVITIES AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Regional Council – activities, successes and objectives

The general meeting of the Regional Council was held on January 26 at Hotel Lac Leamy:

-We received a presentation from Affordable Housing Near Rapid Transit Coalition (ACORN and Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation, CCOC).

-Magali Picard, VP for PSAC, presented on the Phoenix Day of Action in February.

-We received a TB Bargaining update from Seth Sazant (National Negotiator), Charles Khoury (Bargaining Team Member) and Diane Moffatt (Bargaining Team Member). Members engaged in table discussions after the presentation.

-Council Treasurer, Diane Girouard, presented a financial update and the Regional Council Budget was approved for 2019.

The Regional Council Executive met on April 8:

-We received a presentation from the Ontario Student Action Network (OSAN), approved the Audited Financial Report for 2018, and discussed both the regional mobilization for TB bargaining and the OFL Ford fightback campaign.

-I provided an overview of the Federal Election strategy.

Regional activities and successes:

- Held a conference call with NCR RVPs/NVPs on February 22, providing updates from NBoD and the region.
- On March 21, held a “Fax-In” day of action at Place du Centre asking members to send faxes to their MPs to push for movement at the TB bargaining table. Members sent over 650 faxes through the online portal.
- Held TB Mobilizing Strategy Committee in Ottawa March 27.
- Held an action at MP David McGuinty’s office to ask to send a letter to Joyce Murray, TB President to urge movement at the table. We received great press coverage, and MP McGuinty called me to confirm, post action, he would send a letter to Joyce Murray.
- Held a TB mobilizing event at Tunney’s Pasture April 25, which was well received by members including great media coverage. A second kiosk event was held in Gatineau on April 26. Over 300 postcards were signed and sent to Trudeau.
- We canceled the May 1 TB mobilizing event out of respect for those affected by the flood.

Regional offices

- Staffing: We welcomed new Reps: Paula Dignan in Ottawa, Karl Lafrenière in Gatineau. Tobie Castonguy is working in Ottawa (formally in Gatineau).

- The Staff conference was held April 9 -11 and staff have reported that it was tremendous success.

Regional communications

● **Media interviews:** I did several interviews with Radio-Canada, CBC, TVA and others around Phoenix/TB bargaining, Asticou regarding potential movement of employees due accommodation of students at Montbleu.

- I attended MP Steve MacKinnon’s press conference, April 15, regarding exterior renovations to Terrasses de la Chaudière. I am working with UNE on our response to management as employees continue to experience health issues, and overcrowding.
- I appeared in-studio at Radio-Canada and CBC for interviews regarding Phoenix and TB negotiations.

● **Social media:**

- We are now capturing more data from improving our online sign-up feature on our website for our newsletter.
- February 28, Phoenix Day of Action, received the most “likes” during this reporting period. Our best paid promotions since January on Facebook included posts around the Phoenix Day of Action, and the TB “Fax-In.”
- Our total “likes” for posts since January are 6630. Page views spiked during February 28 Phoenix Day of Action (1st), “Fax-In” day of action for TB mobilization (2nd) and January 28 “Heat is On” action (3rd).
- Featuring our grassroots mobilization work, this period, resulted in the most online engagement.

● **Email news:** PSAC-NCR regularly communicates with members via emails. We have over 22,200 active email addresses in our MailChimp server. This number has increased by 1800 new emails since September 2018.

Political Action

The Heat is On Campaign:

- We held a day of action on January 28 despite the blistering cold, turning out over 30 members. Guest speakers included Stéphane Aubry the VP for PIPSC, MPP Joel Harden, MP Daniel Blaikie and the event was MCed by Alex Silas (AREVP).
- As part of our lobbying efforts with GSU I met with:
 - Minister Catherine McKenna on February 5 - we are still waiting for follow up information from our questions
 - Senator Harder on February 8 - promised to circulate information to colleagues, waiting for follow up
 - MP Steven MacKinnon on February 21 - We pressed for more information, and were informed that “everyone” knows we are digging for information on this issue
 - NDP MP Candidate for Ottawa Centre Emilie Taman on March 7 - supports the campaign
 - MP Elizabeth May on April 4 - wants to work with us, and MP Daniel Blaikie, to ask questions in the House of Commons
 - Mayor Jim Watson’s staff on April 18 – the city is more concerned now because of our meeting about the potential waste from the plant draining into the Ottawa River
 - Minister Carla Qualtrough’s staff on April 26 - they had many questions after our meeting as we raised concerns about the lack of environmental assessment, parallels with Phoenix, and technical issues
- These lobby meetings included: Randy Howard (NP of GSU), Paul Paquette (President of Local 70023, which is the affected plant), Alex Silas (AREVP, working in the affected area), Michele Girash (National Privatization Officer) and Stephanie Penwarden (Regional Representative).
- Myself, and Paul Paquette met with the Ottawa Riverkeeper, potential allies in the campaign.
- I published a successful op-ed, with the help of Michele Girash, in the National Observer.

- Our petition, sponsored by MP Blaikie, is ongoing and will be read in the House of Commons likely mid-May.
- The government recently awarded the bid for the plant to Innovate Energy (private consortium) so we will be ramping up our campaign, with GSU, which includes outreach teams as well as increasing media coverage and mobilization.

OFL Power of the Many Campaign:

- I attended, along with Robbie Henderson from OAC, the OFL's Power of Many Conference in Toronto March 25.
- I attended, with many members in the NCR, the OFL's Regional activation meeting for the Power of the Many campaign on April 2.
- I spoke at the OFL's action outside MP Jeremy Robert's office, April 17, regarding Ford's cuts to education and healthcare; several NCR members attended.

Federal Election Strategy:

- The direction is that we will work to protect incumbent NDP seats and work to elect Liberals anywhere that it would prevent the election of a conservative. We would look at three-way races carefully, but not engage in battles between Liberals and NDP except where the NDP is the incumbent.
- I held a conference call with OAC and CRAPO chairs to discuss the overarching plan for the federal election.

Solidarity

- We are working with several community allies, through OAC, in resisting Ford. And we are engaged with the OFL's Power of the Many Campaign.
- I attended the municipal Affordable Housing Rally with ACORN, CCOC, The Alliance to End Homelessness etc. The rally helped groups secure \$15 million for affordable housing in Ottawa.

- Myself and the YWC met with the Ontario Student Action Network, who are organizing a grassroots movement against Doug Ford. We are working on ways to support their work.
- OAC members attended Broadbent Institute's Progress Summit March 27-29.
- I spoke at McGill University's Labour Relations Conference as part of a panel discussion on Precarious Work, March 29.
- I and some members of the Executive attended ACORN's Trivia Night April 5 representing the PSAC Region.

Phoenix Pay Debacle

- I attended a Hear for Canada event at the pay centre in Gatineau by the GSU Local headed by Steve Colterman. We are working to create videos, with the local, to showcase our member's stories working here.
- I spoke at the February 27 Mobilization Training.
- I participated in the successful Phoenix Day of Action in the NCR on February 28. We turned out 250 members in the region by using digital tools to call and text members as well as direct outreach. The components turned out 250 people.
- I attended the Ad Hoc Phoenix Committee March 4. There was a review of the actions so far and a commitment to keep escalating to press our demands for damages for all members.
- I attended CRAPO's action at MP Steve McKinnon's Maple Taffy event on March 16. Members conducted outreach to the community and we received great coverage from Radio-Canada.

Collective Bargaining and Ratification

- **National Gallery of Canada:** Initial brief prepared and sessions are scheduled
- **OLG:** Ratified collective agreement March 8
- **Amethyst House:** Ratified new collective agreement February 25

- **Unitarian Service Committee:** Ratified new collective agreement February 19
- **Carleton Post Docs:** Signed collective agreement March 28
- **Canada Council:** Reached a tentative agreement April 25
- **OAG:** Initial bargaining prep bargaining
- **SSHRC:** Initial bargaining prep bargaining
- **NCC:** Mobilizing for bargaining priorities
- **Royal Canadian Mint:** In bargaining
- **Museum of Nature:** In bargaining
- **Museum of Science & Tech, Aviation and Agriculture:** Classification overhaul underway
- **CSE:** Working on classification issues

Education

Registration for NCR spring courses are open for:

- Union School Part II - Oct 3 - 6

PART 2: NATIONAL PORTFOLIOS

- Public Service Dental Care Plan Board of Management.
- NavCan Bargaining Team.
- Union of Postal Communications Employees Bargaining Team.
- Ontario Federation of Labour Executive Board.
- Phoenix Ad Hoc Committee of NBoD.

PART 3: REVP ACTIVITIES, LEAVE & ATTENDANCE

● I participated and attended many activities in locals, regional meetings, conference calls, and other events to inform and mobilize our activists as well as our members on how to protect our public services and defend and promote our collective bargaining rights and provisions.

- A full accounting of travel outside the region has been submitted to the National President.
- A full accounting of my expenses has been submitted to the National President.
- A full accounting of leave taken for the period has been submitted to the National President.
- All overtime requests for certain weekend activities have been submitted.

Scheduled activities

- OFL Executive, February 7, Toronto
- AEC Meeting, February 11, Ottawa
- NBoD Ad Hoc Committee on Phoenix, February 11, Ottawa
- NBoD Meeting, February 12-15, Ottawa
- NSCC call for TB, February 15, Ottawa
- NBoD Conference Call, March 1 & 4, Ottawa
- RSCC OLG Call, March 6, Ottawa
- Parks Bargaining Team Meeting, March 11, Ottawa
- NBoD Conference Call, March 12, Ottawa
- National Roundtable of PSAC's University Sector, March 26-28, Ottawa
- NBoD Ad Hoc Committee on Phoenix, April 1, Ottawa
- AEC Meeting, April 1 -2, Ottawa
- NCR H & S Conference, April 6, Ottawa
- NCR Executive Meeting, April 8, Ottawa
- OFL Board Meeting, April 10, Toronto
- PSAC Convention Planning Meeting, April 11 & 12, Ottawa
- AEC Conference Call, April 24, Ottawa
- NBoD Conference Call, April 25, Ottawa
- Parks Bargaining Teams Meeting, April 29, Ottawa

* * *

Respectfully submitted,

Greg McGillis
NCR REVP