

News from the Society of Energy Professionals

Forge, Minello re-elected



Dennis Minello and Leslie Forge, speaking to their candidates at Society Council in October.

Incumbents Leslie Forge and Dennis Minello have been re-elected to their Principal Officer positions. Forge will serve another three-year term as Executive Vice President Policy and Minello as Executive Vice President Member Services.

Chief Returning Officer **Paul Czuczman** (Bruce Power) called it "an extremely close result for both elections, which is a reflection of the strength of all four candidates."

Indeed, results were much closer than usual for Society PO elections. Forge was elected over **Scott Travers** (IESO) by 110 votes. Minello prevailed over **Tracy Miller** (Vertex) by 187 votes. Voter turnout was in the neighbourhood of 30 per cent.

Minello has been EVP Member Services since being appointed by the Executive Board in early 2008. (He replaced **Rod Sheppard**, who had just been elected President.) Minello said he was looking forward to being able to serve a "full term" in the position. "I wouldn't have run if I weren't enthusiastic and optimistic about the times we're in and the direction we're going," he said.

Forge has been a Society VP or EVP since 1995. "My personal commitment to the Society and its members is very strong," she said. "I'd very much like to thank members for their support in this election. I ran on the basis of my solid achievements, strong qualifications, and progressive vision for the Society. I look forward to continuing my work to ensure that the Society is truly effective, relevant, representative, and principle-driven."

Happy holidays!

All Society officers and staff wish to extend their personal greetings and best wishes for a happy holiday season to all Society members and their loved ones. Have fun, be safe.

The Society office will close for the holidays at 12 noon on Thursday, December 24th, and will re-open at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, January 4th, 2010.

Council approves strategic plan, coordinated bargaining procedure

Society Council set the Society's strategic direction for 2010-2011, approving the "strategic objectives" recommended

by the Executive Board, and adopting a “coordinated bargaining policy and procedure.”

Council met on Monday, October 26th, after attending workshops on various issues and Local meetings the previous day.

Led by EVP Policy **Leslie Forge**, Council approved the following strategic objectives:

- ◆ a significant policy and external relations initiative to shape the government’s policy in the interest of this union;
- ◆ internal organizing for the purpose of creating solidarity within and across bargaining unit boundaries;
- ◆ strategic and coordinated collective bargaining; and
- ◆ a significant external organizing initiative, including initiatives that facilitate or overcome obstacles to the organizing of professional and supervisory employees.

Coordinated Bargaining: Council’s approval of a policy and procedure for coordinating collective bargaining should, said Forge, “maximize our bargaining power with all our employers.”



Photo: David Smiley

Society President Rod Sheppard was acclaimed to serve a full term, until March 31st, 2013.

The policy establishes a Coordinated Collective Bargaining Committee consisting of all Society Local Vice Presidents, and chaired by the EVP Policy. The other three Principal Officers and the Staff Manager are included as non-voting members, and the Committee will be “primarily” resourced by the Staff Specialist-Policy and Staff Specialist-Research.

Meeting at least four times yearly, the Committee will:

- ◆ assess collective bargaining research;
- ◆ incorporate policy into collective bargaining;
- ◆ develop coordinated bargaining strategy and methods; and
- ◆ plan campaigns in support of collective bargaining.

The policy also sets out the roles and accountabilities of its various members. Members can view it on the Society web-site in January.

Audit Action Plan: As the final act to complete the Audit Action Plan of 2006 (see, for example, Society *Newscast* 2006:06), Council decided **not** to:

- ◆ Set up an “ombudsmun” to arbitrate internal disputes
- ◆ Conduct a survey of members on governance issues and experience

Forge argued that the “ombudsman” proposal had been rendered redundant by a number of other mechanisms for the settlement of disputes, such as the “Internal Harassment Policy and Procedure.”

Board highlights: November-December, 2009

The Executive Board met on November 3rd and December 1st, dealing with the following items.

Recognition: The Board recognized the following for outstanding contributions to the Society:

- ◆ The Society’s administrative staffers for their outstanding work making arrangements for and supporting Society Council in October

- ◆ Sisters in Society for their outstanding “Evening of Empowerment” event
- ◆ The IESO Bargaining Team and Staff Officer **Sonia Pylyshyn** for their work in preparing for bargaining
- ◆ The Dues Action Team, in particular Communications Officer **Brian Robinson**, for their work on the dues conversion referendum
- ◆ Society Chief Returning Officer **Paul Czuczman**
- ◆ The Ontario Energy Board Local Executive for their initiatives in getting members-at-large involved in the local
- ◆ Society delegates who attended the convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour, especially Hydro One Unit Director **Michelle Byck-Johnston**, who accepted an award on behalf of the Society for the “women rising and organizing” banner the Society had entered in the OFL banner contest, and spoke of the history behind both the banner and Sisters in Society

- ◆ Bruce Power Local VP **Rob Stanley** for his outstanding work on arranging for the purchase of a condominium out of the Bruce Power Local Fund
- ◆ All candidates who stood for election as Principal Officers

Standing Finance Committee: The Board appointed **Shirley Kung**, of OPG’s corporate finance department, to the Standing Finance Committee. Shirley will bring her six years of experience in accounting services, cost and scheduling, and procurement to Standing Finance, an important group of advisors to the EVP Finance.

Shirley replaces Frank Lenarduzzi, who recently retired from Hydro One.

Workplan and Budget Manual: EVP Finance **Bill Jones** presented his “workplan and budget manual” for Board approval. “It codifies the things we’ve done when we’ve done it best,” Jones said, “and streamlines previous practices and guidelines to solidify our budgeting practices.”

The manual was approved.

UNITE / HERE Loan: The Board has entered into an agreement with UNITE HERE Local 75 in Toronto, pledging that union up to \$1.6 million in repayable loans should Local 75 require.

Local 75 represents workers in hotels, restaurants, race-tracks and casinos, laundry and food service companies, airport concessions and apparel, textile and general manufacturing, and distribution centers. A very high proportion of Local 75’s membership is women, and the Local also represents New Canadians from many, many countries.

UNITE HERE has locals across North America, including in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu, Vancouver, Ottawa, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. Since 2005 UNITE HERE has campaigned under the banner of “Hotel Workers Rising,” advancing public awareness of the working conditions of their members, and attempting to coordinate their bargaining North America-wide. Actor



Photo: John MacLennan

At the Ontario Federation of Labour convention in November, Hydro One Local UD Michelle Byck-Johnston accepted an award on behalf of Sisters in Society. The SiS banner (on screen in background) had won a prize in the 2009 OFL Banner Contest.

Danny Glover has been active in Hotel Workers Rising events, helping to attract attention to their cause.

UNITE HERE successfully bargained coordinated termination dates for their North American contracts, all of which are scheduled to expire in 2010. Local 75 has asked for the support of affiliates of the Ontario Federation of Labour to assist them in building a Defence Fund.

“As we’ve said many times, we’re eternally grateful to our brothers and sisters in the labour movement for their fraternal and financial assistance during our 2005 strike at Hydro One,” said Society President **Rod Sheppard**. “Millions of dollars were pledged to us then; we’ve got a real obligation to do what we can to assist other workers when they need it.”

While Local 75 is eternally grateful for the support, hopefully in the end it will not be needed. They’d prefer, of course, that a strong show of support for their union from all over Ontario will demonstrate the strength that is needed for bargaining breakthroughs, and strike avoidance. If needed, however, any loans will be paid back in their entirety, beginning in 2012.

USW Local 6200 Support: The Board approved a donation of \$12,000 to United Steelworkers of America Local 6200. Local 6200 has been on strike at the Vale Inco facility near Nanticoke since July 1st, 2009, opposing two-tier benefits for new hires.

Vale, a company headquartered in Brazil, bought Inco, a mining company that had been in Canadian hands since the early 1900s, in 2005. Vale made \$13.2 billion in profits in 2008, with each Vale employee generating \$221,223 in profits. Vale is notoriously hostile to its employees and their unions, with its Brazilian employees being especially badly treated. According to Local 6200, Vale wants to bring a little bit of its part of Brazil to southern Ontario.

According to Local 6200 president Wayne Rae:

USW and unions in Brazil and elsewhere working with the IMF (International Metalworkers Federation) and ICEM (International Federation of Chemical, Energy,



Lanny Totton ran unopposed for EVP Finance. He is currently in transition from his former position, OPG Local VP.

Mine and General Workers’ Unions) are running a global campaign for justice at Vale. We are reaching out to workers, unions and communities; staging rallies, press conferences and other solidarity activities; manning picket lines in Canada 24 hours-a-day seven days a week; dialoging with other unions in South America, North America, Africa, Europe, and Asia; raising concerns with Vale executives, board members and shareholders in Brazil; and lobbying governments in Canada, Brazil and elsewhere.

External Relations Update: President **Rod Sheppard** reported that he’d attended a meeting of the IFPTE Executive Council in Las Vegas in November. He stated that he was encouraging Council more actively to drive IFPTE policy, rather than waiting for IFPTE Conventions to set policy, as they happen only once every three years.

He also reported that the IFPTE intends more actively to support the Society in political action in Canada. To that end, IFPTE Legislative/Political Director Matthew Biggs will visit Toronto in January.

Women empowered

Society women took a little power for themselves in early October. More than 65 Society women attended the “Evening of Empowerment,” sponsored by Sisters in Society, the Society’s women’s group.

Female Society members working in the downtown Toronto core were invited to network, to tour the Society office, to view the SiS web-site, and to vote on the entries for the SiS 2010 calendar. Chaired by **Tracy Miller** (Vertex), the event featured some excellent nosh and knowledgeable speakers.

Irene Harris, then the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour (since retired), gave attendees a brief history of women in the labour movement. Peggy Nash, former NDP MP and currently Executive Assistant to CAW President Ken Lewenza, told attendees of a number of important changes women had collectively made to their working conditions. Dr. Charlotte Yates, Dean of Social Sciences at McMaster University, provided a global perspective of unions, an overview of the areas where the Labour Movement is growing, and some statistics indicating there’s still a lot of work to be done to ensure people have decent wages and working conditions.

A photo gallery can be viewed on the SiS web-site.

Miller thanked **Dianne Mowat**, **Shirley Kung**, and Society/IFPTE staffers **Anna Liu**, **Laura Langmaid**, and **Cheri Funston** for all their work in putting the event together.

Saugeen Shores: Thanks, Society!

The Society’s Executive Board got a great big thank you from the Town of Saugeen Shores at its December meeting.

Mayor Mike Smith and Chief Administrative Officer Larry Allison drove from Port Elgin, anxious to deliver thanks in person for the Society’s help in addressing their area’s critical shortage of doctors.



On December 4th, OPG’s Ralph Chatour (centre) spoke at the OPG White Ribbon ceremony. Ralph, who lost his sister this year to domestic violence, said its eradication begins with educating youth on the fundamental principles of human rights. “No action is too small.” He’s pictured here with Acting Local VP Joseph Fierro and OPG President/CEO Tom Mitchell.

Upon the recommendation of the Bruce Power Local, the Society has purchased a new condominium townhouse in Southhampton to house medical professionals who agree to practice there. The shortage of doctors in the area had become so severe that the Saugeen health centre was considering closing its emergency unit in the evenings. While the town had a residence they’d used for housing doctors, it was aging and had fallen into disrepair—not much of an attraction for even young, single doctors.

“You’ve given us a great tool for recruiting physicians to our community,” said Mayor Smith. “In fact, the night we got the keys handed to us we had a doctor stay in it, and he subsequently signed an agreement that he’s going to practise here in Saugeen Shores.”

“It’s a real win-win for our area,” said Local VP **Rob Stanley**. “And what an incredible result—our recruitment tool has already netted us a doctor.”



Photo: Patrick Boles, Shoreline Beacon

Rob Stanley, Bruce Power Local VP hands over the keys to a new townhome to Saugeen Shores mayor Mike Smith (see article, p.5). Seated are (from left) UD Bob Wells, Stanley, Smith, Jill Roote of the Doctor Recruitment Committee, and townhouse developer Mel Walters. Standing are Becky Smith (representing Huron-Bruce MP Ben Lobb), councillor Diane Huber, councillor Thead Seaman, Ian McGinty of Bruce Power, councillor Luke Charbonneau, Murray Elston of Bruce Power, councillor Taun Frosst and vice-deputy mayor Doug Gowanlock.

The doctor recruited by the health centre, it turns out, prefers emergency room duty.

The Society bought the townhome using the Bruce Power Local's portion of Bruce Equity distributions. The home has been leased to the town for ten years for \$1 per year. The town has furnished it, and will pay for the overheads, while the Society will pay the property taxes. Saugeen

Shores has a separate agreement with the Grey-Bruce health unit, which covers some of the Town's expenses.

"It's a fabulous facility," Smith said, "and I want to really thank the Society. I've got to give a lot of credit to Rob Stanley—he's been instrumental in bringing this whole thing together."



Photo: John MacLennan

Part of the Society delegation at the Ontario Federation of Labour convention: (L to r, standing) Dan Kellar (Staff Manager), Bhupinder Bajwa (OPG), Jose Freire Canosa (NWMO), Keith Rattai (Hydro One), Bill Jones (EVP Finance), Edik Zwarenstein (OEB), Simon Huang (New Horizon), Geetha Daniell (Toronto Hydro), Jim Botari (Hydro One); (seated) Leslie Forge (EVP Policy), Elaina De Luca (Inergi), Tracy Miller (Vertex), Michelle Byck-Johnston (Hydro One).

Ryan, Kelley elected, Sheppard re-elected at OFL

Patrick Sid Ryan has been elected President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and Marie Kelley has taken over the position of Secretary-Treasurer. Terry Downey will serve another term as Executive Vice President.

Meanwhile, Society President **Rod Sheppard** has been re-elected to the OFL Board as the Vice President representing small affiliates.

Ryan campaigned on a three plank platform of a 'new economy', labour unity, and social solidarity. He has

pledged to:

- ◆ bring together policy experts, economists, academics and labour unions to develop a progressive strategy for the 'new' economy;
- ◆ end divisions to build a strong and united labour front working in solidarity with community partners; and
- ◆ convene a Social Solidarity roundtable and develop research studies to influence public policy on key issues including, social housing, public child care, free post-secondary education and the expansion of community/union health clinics

Ryan, who served as President of the Ontario Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees from 1992, was acclaimed, as was steelworker Kelley.

Kelley takes over from Irene Harris, who served in OFL offices for 12 years. Ryan replaces steelworker Wayne Samuelson, who was OFL President for 12 years.

"This is a talented and dedicated team," said Samuelson.

Delegates approved a 2009-11 "action plan" and direction in pursuit of good, green jobs; quality public services and social safety net; and human rights.

A key element of the OFL action plan is a campaign to pursue a green energy industry with plenty of green jobs.

The Plan calls for significant public investment to make sure the electricity industry serves the needs of Ontario's ratepayers and workers. According to President Sheppard, "I'm happy to be involved at the top level of the Federation in working out the details of the Action Plan. I'll do what I can to make sure it meets our members' needs."

Society delegates to Convention played active roles. **Keith Rattai** (Hydro One Local VP) sat on the credentials and health and safety committees; **Michelle Byck-Johnston** (Hydro One UD) on the aboriginal rights committee; **Bill Jones** (EVP Finance) on the constitution committee; and President Sheppard sat on the resolutions committee and chaired the credentials committee.

Society Newscast 2009:04

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