

UFCW 832  
Spring Telephone Town Hall General Membership Meeting  
May 16, 2017

Jeff Traeger:

Good evening, everyone. My name is Jeff Traeger, and I'm the President of your union, UFCW Local 832. I want to welcome you all to the 2017 Spring Telephone Town Hall General Membership Meeting, for members of Local 832, which is now called to order.

We got a full agenda for you guys tonight. With me in the studio, along with our Communications Coordinator, Chris Noto, is your Secretary Treasurer, Beatrice Bruske; your Director of Negotiations, Martin Trudel; your Director of Servicing, Sandy Forcier; and two special guests, John Sulyma, from Pepsi, and Tom Biebrich, who's on the phone from Beausejour from Sun Gro, both of whom are Vice Presidents on our Executive Board and will be giving you a presentation this evening.

This is our second meeting, trying out the new format that has no reading of reports and more time for you to hear from our guests and ask any questions that you may have. There are three reports that our by-laws require us to approve at this meeting. They are the minutes of the past meeting, Treasurer's Report, and the President's Report. And as we did back in February, we've posted those documents on our website at [UFCW832.com](http://UFCW832.com) for you to review. They've been posted for the last week, and they'll stay on our website in a folder that contains the archived documents of all of our previous Town Hall meetings. We're not going to read those documents tonight, but we will conduct three votes throughout the meeting to pass the approval of them, and this will give us plenty of time to hear from your guests and take your questions.

For all the members on the line that would like to ask a question, please press the star key followed by the number three, and you'll be placed in a queue to ask your question. I would ask that you please remember that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss issues or ask questions about matters that affect all Local 832 members. If you have a specific question about a grievance or an issue that affects your workplace alone, I would ask that you contact your full time union representative, whose name and contact information is available on the UFCW bulletin board in your workplace, or online at [UFCW832.com](http://UFCW832.com).

So, tonight is our second quarterly Town Hall meeting of 2017, and I want to thank all of you who have participated in these meetings for making them such a success. If you know of any members who haven't participated from your workplace, please ask them to try us out for one meeting so they can stay more connected to their union.

Our agenda tonight will begin with voting to approve the minutes of the last meeting, and when we're completing the results of that vote, we'll have a presentation by Martin Trudel, our Negotiations Department Director, who will be speaking about the bargaining process, the importance of solidarity, and the effect that the government's new Bill 28, the Public Services Sustainability Act, will have on UFCW members.

We'll open the line for questions following Martin's presentation, and then we'll call for a vote to approve the Secretary-Treasurer's report. And while we tabulate those results, we'll hear from Sandy Forcier, our Director of Servicing, who will be talking about our servicing department and his role as the Director. After that, we'll open the lines for questions once again.

And finally, we will call for a vote to approve the President's report. While that takes place, we'll hear from John Sulyma and Tom Biebrich from your Executive Board. After we hear from those gentlemen, we will again open the line for questions.

So, I will begin by making a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting which took place on February the 7th, 2017.

Speaker 2: So moved.

Jeff Traeger: Seconded?

Speaker 3: Seconded.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please vote yes by pressing the number one on your keypad, or vote no by pressing the number two on your keypad. Once again, to get in the lineup to ask a question, simply press the star key followed by the number three key, and you'll be placed in the queue. Since we'll be opening the phone lines up for questions soon, please get in the queue now if you have a question.

So, I will now turn it over to Martin Trudel from our Negotiations Department. Martin.

Martin Trudel: Well, thank you, Jeff, and thank you for having me. Although I would like to be talking for quite some time in terms of what we are doing in the Negotiating Department, I'm a little bit restricted for time because I need to be cognizant of my coworkers here that also have some other reports to give on their respective departments, so I'll just touch on the few other important points in what we do in Negotiations.

So, in terms of the structure of the Negotiating Department, often people are asking us, in terms of how our Negotiating Department goes, "Why do you have to structure that we have in place currently?" So, as of right now, we have three full-time negotiators that are strictly dedicated to negotiating the terms of your collective agreements. What we're doing in terms of the division of the work is that each negotiator's specific territory that he or she is assigned to, and the reason being is that we're trying to ensure consistency between rounds of bargaining. So, as time progresses and then collective agreements are being negotiated, having the same negotiator doing said renewal, that ensures consistency and just so the negotiator is effectively more familiar with each

workplace, the management type their workplace has, the type of concessions an employer can bring to the table from one round to the next. So we ensure more consistency and we have better results in the bargaining process.

Second one, I wanted to touch on the steps in the bargaining process. It's often a question we get from our members. Why we do what we do, and why we take the steps that we take. So, essentially, the first step that we have is the proposal meeting. That is when we schedule a bunch of different meetings and times where the membership, you, can attend those meetings and tell us what you want in your collective agreements. Although we do have an idea of certain changes that might need to be taking place between the collective agreements negotiations, we want to hear from you to see what you would like in your contract. It is your contract. It's our job to try to get as many things as you want when it's time for renewal, so that's why we need to hear from you.

So, based on the ideas that we get from the membership at those proposal meetings, that's what we use to draft the proposals that we're presenting to the employer when the bargaining process starts.

Now, once the proposals meetings are done, proposals are drafted based on your ideas. Again, that is when we go through a negotiating process with the employer. And then, once we come to term with the employer, in terms of when we feel that we have a deal in place that could be fair and reasonable, that is when we actually take it to you for a vote. Ultimately what's being decided at the table, again, it's only a tentative agreement. Nothing can be put in place until you vote on it. It's you that has the last say. So, that is when it's very important for all of you to make an attempt to attend a ratification vote, because we need to hear your voice and we need to hear from you in terms of whether or not you're satisfied about the contract terms.

Which takes me to my next point in terms of membership engagement. As you know, strength is in numbers. That's why we absolutely need you to come to those proposal meetings, and we need you to come to those ratification votes. The more people come, the better. Like, strength is in numbers, so the more support we have from you, the stronger we are at the bargaining table.

In order to facilitate that, what we're trying to do in the Negotiating Department, it's an initiative that's been taking place for pretty close to two years right now, is that try as much as possible to add proposal meetings and to add ratification vote meetings. The reason being is we're trying to make it as convenient as possible for you to attend, give you more options, and we've found that over the last couple of years, we've had a much greater number of people attending the proposal meetings, attending the ratification votes, which in turn gives us more power at the bargaining table, and that allows us to get much better results during the negotiation process.

Now, the last point I want to touch on was the potential impact of Bill 28 on the non-profit sector dealing with individuals with disabilities. We currently have about a dozen agencies that would fall under that category, which affects about 2,000 members. Now, we haven't gotten confirmation, as of yet, that Bill 28 would affect all these workers, but we're really concerned that it might. So, we're taking steps ahead of time just to be proactive in terms of now if all the members implicated in this sector would be affected by Bill 28, we have the steps already in place to try to protect them.

Now, the issue that we have with Bill 28 is that if it was to be applied to the members in this sector, then essentially it would sort of like take away, or greatly affect, the potential for meaningful collective bargaining. The reason being is that if we know that there's a predetermined outcome in terms of what could be available in terms of, you know, financial capability for wage increases and what not, if this is predetermined, again, that greatly, greatly, affects our ability to negotiate a proper collective agreement. So as such, we're trying to take steps to notify the government that we're opposed to this, and we will do everything in our power to try to make sure that the members that are part of this sector wouldn't be affected by Bill 28.

That's all I have for tonight. Thank you very much for listening.

Jeff Traeger:

All right. Thank you very much, Martin.

I don't think Martin mentioned the people that are in our Negotiations Department. So, we have Blake Crothers, he used to work in communications, is now a full-time negotiator for the Local, and he was here bargaining with Bunge Canada today. Sonia Taylor is also a full-time negotiator for the Local. Then myself and Bea do bargaining of large agreements like Superstore, Safeway, HyLife, Granny's, both Maple Leaf plants. And, we also have two other folks, Phil, our Health and Safety Coordinator, Phil Kraychuk, does some bargaining. Does a couple of contracts a year. As well as Debra Malmquist in our Legal Department, who also negotiates some contracts on our behalf.

So, thank you, Martin, and I do see that the vote to approve the previous minutes has been passed. So, it is time to take a few questions, and I know there's ... I know we've reached out ... Let me see. We have phoned almost 15,000 ... Make that 16,000 people, and we only have one question on the line. So, I'm going to ask all of you that are out on the line today, if you could please dial in and engage with your union, and ask us any question that you want.

So, I'm going to take it now to Nick from Winnipeg at Superstore. Nick, go ahead. What's your question?

Nick:

Hey.

Jeff Traeger:

Hey. How are you?

Nick: Good. How about you?

Jeff Traeger: I'm doing well, thank you. What is your question?

Nick: I was wondering, how many fish are in the freezer at work?

Jeff Traeger: How many fish are in the freezer at work?

Nick: Yeah.

Jeff Traeger: I ... Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I haven't ... Which Superstore do you work at?

Nick: The one in Winnipeg.

Jeff Traeger: The one in Winnipeg. There's a variety of them in Winnipeg. But, did you also have a question about your breaks?

Nick: Yeah, I was wondering how many breaks we get each shift?

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so we've got the Superstore collective agreement here so ... And, we'll put Bea on, and Bea will let you know how many breaks per shift you get.

Beatrice Bruske: Hey, Nick. So, if you're working a daily shift of five hours or less, you get one 15 minute rest period with pay. If you're working five hours, but less than seven, you get one rest period plus a 30 minute meal period. The 30 minute meal period is without pay and it's scheduled as part of your shift. And if you're working seven hours or less, then basically you have the option of taking one meal period, and one coffee break, or two rest periods. Then, of course, if you're working more than seven hours, an eight hour shift, you get your meal period plus two 15 minute coffee breaks.

Jeff Traeger: There you go. And, we're still working on getting somebody to get out there and count those fish.

So, before moving on to our next guest, I'll make a motion to approve the Secretary-Treasurer's report, and the report that you'll see on our website is for the two month period ending February the 28th, 2017.

Beatrice Bruske: Moved and seconded.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent. It has been moved and seconded, so again, please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes, and the number two on your keypad to vote no. And, if you have a question, and right now we've got no questions on the line, what I'd like you to do is if your question's about the Treasurer's Report or if you want to ask a question of Martin Trudel or myself, or anything else at all,

please press the star key, followed by the number three, and we'll gladly take your question.

So, now I'm going to turn it over to our Director of Servicing, Sandy Forcier. Go ahead, Sandy.

Sandy Forcier: Good evening, everyone. My name is Sandy Forcier, as Jeff just mentioned. So, tonight, what I wanted to do was basically review the role of the Director of Servicing and give you a bit of a job description, if you will, of my position here.

So, in the role of Director of Servicing, there are a wide variety of duties that must be carried out, which included, but not limited to, ensuring that servicing reps are performing their duties, and this is done by compiling and reviewing servicing grids, and ANS grids, and review of grievances at grievance meetings monthly.

Coordinating territory changes with consultation of the Local leadership, and this is done by reviewing workload and travel to try to balance the territories, and not just looking at the number of members alone.

Coordinating time off for sick time and vacation for all reps and specialists.

Work to resolve any issues between service reps and the administrative support staff in conjunction with the Office Manager.

Review with service reps and ensure they are updating the Local database with proper member information. This is important for the Local, as we have to have correct information if we're ever having member votes such as ratifications, or Executive Board nominations, etc.

Have regular monthly meetings with servicing reps as a group and individual meetings with reps to discuss current issues and assist in finding ways to better discharge their duties.

Work with service reps to seek out education and training needs and opportunities, and organize these training opportunities.

Coordinate training for relief reps and new service reps. We've developed a new hire program here that has worked well, and Geoff Bergen and Claudia Colocho are our current full-time relief reps.

Roll out special projects and assignments to service reps, specifically dealing with servicing reps that have been assigned by Local management.

And work to resolve any issues between service reps and the training centre with our Education Director.

The DOS is, or Director of Servicing, is also the front line in dealing with and investigating member complaints. Complaints are investigated, and a report is provided to the President with a response provided to the complainant. All findings, in any situation, are reported to the President. And the largest task of the Director of Servicing is to be a resource to the servicing reps and assist them with day to day issues and challenges they may face in the course of their duties.

The Servicing Department currently has 14 full-time service reps and two full-time service reps. We are currently very busy at the moment as one of our service reps is off on a medical leave, and we have a relief rep assigned to the Marion Street office. We also have a temporary representative, Michelle McHale, assigned to our healthcare campaign, "We Are the Frontline."

I'd also like to take this opportunity, as Martin spoke a little bit about member engagement, and reach out to our membership and ask that they contact me in my role as Director of Servicing, provide me with ideas of how the Servicing Department can better service their units. Maybe our current model is not a one-size-fits-all, and maybe it's different from unit to unit, depending on the nature of the business or the industry. And we need to hear that from you folks. The best way to engage folks is to be inclusive and listen, rather than be exclusive and not listen. And really, that is my report.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent. Well, thank you very much, Sandy. I'm not going to list everybody that works in Sandy's department because he's got about 15 or 16 servicing reps that he's responsible for at this point.

And I do see that the vote to approve the Secretary-Treasurer's report has been passed, and thank you all for listening to me.

We've got a good line up of people on the line for questions now. So, we're going to start with Cheryl from Arctic Co-op here in Winnipeg. Good evening, Cheryl. How are you?

Cheryl: I'm fine, thanks. How are you?

Jeff Traeger: I'm doing well, thank you. What's your question?

Cheryl: I'm just wondering when the next contract is being negotiated for Arctic Co-ops? I'm on disability, so I don't hear too much.

Jeff Traeger: Oh, okay. Well, that ... Your negotiator is Sonia Taylor, and the next contract actually expires June 30th of this year. So, as far as, if you want to get a tighter time frame on when proposal meetings are going to happen or when meeting dates will be set, then what I would suggest you do is contact our office here in Winnipeg at (204) 786-5055 and ask to speak to Sonia Taylor, and she'll give you

all of those dates. But the contract expires at the end of next month, on June the 30th.

Cheryl: Okay. Thank you very much.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent. You're welcome.

Now, we've got Fred Haluschko from BDL here in Winnipeg -- Brewers Distributed Limited. Go ahead, Fred.

Fred: Yeah, I was just wondering, is there any new updates on Heather Grant-Jury? What's going on with that?

Jeff Traeger: Sure. Okay. I can give you an update. The ... For those of you who are or are not, may or may not be aware of the situation, is that about December of 2015, we discovered that there was some financial irregularities at our training centre, and Beatrice and I immediately reported those, investigated those and reported those to the police. Police have been conducting an investigation and actually charged Heather last year. There have been several court dates and our lawyers certainly tell us that ... I'm limited as to how much I can go on about this, Fred, but I can tell you that her case is ... She has been charged. A judge has determined that there is a prima facie case, and that that case will likely go to trial within the next few months.

I can also tell you that we took the opportunity Monday morning, yesterday morning, to meet with a bunch of employers. We had an open house at our training centre because, for those of you that may or may not know, our training centre is actually funded by direct contributions from employers that are negotiated by people like Martin and his team at bargaining times. So, the training centre is not paid for out of your dues money. It's paid for out of direct contributions from the employers. So, since it is their money, we decided that it was a good idea that we met with them to give them the same update that I just gave all of you. And I do make the same commitment that I made in the media back in February of 2016, and that is that I will certainly provide all of our members with a full update once the trial is completed.

I guess the silver lining for us in the dark cloud of that whole experience is that it's caused us to call in a forensic investigation team and review all of the financial operations of the Local and make sure that something like that cannot happen again. And as I said to you all in the past, I can't guarantee that good people won't do bad things, but I can guarantee you that the manner in which things occurred at the training centre in 2015 will not happen again.

So, now we're going to go to Tara Roberts from the Grace Hospital in Winnipeg. Tara, how are you doing tonight?

Tara Roberts: Hi, Jeff. I'm doing great. How are you?

Jeff Traeger: I'm doing good. Thank you for asking. What's your question?

Tara Roberts: Good. My question pertains to, I think it's called Bill 29, and I'm just wondering, is there any precedent set across Canada that has had other, say, provincial governments dictate the number of union representatives allowed for a particular sector?

Jeff Traeger: Now, when you say union representatives, you're talking like unions that represent within a particular sector, right?

Tara Roberts: Yes. Yeah.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah. There actually is. There's one of the precedents is right here in Manitoba.

Tara Roberts: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: It happened when we went down from eleven regional health authorities down to five. There had to be votes conducted in the Parklands Region, in, I think, the Interlake, and in the South as well, where there was different unions that represented workers, and there was a run-off vote taken there. And so, I can tell you that there is precedent here, and there's precedents elsewhere, such as Nova Scotia, where this exact same thing has happened in the past.

We've actually looked at whether or not there is a legal challenge to Bill 29. We've actually looked at whether or not there is a challenge, and right now, it doesn't seem like there is one.

So, I think we'll take one more question. We'll take one more question from Jesus Catacatan from-

Jesus C.: Yeah.

Jeff Traeger: Limited. Hello, Jesus. How are you?

Jesus C.: Hi. As of now, I have no job because they fired me for about the topic of that seniority.

Jeff Traeger: So, you were terminated from Aritzia, were you?

Jesus C.: Yeah, because they said that my last final stage on that counseling, but I don't know what kind of reason is that. They fired me for talking about the seniority for our right.

Jeff Traeger: Okay.

Jesus C.: Because, at that time, they have a meeting on that safety. And then, they changed the topic. They talk about from that seniority for that our workers on

the line, because it's happened to me. I'm a shop steward. One's a dropper, and I'm a mixer. And then they push me to stay into my break, and that is a loss seniority on me.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. Listen, what I'm going to tell you, Jesus ... What I'm going to tell you is that you have a full-time Union representative, whose name is Geoff Bergen, and I strongly recommend that you contact him immediately. I do want to say how sorry I am that you're in the situation that you are, but if there's any way that the employer has acted inappropriately or anything that we can do to help you to get your job back at Aritzia, we certainly will do so. And I know that Geoff Bergen will do everything in his power to make that happen.

So, we still have a couple people on the line, and we're going to ask you to hold on for just one second because we have another guest that we have to get to tonight.

But, before moving on to that guest, I want to make a motion to approve the President's Report.

Beatrice Bruske: Moved and seconded.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so it has been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes, and the number two on your keypad to vote no. And, if you have a question about the President's Report, or anything else at all, please press star three and we will gladly take your question.

So, I will now turn it over to John Sulyma, your Executive Board member from Pepsi. Go ahead, John.

John Sulyma: Good evening, everybody. My name is John Sulyma, and I'm employed by Pepsi-Cola. I've worked there for 32 years. I also sit on the Executive Board for our Local. I would like to share my experience I had at this year's 2017 Canadian Labour Congress Convention. The event took place in Toronto. It was a gathering of over 3,000 labour activists from all Unions across Canada. The conference went from May 8th to May 12th. I will touch on a few things that I had experienced in lieu of time.

So, we had many guest speakers speak at this convention. One of the guest speakers there was Mary Walsh. She gave an inspiring speech on mental health awareness. Candy Palmater talked about inclusion, achieving goals, and fighting racial barriers. We also had the Premier of Alberta, Rachel Notley, talk about the success she's had in Alberta. There were many more, as well, inspiring speakers, but that was just to name a few.

There was many policy resolutions put forward throughout the week. A lot of debate was done on what the priority focus would be for our international union to work on the next three years.

In closing, I would like to say, when you have a room full of over 3,000 Union activists working together at one time, you really feel strong, proud, and have the strength and backing to fight government and corporations, to provide a fair future for all the working class people, young and old.

And just on a separate note, I just want to talk a little bit about my time at Pepsi. We just ratified a contract yesterday. It was a three-year deal, and we had a 78% vote in favour, which is a fairly strong favour for the contract, and we also received the highest wage increase across Canada. In addition, we had a couple more ratification meetings. The meaning behind that was to try and engage our membership to have a bigger turn out, and it turned out to be a great success. We had approximately about an 18% increase over last contract vote, which proves that when you have a few more meetings, it allows people to get out and vote on their future.

That's basically all I have to say. Thank you for your time.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, John. Thank you so much for doing that. And somebody passed me a note here that this man has the voice for radio. Yeah. I won't say the face to go with it, but ... Sorry. Oh, actually, apparently I did say that. Didn't realize my microphone was still on. Sorry. John and I like to bug each other a little bit. Spend a little bit too much time together on the board.

So, I just also want to note that the President's Report has been passed, so I'm going to open the floor ... That's our last report of the evening, so thank you folks for voting on that. We've got about three questions in the queue at the moment. Then, after we take those three questions, we're going to go out to Beausejour and put Tom Biebrich on the line.

Let's start with Lyalani from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Laundry Facility. Lyalani, how are you tonight?

Lyalani: I'm good. How are you?

Jeff Traeger: I'm good, thank you. What's your question?

Lyalani: I'm a [inaudible 00:28:43] in WRHE Laundry and sometimes we are working only three hours per day. Do we have a break for the three hours?

Jeff Traeger: Under your current contract with the laundry facility, there is no break on a shift of three hours or less, unfortunately.

Lyalani: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: Now, we do have bargaining coming up, right? If we ever get to it. If this new provincial government of ours actually ever lets us get to the bargaining table. So, I think that what we should ... Your CBA is open now. So, I think we should

make sure that we have a proposal in place that you folks either have a minimum shift of four hours or that you get a 15 minute break on a three-hour shift. But thanks for joining-

Lyalani: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, thank you. Have a good night, Lyalani.

Now, we're going to go to Monique from Vantage Foods in Winnipeg. Monique?

Monique: Hi.

Jeff Traeger: How are you?

Monique: I'm good. How are you?

Jeff Traeger: I am very good. Your question?

Monique: My question, it's kind of ... I don't even know how to ask it, but it's just basically talking about languages. Talking English on the production floor. I know in the past through our company, we have brought it up, and then we've had our union be involved, and then they've said it's a touchy subject on and off. The last thing I had heard was that they allowed it. The company and the union agreed to do English on the floor only and that if they kept speaking their language on the floor, on the production floor only, because it causes a lot of issues and it causes a lot of problems on the floor ... Now we're told that they're allowed to speak their language on the floor.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so what I'm going ... I'm going to turn your question over to Sandy Forcier in one second, but I do just want to make one comment before I do that, and that is certainly that we're a very inclusive and open union, and we have a lot of members who either speak very little English at all, which is why we offer English language courses both in Winnipeg and in our Brandon Training Centres. We certainly want all of our members to be included.

When it comes to a matter of safety or instruction, sometimes getting that in the language that's your first language is easier and safer than in others. I'm not aware of any agreement to speak whatever language on the floor. I do know that if I look up a Maple Leaf brand, we've got as many as 50 different countries represented and probably a dozen or more languages that are spoken on the floor. So, a lot of the instructional signs and safety signs in the plant are kind of like the bus stop where you see somebody getting on a bus. It doesn't say bus stop in English anymore. It's in a visual language that anybody can understand.

But as far as the specifics of the question, Sandy is actually the union representative at Vantage Foods, besides being our Director of Servicing, so I'm going to turn that over to Sandy.

Sandy Forcier: Sure. So, in regards to the English only policy on the production floor at Vantage Foods, I do have a legal opinion on that, and the only time that a company can enforce an English-only policy, or any language-only policy in a workplace, is if it's of a safety nature. For example, if everyone in the group does communicate or can communicate in English and there is work instruction, they can put a policy in place to say that you can speak English.

But, in a place like Vantage Foods where there's a large number of our membership that do not have English as their first language, there's nothing preventing them from speaking in their own language. It's actually a human rights violation to say that someone cannot speak in their own language, and I know that there's the issue of perception, "Well, how do we know if someone's not talking about me, or a group of people aren't talking about me?" I'll say that that's just what it is. It's a perception. It's not a fact, and we can't deny people to speak in their own language.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent. Thank you for that, Sandy. I appreciate it.

So, we've got one more question, and then we're going to head out to Beausejour to speak to Tom Biebrich.

So, the question is from Darlene from Sobeys West, Inc., a Canada Safeway store. Darlene, go ahead. What's your question tonight?

Darlene: Hi, Jeff. Evening, everyone. I'm just curious, I know other provinces might be negotiating their contract with Sobeys prior to our negotiations in March of 2018, and I was wondering, is it possible to have an executive member of our negotiating committee at the table of those talks just to observe and maybe get some insight into what we might expect during our negotiations?

Jeff Traeger: Sure. Absolutely, it is, and it's something that we've done in the past with both Loblaw and Safeway before it was Sobeys. Right now, the BC agreement is just coming up on the five-year mark, which is where it opens for renegotiation with no strike or lockout clause. They have an automatic term of another five years coming up, and that's coincidental with ours, which is in March of 2018.

There's only one store represented by Sobeys West, Inc. in Saskatchewan. It actually has a collective agreement that it goes until 2019, but open for bargaining right now is UFCW Local 401, which has 8,500 members working at Safeway stores in the province.

I've had direct communication with Doug O'Halloran, who's the President of Local 401. They have not had any meetings yet. They're providing me with their proposals, and they've committed to providing me with the company's proposals as soon as they're tabled. I've got an open invitation from Doug. He's going to send me bargaining dates as they come along. I have an open invitation to come and speak as long as I behave myself. Right?

So, I have every intention of trying to find out what kind of a tack Sobeys is going to take in Alberta, and then I'm going to make sure I roll that out to people when we start doing our bargaining preparation, which will probably be in September or October. Company here in Manitoba, so you know, has already said that they're interested in sitting down a little bit early like we did last time. We started bargaining in December last time for our March, mid-March renewal, and we're going to the same thing again this time.

Darlene: Sounds good. I'd like to be a fly on that wall.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. All right. Very good. Well, you have a good night.

So now, I am going to ... On the line from Beausejour is your Executive Board member, working at Sun Gro, and that's Tom Biebrich. So, take it away, Tom.

Tom Biebrich: Good evening, Jeff. Thank you.

Jeff Traeger: You're welcome.

Tom Biebrich: Good evening, everybody. It's a pleasure for me talk to you. I wanted to speak about a couple different things tonight.

First off, I just wanted to talk about my time as a facilitator. Like a lot of you, I started out on the sidelines, you know, just sitting back, letting things go, and at one point, somebody asked me if I would be a shop steward. So, I said yes, and I started in with the union stuff. And then I started going to courses, started learning more things in that.

One lady in particular told me a few times, you know, "Tom, would you ever think about being a facilitator?" Which I never did. And it wasn't until I took a public speaking course that ... It gave me enough confidence that I went into Heather's office, and I treated it like a job interview. I told her my strengths. I told her what I knew that I needed to work on and that, and she said, "You know what? Let's get you started right away."

So, the very next week, I started co-facilitating, and you know, over my time, I worked with a lot of great people. They taught me a lot of things. Hopefully, I put in some things that they liked as well. Over the last four and a half, five years, I have given five different ... No, not five. Eight different courses throughout the time. I've traveled to Thompson. I've traveled to Dauphin. I've traveled to Brandon. I've given courses in Winnipeg. I've met so many great people, and at the end of the courses, I always thank people. I say, "You know what? I love meeting people. I love hearing new ideas." And, every course that I give, it doesn't matter how many times that I give it, I always learn something new. So, thank you very much for that.

I did take a little break from facilitating. Now, I will be talking to Aaron, and I know people have been asking me, you know, "When are you going to be giving your next course?" I will be talking to Aaron, and rest assured, I do want to come back in fall time and keep on giving courses, keep on meeting people, and having a great time.

The second thing I wanted to touch on was my experiences being on the Executive Board. You know, I have done relief work. I have done organizing, co-facilitating, facilitating. And luckily, I was nominated to be on the Executive Board, and during the election, I was voted in. So, I started my time not knowing what exactly, what was going to happen during my term. But, there are different committees that we can go on. That's when we come into this role. You could be on the Auto Committee, you could be on the Hardship Committee, which actually we hear different stories. Maybe one of our members has suffered a fire and they need a little bit of money to help them get going again. So we as an executive board will listen to this, we will vote on and discuss what kind of money we can give these people to get back on the road to wellness.

We also listen to the different reports, such as these finance reports, and we vote on that. We hear requests, and we vote on different donations that come into the union. Sometimes we do listen to and vote on appeals. You know, I'm not going to kid you. Sometimes it doesn't turn out well for the person, but we try our best.

One of the things I like about being on the Executive Board, and also being an activist, is that I get to talk to a lot of people and just list off all the pros that go along with being with the union. Another thing that we do is we attend different functions. Last year was the first time that I attended two of the pride parades. And it was great. I had a lot of fun doing that. I enjoy my time being on the Executive Board. I love meeting people and talking to them about union issues.

The last thing I wanted to touch on was Aboriginal Day. So, fellow Vice-President, Eric Flatt and I are on the UFCW Canada Indigenous Subcommittee. And we have had a few conference calls already on how we can have something to commemorate National Aboriginal Day. And June 23 in Calgary, at Local 401, they're hosting the first National Aboriginal Day Conference. So, our event goal is to bring together indigenous and non-indigenous workers in commemoration of National Aboriginal Day. We're going to have a daytime workshop to learn from each other's life experiences and to apply principles of reconciliation into our lives, our work, and our union. And hopefully we can come up with more ideas of how to include indigenous people into the workplace, make them feel more welcome. Because that is one of the biggest ... Or it is the biggest demographic of upcoming workers.

We are going to have an elder to open up the ceremony. We are going to have an all-day conference. And ... One second here ... One thing I learned is we're going to have a Round Dance. So, what a Round Dance is ... It is a healing

ceremony. It's also a friendship ceremony. It's performed during the Intertribal portion of the Powwow. But the great thing is -- it brings young and old together at the same time. Everybody can join in. Everybody has a great time.

We are going to be having a traditional indigenous meal at the end of this conference, and hopefully at the end of all of this, we will walk away with more ideas of how to include people, how to get more workplaces included in everything, and just keep this going year to year. Thank you very much.

Jeff Traeger:

Excellent. Well, thank you very much for that, Tom. That's great, and I know the Board will be looking forward to hearing your report, from both you and Eric at our next meeting. And just so you know, our next meeting of the Executive Board, and we do this once a year, is going to be in Gimli, Manitoba. We take it outside of Winnipeg. Last year, we were in Dauphin. It was really quite good because we were able to tour all the various units in Dauphin, and we were actually able to be there for the grand opening of the new co-op store, which was a real treat.

And while we're working on getting tours of both the Fairwax and Diageo in Gimli, and UFCW Canada does their youth internship program out in Gimli, and we've timed our Executive Board meeting with that same group. So, we're going to have a meet and greet, and if any of you members happen to be in Gimli after 6:00 at the Lakeview Hotel on July the 20th, you're more than welcome to come out and meet your Executive Board and meet the members from UFCW Canada Youth Internship Program. And Bea and I will be there as well.

And speaking of Bea, I know she's got a couple of announcements that she wants to make before we adjourn. Last chance to get on the line and ask a question. That's the star key and the number three. We've got nobody in the cue right now. So, after Bea's report, if there are no further questions, we will adjourn. Go ahead, Bea.

Beatrice Bruske:

Yes, I just want to give a quick update on the We Are the Frontline Healthcare Campaign. As most of our healthcare members well know, our government has recently been passing Bill 28 and Bill 29, which impact our non-profit sector and our healthcare workers specifically. We've been very fortunate to have Michelle McHale step into the We Are the Frontline Campaign during Alyne Odette's medical absence. To date, Alyne and many of our shop stewards in the healthcare sector and Michelle have repeatedly connected with our members in the various different healthcare sites. St. Boniface, the WRHA, the Grace Hospital. We've shared information regarding the two bills -- Bill 28 and Bill 29 on our website, [www.wearethefrontline.ca](http://www.wearethefrontline.ca). That's where the most updated information is posted on a regular basis.

In the coming weeks, healthcare staff can expect to see their UFCW shop stewards, UFCW reps onsite, gathering questions from the various different workplaces and listening to the concerns. We have more questions than

answers at this time ourselves, as we're not entirely certain yet how government is going to be proceeding with Bill 29 in terms of the healthcare representation votes. And Michelle and JP will also be spending some time in the North with our northern healthcare workers in late June.

On top of that, we have a couple of updates in terms of upcoming meetings that will be happening within the next couple weeks. Phil Kraychuk, who is negotiating the Fort La Bosse School Division collective agreement, is holding proposal meetings on Thursday, May 18, at 5:00 pm at the Comfort Inn, in Virden, Manitoba. We have a ratification vote coming up for Brewer's Distributors, Blake Crothers recently bargained that collective agreement and that ratification vote is scheduled for Saturday, May 27, at 10 am at the Canad Inns on Pembina highway.

Our Crown Produce proposal meeting, which Blake is also bargaining, that proposal meeting will be taking place on Friday, June the 2nd, at 4:15 at the Best Western Plus on Wellington Avenue. And lastly, our Carman Co-op ratification vote, which Sonia Taylor recently negotiated, is scheduled for June the 4th at 6:30 pm in Carman at the Breakaway Family Restaurant.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. Thank you very much, Bea.

I see we have one more caller on the line, and we're going to try to get through to him now. Or her. It's Erin from Red River Co-op in Grant Park. Having a minor technical glitch with getting Erin on the line, but just bear with us for a second. Maybe Bea can come up with one more thing to talk about while we try to figure out the glitch here.

Beatrice Bruske: Yes, as Jeff mentioned, we have the Pride Parade coming up in Winnipeg on Sunday, June the 4th at noon. Any of our members who would like to join us, we will be out in full force with a float and all those kinds of things, can get in contact with our rep, Joe, at the Winnipeg office and make sure that they get to be a part of that particular process. In Brandon, in the Pride Parade is taking place on June 17th. And the Thompson Pride Parade is June 26 of this year, also.

Jeff Traeger: Perfect. Thank you. We fixed up the glitch here, so now we're going to go to Erin from Red River Co-op in Winnipeg. Go ahead, Erin.

Erin: Hi there. So I have two questions. The first one is, I'm wondering with the Red River Co-op, will we be on our own with the renegotiations come March 2018? Or will you be ...

Jeff Traeger: No. You will be on your own.

Tom Biebrich: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: So right now we've got approximately 22 Safeway Stores, and for those callers on the line that don't know, the Red River Co-op stores were originally Safeway Stores, and after Sobeys bought Canada Safeway, the Competition Bureau forced Sobeys to sell the four stores -- actually five -- because there was the Price Choppers, as well, which was purchased by the Northwest Company. And that's closing. But your collective agreement right now, because we were at the bargaining table when the sale took place, is identical to the Sobeys agreement, but we will be bargaining separately. So, we will bargain the Sobeys agreement with Sobeys, and we will be bargaining the Red River Co-op agreement with Red River Co-op. And that will be completely separate and apart, and I am assuming that after that your contracts will no longer be identical. They both expire on the same day, and we intend to have them both renewed by March the 18th, 2018.

What's your second question?

Erin: Okay. And my second question is, in the current contract, it does state registered pharmacy technicians are not a part of the union, and so, I'm wondering is that going to be something that -- I'm currently not one myself, just to clarify -- but, I'm just wondering is that going to be something, a part of the second or next contract coming up? When we're only Red River Co-op?

Jeff Traeger: Yeah. Okay. I'm going to let Bea take that question.

Erin: Thanks.

Beatrice Bruske: Hi Erin. So, anything is obviously up for discussion when it comes time to renegotiate a collective agreement. So, we can make whichever proposals our members would like us to make. And that could include dealing with the registered pharmacy technician vs. the pharmacy assistant, which is what we have in the collective agreement currently. There is still some debate as to whether or not our retail employers are actually going to have that classification working within their establishments. They have not yet indicated to us that their intention or expectation is to have that requirement for working in the retail stores that they are currently running, the way their pharmacies are currently being run.

Jeff Traeger: There you go. Okay. And that was our last question of the night. So we have actually managed to answer all the questions from our group. I do want to thank all of you for joining us on our telephone town hall. We will be conducting our next general membership meeting on Tuesday, September the 12th, 2017, by telephone town hall, as well, beginning at 7:00 pm.

So, thank you, again, for participating in your union, and we are now adjourned.