

This year has been another great year in the Northern District and I am excited to share this report with delegates to the 2022 Presidents Conference. Much like in 2021, a quarterly call was held with local Presidents in Northern Ontario on February 9 to get a pulse of what was happening in their locals. We also initiated a conversation about what they would like to see at the next District Conference. Having received a lot of training since the National Vice-Presidents were elected, local presidents were looking for opportunities to engage with other members across the district but also to learn something a bit different outside of what CEIU traditionally offers.

Just as we did in 2021, the Eastern and Northern District held a joint district conference which originally would have seen delegates in Eastern Ontario meeting in Kingston while those in Northern Ontario would be meeting at the PSAC Regional Office in Sudbury. The intention was to have both meeting spaces linked using the OWLs we have for the region. Given the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases in Kingston, delegates from Eastern Ontario participated virtually; there was no impact in Sudbury as the numbers were relatively low and stable. When the Northern Caucus met, we heard from our National Vice-President, Phil Matheson, on what was happening at the National Executive. Part of that day was also focused on two things: allowing delegates to share their stories, issues and best practices with one another in order to help each other, and, we had a productive brainstorming session on mobilization around collective bargaining. We were fortunate to have several members involved in the collective bargaining process attend the conference. On the final day, delegates attended a panel discussion with Sean McNeill (Eastern District Representative), Dr. David Leadbeater (author and former professor at Laurentian University) as well as me. The discussion was centered on what unions mean to local communities. The conversation was thought-provoking, and the hope was that local leaders would be able to take what they heard and apply it to their work around collective solidarity in their own communities.

This year also shaped the Northern District a little differently. In the spring, we saw two mergers occur (finalization pending). Given the reality that some locals have decreased

in membership (in some cases substantially), locals worked with the NVPs and me to consider mergers. By the end of this year, the Northern District will have two fewer locals, but a better functioning structure.

Over the first eight months of the year, I've been able to attend several General Membership Meetings – both in my capacity as district representative and member of the PA Bargaining Team. However, on August 7, I resigned my position as the district representative having accepted a new position with our component as a National Union Representative. As excited as I was accepting this incredible opportunity, I was, and am, sad to be leaving my union family who has embraced me from the first day. I am confident that Sarah will continue to do great work and excel in this role.

Forever in solidarity,

D'Arcy Gauthier

Sarah's portion:

In August, I joined ORC as Northern District Representative, coming in with big shoes to fill. I have spent the last 2 months learning about my role and preparing for the Presidents' Conference. In the coming months, I am planning to continue the quarterly meetings with the local representatives of the North as having attending as President of Local 650, I believe they are important to share the experiences of each local, support each other and provide feedback to build a stronger district. I am committed to supporting the mergers that are taking place within this district to ensure they are as seamless as possible. Much like the other representatives, I am hopeful for the opportunity to join general meetings in my district, both in person and virtually to connect with members of the North.

I am very proud to be in this role and look forward to the challenges over the remainder of the term.

In solidarity,

Sarah Walraven

