

ufcwnews



In this edition of our union newsletter, we provide updates on leadership and staffing changes as well as news on union contract negotiations and organizing. Connect with your union by getting in touch and asking about ways to get involved!

Leading by Engagement

Last October's engagement conference left us all feeling empowered. The UFCW Local 247 Engagement Committee that organized the conference didn't want it to be a one-time event. They wanted it to be a significant step in a new direction for Local 247, one characterized by well-informed and engaged members who feel pride in their union.

"We want to build on the sense of solidarity and connection members feel when they think of themselves as union members," said UFCW Local 247 President Dan Goodman. "We do that by opening spaces for members to learn about, enforce, and improve their workplace rights."

In the weeks since the conference, activists and union staff have held over a dozen events in nearly all corners of BC, including free movie nights in December for members and their families.

Driving the visibility of our union with new members, our Engagement Committee, together with the support of UFCW Local 247 leadership and staff, promise much more to come.



Free movie nights during the holiday season have proven popular events for UFCW Local 247 members and their families.

In Your Workplace

In recent weeks, UFCW Local 247 Union Representatives have been continuing to host "union pop-up" events in members' workplaces across the province. Featuring fun contests, union information and delicious treats (of course!), these events are opportunities for members to get to know their union representatives, shop stewards, and leadership face-to-face. While we increase how we can communicate in the digital age, we know nothing beats face-to-face events in our members' workplaces.

"Just glancing at the newly refreshed union bulletin boards, it's hard to avoid noting the many new ways members can engage with their union," said President Goodman, a frequent participant in these events. "Members can email, call, and now text message their representatives, but they can also take free union courses and join union committees. Our pop-up events help to bring the union to the members, and it's part of our new way of doing things."



Connect with Telephone Town Hall meetings!



UFCW Local 247 members live and work in all corners of BC. To better connect members with the latest news and information from their union, we hold quarterly General Membership Meetings via Telephone Townhall calls.

Upcoming calls for 2025 are:

- May 29 at 7pm
- August 28 at 7pm
- November 20 at 7pm

If we have your current phone number, we'll call you. All you have to do is answer. Members can also join the calls by dialing **1.877.229.8493** and entering ID **#116389** following the prompts.

this issue

p2 Charles Pratt - Thank you!

p2 Staffing Changes

**p3 Cathy Shannon:
A Member's Journey**

p4 Bargaining Updates

p4 Organizing Win

**p4 Endless Savings & More
(ESM)**

p4 webCampus

p4 Connect with Your Union



Charles Pratt – Thank you!

UFCW Local 247 Secretary-Treasurer Charles Pratt has been a cornerstone of our union, providing steadfast leadership, financial stewardship, and an unwavering commitment to the rights and well-being of our members. That's why it was with mixed emotions that we shared that we had received notice of his retirement this past February 2025.

Charles was hired as a Baker in Training at the Metrotown Superstore when it first opened in 1989. He became a Shop Steward and was elected to the position of Recording Secretary for UFCW Local 777 in 1992.

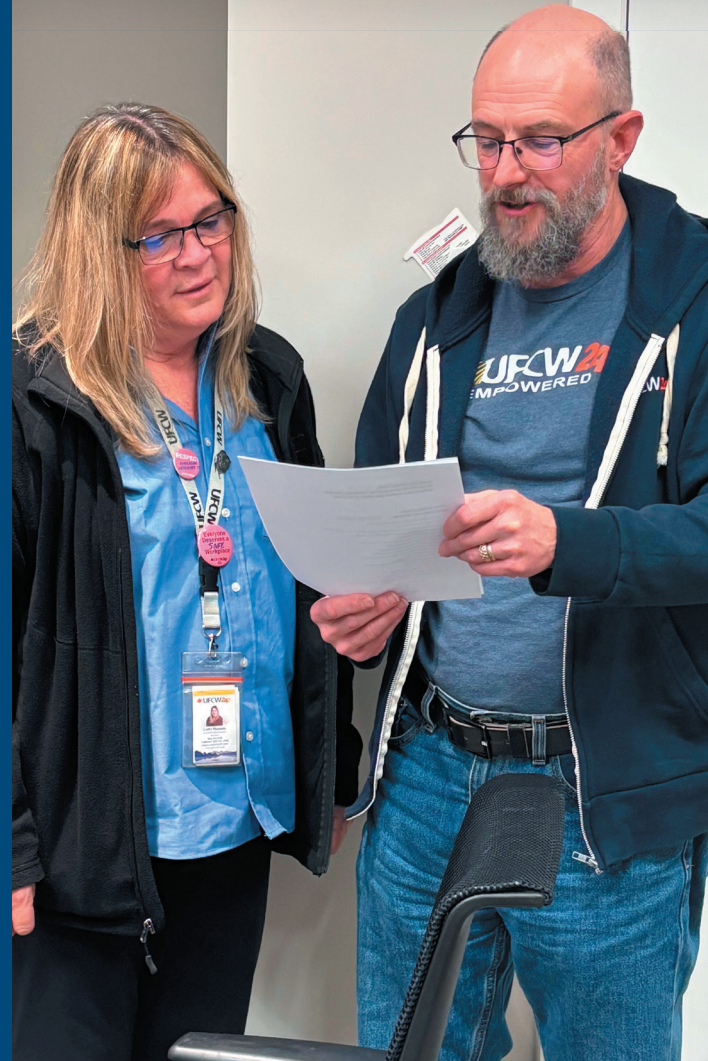
In 1995, Charles took the opportunity to assist with servicing and was hired on as a full-time union representative a year later. His servicing assignments crisscrossed the province, from Vancouver Island to Northern BC, the Fraser Valley, and the Lower Mainland.

UFCW Local 247 members who ever needed assistance with their WorkSafeBC claims may have been encouraged to “call Chuck” for his specialized and technical knowledge of the workers’ compensation system. He carried this responsibility with wisdom and poise for nearly 25 years.

In 2011, Charles was promoted to Assistant to the President and provided an important leadership role for union representatives servicing Loblaw stores. His vast experience and expertise led to his election as Secretary-Treasurer of Local 247, a position he held from 2021 until his retirement.

While we are happy for Charles and wish him the best in his retirement, the challenge is now on us to let him enjoy his retirement and not continually knock on his door with burning questions.

Charles noted that he felt it was both an honour and a privilege to have served hardworking UFCW Local 247 members during his three decades as a union staff member. We'll miss you, Chuck!



Other Staffing Changes



With Charles Pratt's retirement, there have been some other staffing changes.

Director of Bargaining **Dean Patriquin** has been

appointed to the position of Executive Assistant to the President. Dean started at Superstore as a member of UFCW Local 401 in Edmonton in 1986. After serving on the bargaining committee and in various staff roles from 1988-1997, he was hired by the UFCW Canada National Office as a union representative. Two years later, Dean moved to BC and was hired by Local 777 in 1999, serving as a union representative and servicing workplaces across most of the province. In 2006, Dean was appointed Director of Training and ran numerous programs aimed at assisting people in obtaining employment through various government-funded training programs.

For the last several years, Dean has served as the Director of Bargaining, negotiating dozens of collective agreements for members in all sectors. In his new role, Dean will continue to assist with

bargaining and also with guiding the local in areas previously covered by Cathy Shannon and Charles Pratt.



Promoted to the position of Assistant to the President is **Eric Seto**. Eric started in the Vancouver Loblaw warehouse as a part-time order selector, eventually taking on other

roles such as trainer, forklift operator, and receiver. Soon after, Eric took on the role of workplace leader, serving as shop steward and health and safety representative at his workplace.

In 1998, Eric joined the UFCW Local 777 Executive Board and was hired as a union staff representative in 2002. Since then, Eric has served members across the local as union representative, negotiator, communications officer, and WCB advocate. For several years, Eric has represented UFCW Local 247 on the UFCW Canada Human Rights, Equity, and Diversity Committee. In his new role, Eric will lead union representatives in matters related to Loblaw servicing.



Assistant to the President Eric Seto (right) and UFCW Local 247 Vice President Peter Parmar (left) connect at the Engagement Conference in the Fall of 2024.



Cathy Shannon: A Member's Journey

With Charles Pratt's retirement from the position of Secretary-Treasurer, under the UFCW Constitution, the UFCW Local 247

Executive Board was required to elect a replacement.

Cathy Shannon has been a fixture for Safeway members across the province for many years, from her twenty years working in the stores to the same number of years serving UFCW members as a union staff member. In February, Cathy Shannon was elected by the Executive Board to serve in the position of Secretary-Treasurer of UFCW Local 247.

We caught up with Cathy to ask about her forty years of UFCW membership and how she sees her new role.

When did you first become a UFCW member?

It's hard to believe, but it has been forty years since I first became a member of UFCW. I started working as a Meat Wrapper at Safeway in 1985. Both of my parents were UFCW members, so I guess it was inevitable that I would follow in their footsteps.

My dad worked as a Safeway Meat Cutter and was a member of UFCW Local 2000 (a predecessor to our Local 247), and my mom was a Safeway Cashier and a member of UFCW Local 1518. Like my dad, I loved working in the meat department. Like my mom, I eventually became a shop steward. Both experiences changed my life.

What made you decide to get engaged in your union?

My parents made sure I always understood the importance of having a union. They knew that, without a union or anyone to answer to, businesses put their interests over those of their employees. This impacted my family in a real way when my dad suffered a stroke in the early 1990s. He had difficulty gaining access to his long-term disability benefits, and his struggles really angered me.

Ultimately, that experience pushed me to action. If my dad had to face these difficulties, I realized, there are likely many others in similar situations who need help. I became a shop steward simply so I could help my fellow members, including those like my dad.

So for roughly 20 years, you were an active steward helping members with their day-to-day issues. How did you end up working full-time as a union staff representative?

UFCW was preparing for union contract negotiations with Safeway, and I attended one of the contract proposal meetings with some coworkers. There was a lot of debate about priorities for negotiations, and I spoke up quite a bit. I was encouraged to step up and sit on the bargaining committee, so I did.

In those bargaining meetings, I learned all about our contract. I also realized what goes into fighting

for things like better scheduling provisions, benefit plans, and other things I had thought were just a given. It was eye-opening.

I expanded my experience in the store by working outside the meat department. I worked as a Seafood Operator and Deli Clerk. I continued to serve on the bargaining committee for a few contracts while also using my newfound knowledge about how things worked to support members in my store.

In the early 2000s, there was a proposal to merge our local, UFCW Local 2000, with another, UFCW Local 777, which represented Superstore employees in the province. I got involved and advocated in support of the merger, which was approved by a membership vote in 2002, creating UFCW Local 247.

All of that got me very interested not just in bargaining and being a shop steward but in how unions operate and address challenges, like dealing with bigger and more aggressive employers.

In 2003, I was offered the chance to work as a relief union representative, taking calls from members and visiting workplaces of other employers we deal with. This opened my eyes even more. I realized that our union includes thousands of BC workers beyond my store and beyond Safeway. In 2005, there was a vacancy for a permanent position, so that's when I was hired by UFCW permanently.

It is eye-opening when you zoom out on the work a union does. What was your experience like as a union staff representative?

While my focus was Safeway for obvious reasons, over the past 20 years, I also serviced Superstore, Save On Foods, and for a long time, the Grimms Fine Foods plant in Richmond. Grimms merged with Freybe to form FG Deli in Langley. Centennial Foods was also one of my long-term sites.

Over the years, I learned a lot about the different challenges in these industries and with these employers. One thing that never changed is that I just want to keep being there for people who need my help.

And now you've been elected by the Executive Board to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. What has prepared you for this role?

Members who know me are aware that my feet are firmly on the ground - or more accurately, on the shop floor with the members. As a representative, I've served members in grievance meetings, disability cases, arbitrations, and even as lead spokesperson for UFCW in contract negotiations. Over the past few years, I've been Executive Assistant to President Dan Goodman and have taken on important roles as a Trustee on our benefit and pension plans. Through all this unseen work, I also know who I am and where I came from: I'm a Safeway worker who got involved in her union to help people in their workplaces.

Lastly, what are your goals for this position?

I want to get out more to our workplaces, open spaces for members to participate in their union, and find more efficient ways of doing union work as we adapt to a changing world.

Our Local is transforming. We are trying things we have never tried before, and we are innovating. Our member-driven Engagement Committee just put on an amazing conference that brought energy to our local that will be its power well into the future. I want to continue to promote opening those kinds of spaces for our members who have ideas about what they want their union to be. I want to help members turn their ideas into a reality. I also want to show our diverse members what a union is and how it can help them.

As Secretary-Treasurer, financial responsibility is an important part of my role. We are an independent non-profit organization. That means our revenue comes from dues, not funding from some government or elsewhere. That means we can speak up for our members without fear of repercussions from anyone but our membership. Our dues revenue has to pay for the services and support our members need, so every dues dollar must be used well.

We've already taken on some improvements that have saved us money, like modernizing our phone system and adding text messaging to our ways to connect with members. We also renovated and rented out some unused office space at our Surrey office, generating solid revenue from a stable tenant. We renovated another section of our building to use for bargaining meetings and education courses for members, saving on expensive hotel meeting spaces.

There is so much work ahead, and it's an exciting time for our local. I'm so grateful to have been given this opportunity.

When not visiting UFCW Local 247 workplaces or working late at the office, Cathy spends time with her brother, daughter, and grandchildren Taytum, Maverick, and Grady.

Cathy can be reached at cshannon@ufcw247.com.



Bargaining Updates

Already, 2025 is a busy year for union contract negotiations across the province. Here is a listing of some recent bargaining wins and current and upcoming bargaining.

New contracts approved by members at:

- Stongs Market
- Fresh Street Market
- Five Corners (Chilliwack)
- No Frills (Maple Ridge)

Current and upcoming bargaining:

Swiss Water Decaffeinated Coffee	Tentative Agreement reached
Rio Steakhouse (Denman)	Ongoing (First Collective Agreement)
No Frills (Trail)	Ongoing
Aramark (Delta)	Ongoing
Sobeys Warehouse	Upcoming
Wholesale Club	Upcoming
YIG (Kelowna)	Upcoming
YIG (Davie Street)	Upcoming
FG Deli Group	Upcoming
Centennial Foods	Upcoming
YIG (Creston)	Upcoming

Organizing Win

We are very pleased to welcome restaurant employees at **Rio Steakhouse** on Denman in Vancouver to UFCW Local 247. With assistance from the UFCW Canada National Office, these workers organized and voted overwhelmingly to form a union at their workplace in December 2024. UFCW Representative Johnny Khakh has been assigned to service the workplace, and Communications and Organizing Coordinator Mike Toal will lead bargaining.

Endless Savings & More (ESM): Discounts on your smart phone for UFCW 247 Members

Download a UFCW 247 version of the Endless Savings & More App to save on everyday purchases from hundreds of businesses including national chain retailers, service and travel providers. Powered by Endless Savings & More (ESM), this program is available to UFCW 247 members and their families.

How It Works

- Install the UFCW 247 version of the ESM App on your smart phone
- GPS automatically shows merchants and savings that are closest to your current location
- Tap on a merchant to view offers & tap on an offer for redemption details

- You typically show the offer on your smart phone at payment in physical locations or enter a code for online purchases

Getting Started

- Go to your app store (Google or Apple) on your smart phone
- Search for: ESM or Endless Savings & More
- During registration you will be asked for an "organization code": Your code is: **ufcw247**
- Allow location services. ESM uses "location services" or GPS to automatically show you offers that are closest to your current location first

How to Save Hundreds

- Check out the UFCW 247 "Exclusive Offers" and save hundreds on your smart phone & plan from Rogers. UFCW 247 "Exclusive Offers" always appear first when you tap the ESM App
- Check out the "Travel and Play" category on the ESM App to save hundreds on your next travel
- When in the mall or your shopping district, always "Tap the ESM App" to save additional hundreds per year



webCampus: Free online courses for members and their families!

webCampus is UFCW Canada's online learning program that allows UFCW Canada members and their family members to access their favourite online courses – free of charge – on all tablets, smart phones, laptops, desktops, and Apple computers and devices, meaning participants can complete courses whenever and wherever they want.

webCampus courses focus on everything from personal development to health and safety to computer skills, and are available to all UFCW Canada members and family members at no cost.

To learn more about webCampusPLUS, please go to ufcw.ca, and follow the webCampus links.

Connect with your Union:

Call: 604.535.8329 or
1.888.361.UFCW (8329)

Email: ufcw@ufcw247.com

Visit: www.ufcw247.com

Social: @ufcw247



MAIN OFFICE

200 - 14936 32nd Ave.
Surrey, BC V4P 3R5

KELOWNA OFFICE

206 - 1889 Spall Rd.
Kelowna, BC V1Y 4R2

VICTORIA OFFICE

B - 3943 Quadra St.
Victoria, BC V8X 1J5

PRINCE GEORGE OFFICE

307 - 1717 3rd Ave.
Prince George, BC V2L 3G7