

# USW@Work

A magazine for the United Steelworkers

Spring 2015

**Stephanie Kestle**  
Splicer, TWU-USW Local 1944



USW Local 9466, InterContinental Hotel

Special Photo Essay

## Our Workplaces

## More than . . .

# Getting to Know Our Steelworker Family

In this special issue of *USW@Work*, we feature a photo essay of our Steelworker family in workplaces from coast to coast.

If you ever find it a challenge to describe our union – and I’m sure you do, because we aren’t just making steel anymore – this edition of *USW@Work* will help you out. The United Steelworkers represent workers in so many different industries and workplaces – forestry, post-secondary education, health care, mining, manufacturing, traditional steelmaking, hospitality, the growing renewable energy sector and more.

These fantastic photos of our members at work show our union’s diversity and range. Steelworkers are women and men, we’re from different backgrounds and ages, we work in a range of industries doing any kind of job you can imagine and some that you have to see to believe.

Meet Bill and Brad from Vancouver Island who work in forestry and are proud members of the United Steelworkers. Meet Güler who works in the restaurant in one of Toronto’s finest hotels and is a proud USW member. Meet Martine Dufresne, an emergency response/security officer at a copper refinery near Montreal who is highly trained to respond to complex industrial hazards. Meet Jason Gladney, a welder and USW activist working in a previously abandoned railcar plant that has been converted to produce massive towers for wind energy farms in Atlantic Canada.

We come together as Steelworkers at events, conferences and through political action, but all of us start out as Steelworkers in our workplaces. It’s at work that we begin to learn about and get connected with our union and its principles of fairness, justice and dignity for all. It’s through our union at work that we learn about health and safety, the grievance process or become a steward or get elected to the bargaining committee.

In these profiles of our members, you’ll discover what the union means to them: a fair wage, job security, safety, opportunity, equality and a voice at work.

I’m so proud to meet my sisters and brothers through these pages and get a bigger picture about who we are as a union family.

It’s this connection that makes us strong – all of us at work, whatever that work might be, doing our jobs and being protected by and connected through our great union.

In solidarity,



Ken Neumann



USW Local 13571, Mirolin



USW Local 8328, Welded Tube of Canada



Photo: Jean-René Dumas

USW Local 9400, Hôtel Travelodge Montreal Centre



USW Local 2010 Queen's University



Photo: DSME

USW Local 1231, DSME Trenton

# Our Men and Women of Steel

# Steel

See page 14

Photos: Steve Dietz

# PREPARE MOBILIZE ACT!

# Lessons learned in the Rio Tinto lockout

As the USW and other unions mount a worldwide campaign against Rio Tinto's trampling of environmental, labour and indigenous peoples' rights, the story of the Steelworkers' victory over the global giant in Alma, Que., is worth studying.

The strategic campaign of USW Local 9490 began long before the six-month lockout at Rio Tinto's Alma aluminum smelter that ended in July 2012.



Marc Maltais

## PREPARATION

"We started our campaign before there was ever the probability of a strike or lockout," says Marc Maltais, the President of Local 9490 during the lockout who is now a regional director of the Quebec Federation of Labour.

Maltais and USW Staff Representative Dominic Lemieux recently outlined the strategic campaign that reached as far as Australia, New Zealand and even the London Olympics.

"We began by identifying our key issue as contracting out," says Lemieux. "The company was contracting out the work of retiring workers, paying half the wages with no pensions or benefits."

As bargaining got underway in 2011, many other concessions were put forward by the company and negotiators for the 780 workers knew that a battle was likely.

## MOBILIZATION

Local 9490 set out two objectives: to inform the public about the company's plans to devalue the good, unionized jobs at the smelter; and to mobilize members to withstand whatever was to come.

"Preparation, mobilization and action were our goals and would become our strength," says Maltais. "Our clear message was about keeping good jobs in our community."

Rio Tinto Alcan had a good reputation in the community of 30,000, including sponsoring many charity events. It is also the largest private producer of electricity in the area. That fact would later work in the union's favour when a 60,000-signature petition against Rio Tinto's sale of power to Hydro-Québec was presented in Quebec's National Assembly.

"We had to start early on making sure that our friends and neighbours understood that giving in to contracting out and concessions would negatively impact the future of everyone in the entire region," says Lemieux. "It was risky and Rio Tinto had the media's ear."

As the collective agreement expired on Dec. 31, 2011, Rio Tinto rang in the New Year by locking out workers.

## ACTION AND SOLIDARITY

With the members mobilized and prepared, every level of the USW in Canada and the U.S. came together to build momentum over the coming months. Other unions came forward with funds. Unionized Rio Tinto workers globally came to know the struggle in Alma. Local 9490 members converged on Rio Tinto events internationally.

The USW's global union partner, Unite the Union, was instrumental in bringing attention to the Rio Tinto-tainted medals being awarded at the London Summer Olympics.

"Our members knew they were not alone," says Maltais. "We had to pace ourselves with activities at home to ensure that, no matter what was happening on a global scale, we were keeping the fire burning on the ground in Alma. Without that, we would lose."

Despite all the money raised, the global attention and the solidarity that brought busloads of USW members from Quebec and Ontario, morale was suffering. Although prohibited by Quebec legislation, Rio Tinto still attempted to continue production with scabs brought in by helicopter and snowmobile.

## KEEPING THE HOME FIRES BURNING

"We knew that our strongest support had to come out of discussions at the supper table," says Lemieux. "If families did not stand behind our members, we would lose our momentum and our energy. Spouses found new strength and started holding their own demonstrations and getting organized."

The anti-Rio Tinto power petition was presented following an "energy march" to Quebec City. Support from the members of the National Assembly increased USW's leverage in forcing a return to the bargaining table.

"We feel that we won this struggle 100 per cent," says Maltais. "We have preserved decent jobs for future generations and we have proven that solidarity works as long as you prepare, mobilize and act. And don't wait for a strike or lockout to start."

Local 9490's hard-fought current collective agreement runs until Dec. 31, 2015. ■

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## Steelworkers, Families Demand Public Inquiry

**British Columbia** Steelworkers have joined family members, First Nations, the NDP and the larger community in renewing calls for a public inquiry into a deadly sawmill explosion.

The need for a public inquiry is clear, given the serious shortcomings of a coroner's inquest into the Lakeland Mills explosion in Prince George that killed two workers and injured 22 others in April 2012, USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt says.

The USW has withdrawn its participation in the coroner's inquest because it will not answer crucial questions and will not demand full accountability from WorkSafeBC and executives of the provincial workplace safety agency.

"The inquest has heard how WorkSafeBC's failure to carry out its mandate to ensure the health and safety of workers resulted in a complete mishandling of sawmill safety both before and after the explosion. Despite this tragic failure to do its job, the agency is not being held accountable," Hunt says.

"We will not participate in an exercise that does such a disservice to the families who lost loved ones and to the larger community."

As a result of relying upon WorkSafeBC's flawed investigation, the RCMP and B.C. Safety Authority also produced failed investigations into the sawmill tragedy.

B.C.'s Liberal government continues to ignore widespread calls for a public inquiry. ■

## RCMP investigation into son's workplace death is a milestone for Brian Fitzpatrick.

**Brian Fitzpatrick** has never stopped seeking justice for his son Sam, who was killed on the job in 2009.

Brian has talked to everyone who would listen, to try to make them understand that Sam was killed by corporate negligence and deliberate actions and decisions that put workers at risk, with no one held accountable.

On his own, he has talked to government officials, politicians, lawyers and media. Then one day, after talking to a lawyer who had worked on a case for the Steelworkers, he met USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt.

"Brian is totally committed," says Hunt. "He has strong opinions and has the best reason in the world to fight for justice, not only for Sam, but for all workers. I am proud to have him working with us on our campaign to Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law."

Late last year, that fight reached a milestone when the RCMP decided to investigate Sam's case under the Westray Law.

"This was great news for Brian and his family," says Hunt. "But our campaign will continue until every province and territory provides better enforcement and prosecution of the Westray amendments to the Criminal Code."

The association with USW meant newfound friendship and solidarity for Brian, who was a Steelworker when he worked at Algoma Steel in the 1960s.

"When I got involved and met Steve, I finally felt like I had support," he says. "I didn't feel alone anymore

with the force of the USW fighting, not just for families who have lost their loved ones, but for the future of all workers who face unnecessary danger by negligent bosses."

Sam Fitzpatrick's death is a textbook example of why the USW campaign is gaining momentum. Sam, 24, and

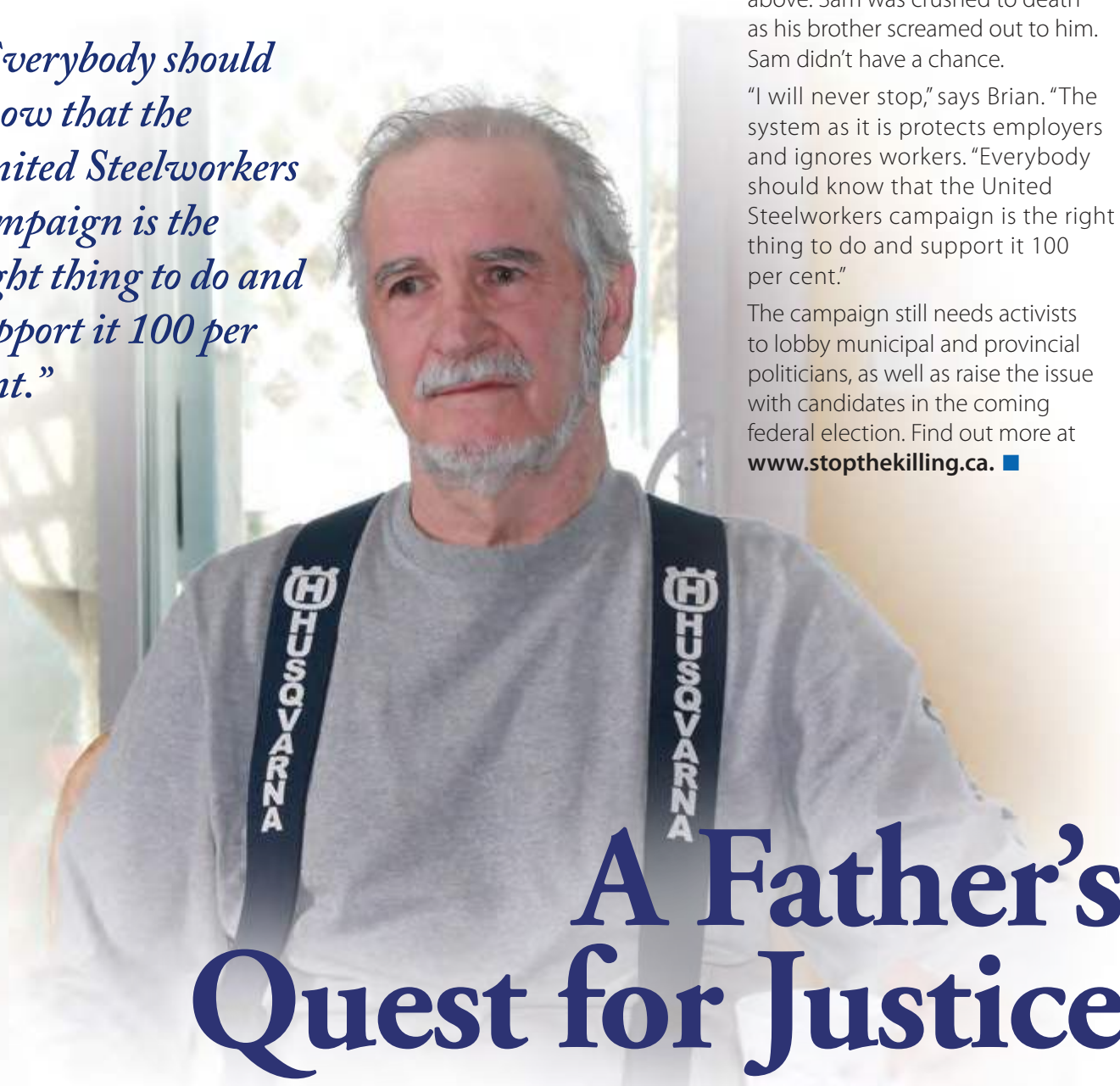
his 20-year-old brother Arlen were rock scalers at Kiewit Construction's Toba-Montrose hydro project on BC's Sunshine Coast. They complained about work practices and the danger from rockfalls. It fell on deaf ears.

Then a few days later, as Arlen Fitzpatrick stood nearby, a pickup-sized boulder came loose from where excavators were working above. Sam was crushed to death as his brother screamed out to him. Sam didn't have a chance.

"I will never stop," says Brian. "The system as it is protects employers and ignores workers. "Everybody should know that the United Steelworkers campaign is the right thing to do and support it 100 per cent."

The campaign still needs activists to lobby municipal and provincial politicians, as well as raise the issue with candidates in the coming federal election. Find out more at [www.stopthekilling.ca](http://www.stopthekilling.ca). ■

*"Everybody should know that the United Steelworkers campaign is the right thing to do and support it 100 per cent."*



## A Father's Quest for Justice



### National Day of Mourning

On April 28 Steelworkers mark the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job. Support memorial events in your community.

# Union Coffee Brewing at *Tim's*

**Workers in Sept-Îles, Que.**, have broken new ground by becoming the first unionized employees of coffee giant Tim Hortons restaurants. Employees at four Tims franchises in the small town in Quebec's North Shore region voted recently to join the Steelworkers.

"These men and women are simply asking for respect. They work hard, and they earn barely above minimum wage. Their employer even expects them to contribute

free labour – requiring them to wait until their shift is over to count and settle their tills. This is definitely a sector where workers can benefit from being unionized," said Dominic Lemieux, Steelworkers' North Shore Area Coordinator.

The owner of two of the Tim Hortons franchises reacted shamefully to her employees' decision.

"She hired her husband, who then came to a union meeting and presented himself as a candidate for

union president – clearly a move to interfere in the union's activities," said USW representative Gilles Ayotte.

The franchise owner went even further, changing employees' working conditions – a labour law violation – such as banning employees from going to the washroom or drinking water during their shifts.

Steelworkers representatives publicly shamed the owner and filed complaints with Quebec's labour board. The union is continuing to fiercely defend the employees' rights and is providing the resources and expertise needed to ensure they can negotiate their first, fair collective agreement. ■

# Guy Farrell

## Passing of a Great Trade Unionist



never missed an opportunity to demonstrate his interest and concern for working people, their families and the details of their lives.

"We've lost a great trade unionist but, most of all, a man of compassion. He was a force of nature with a tender heart. Guy loved his union, he was very close to the members and he was always ready to defend them tooth and nail," said Steelworkers Quebec Director Daniel Roy.

A Montrealer of Irish descent, Guy began working at 17 as a welder-assembler at Dominion Bridge in 1974. He soon became active in his union and by 1990 rose to President of Steelworkers Local 2843. In 1998 he successfully led a battle to keep the plant open. He was hired as a USW Staff Representative in 2001 and became Assistant to the

Quebec Director in 2007.

In one of his final public appearances last November, a terminally ill Farrell delivered an emotional address to grassroots Steelworkers activists from across Quebec gathered for their annual convention.

"As union activists, the work we do has a real impact on the lives of working people," he said. "So we can never give up. That's my final message to you – never stop fighting!"

USW International President Leo W. Gerard was on hand and recognized the great battles Guy helped to lead, including the successful campaign against Rio Tinto during the 2011-2012 lockout in Alma, Que.

Guy is survived by his wife Julie and his sons Francis and Kevin. ■



### Benefit Gains at CN RAIL

A new four-year agreement provides 3,000 members of USW Local 2004 with annual wage increases of 3%, increased benefits, a \$750 signing bonus, increases in short-term disability and extended health benefits, while also adding strong contract language to protect against contracting out. The bargaining committee heard from members that an increase to per diems and allowances to reflect today's costs was important and they were also achieved.



### Chain Holds Strong in EVRAZ Bargaining

USW 5890 & 6673 represent 1,200 members at Evraz's steel-making and pipe mill in Regina, Sask. The two locals work closely in bargaining, held joint Building Power training and successfully employed Communication Action Teams (CATs). In the agreement ratified mid-January 2015, the joint bargaining committee protected the defined-benefit pension plan, including an annual \$1,000 payment to retirees, maintained COLA and achieved wage and benefit improvements, enhanced contract language and a \$5,000 signing bonus.



### After Hard Lockout, CHANCES CASINO Members Win

Our USW 1-1937 workers at Chances Casino, in Campbell River, B.C., were locked out as they attempted to secure their first collective agreement. After three months on the picket line, the settlement included a 7.5% wage increase over four years, increase in benefits and a premium paid for length of service. Workers also received a significant signing bonus in lieu of retroactive pay. The new USW members stood strong on the line, got support from other unions and the community and went back to work on January 23.



### New Gains for New Members at CHALK RIVER NUCLEAR

Joining the Steelworker family are 900 technical, professional and support staff employees of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (formerly Atomic Energy of Canada Limited) who are covered by three collective agreements with USW Locals 4096 and 1568. Their first-ever agreements include 1.5% annual wage increases, extended income supplements for parental leave, a new process to address contracting out issues and an expedited arbitration system to deal with grievances. Other gains include restoration of seniority rights for employees who had lost them before joining the USW and the resolution of numerous longstanding grievances.



### VALE Smelter and Refinery Keeps Operating with Increased Wages and Benefits

In the shadows of the hard-fought 2010-11 strike against multi-national Vale and the threat of closing the smelter and refinery, USW 6166 from Thompson, Man. was saddled with being first to negotiate this round. And bring home the victories, they did. In addition to COLA increases, a signing bonus of \$4,000 and wages and benefits improvements, they got job security for the five years of the contact. Also, the bargaining team for the 1,100 USW 6166 members secured a defined benefit pension plan and supplemented its monthly benefit.



### EXO-S – Improved Wages, Premiums and Benefits

The 189 Steelworkers of Local 9414 at Exo-S (formerly Camoplast), an injection mouldings manufacturer in Richmond, Que., negotiated a new, three-year contract in October providing 2% annual wage hikes, increases in shift premiums, improved vacation entitlement and reduced benefit premiums.



### USW Scholarships – Apply Today!

June 30 is the application deadline for Steelworkers' scholarships. Don't miss your opportunity to apply! For information and application forms, visit [www.usw.ca/scholarships](http://www.usw.ca/scholarships). ■



**2015**  
*vote fairness*

Photo: Canada's NDP

The federal election coming this fall is our chance to stop the damage caused by Stephen Harper and 20 years of governments advancing a big-business agenda. We can finally elect a government that puts average working people first and proposes fairness.

This election, the Steelworkers Vote theme is **Vote Fairness**.

Unions are all about fairness for workers; fairness for working families and fairness for those trying to make ends meet. We're bringing that concept to our USW election coverage, too. We should look at the parties and their policies based on fairness.

### Harper Has Failed Us

The top issues for workers are good jobs, retirement security and health care, which Stephen Harper and the Conservatives would rather not talk

about because they've abandoned them.

Since Harper and the Conservatives won government, our economy has lost 600,000 jobs, and turned even more jobs into precarious, part-time, low-wage work.

These are not policies of fairness.

Harper has failed our veterans, women, First Nations and the environment. He's cut funding, closed offices and passed laws that make it easier for corporations to exploit the environment, Canadian workers and our communities. These decisions are not about fairness.

Harper's government is also mired in scandal and corruption. A Conservative campaigner has been sentenced to jail for robocalls; the Mike Duffy Senate scandal fraud trial is underway; Conservative MP Dean Del Mastro has been convicted of breaking election laws. And don't forget the ad campaign for an

apprenticeship program that didn't exist or the bungled 'fixes' to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Conservatives brought in back-to-work legislation for Canada Post and Air Canada workers, signalling their first attacks on workers and unions. Then they brought in anti-worker bills C-525 and C-377 that make it harder for workers to form unions and weaken unions by adding onerous financial burdens.

### Both Business Parties Have Failed Us

There are many good reasons to defeat the Conservatives. However, the growing 'Stop Harper' movement can cause us to simply vote out of fear – and thereby vote for the other party that has always put the interests of big corporations ahead of average working people.

Justin Trudeau is not ready for the job.

The Liberals have a disastrous record of unfair cuts to social programs. The Liberals ended our national housing program in 1995. The Liberals made unfair cuts and tightened rules to Employment Insurance so fewer unemployed would qualify for benefits. The Liberals ended the federal minimum wage in 1996. It was the Liberals that distorted the Temporary Foreign Worker Program into the mess that Harper has only expanded.

The Liberals have a long track record of unfair policies that put working people behind the interests of their elite friends.

### Mulcair Is Proposing Policies of Fairness

Tom Mulcair has the experience to replace Stephen Harper. The NDP has a principled platform that's about fairness for working people and the middle class.

The NDP is proposing \$15-a-day childcare that will create more spaces,

make childcare more affordable and give working families the support they need to stay in the workforce.

The NDP will re-introduce a fair federal minimum wage of \$15 an hour.

The NDP will give back the two years of retirement stolen by the Conservatives by restoring retirement to age 65.

Tom Mulcair and the NDP will invest in manufacturing and small businesses to create middle-class jobs.

These are fair policies that make sense.

### We Can Make a Difference

Recent Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) research shows that union members care about fairness and our members turn out to vote in great numbers when we as unions engage them.

Let's get informed and active, and let's vote from a place of hope, not fear.

When Steelworkers vote, **let's vote fairness in 2015.** ■

### What You Can Do

Steelworkers can help decide this election!

- ✔ Distribute USW election materials at your workplace
- ✔ Invite NDP candidates to meetings and events
- ✔ Volunteer to help local NDP candidates
- ✔ Donate federally and locally and sign up USW members

Unions can no longer make donations to federal candidates or parties, so our emphasis will be on USW members getting involved as individual volunteers and donors.

If your local needs USW election materials or clarification on election rules, contact the Communications and Political Action department at [communications@usw.ca](mailto:communications@usw.ca).

**Get Active for Fairness**  
[www.usw.ca/election2015](http://www.usw.ca/election2015)



**Stephen Harper**

- ✘ Expands inequality
- ✘ Oil profits at any cost
- ✘ Union buster



**Justin Trudeau**

- ✘ No experience
- ✘ Not ready
- ✘ Not for workers



**Tom Mulcair**

- ✔ Principled
- ✔ Experienced
- ✔ For working people

Harper photo: World Economic Forum - Remy Steinegger - Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Trudeau photo: Alex Guibord. Used under Creative Commons licence. Mulcair photo: Canada's NDP.

### Conservatives



Tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy  
*unfair*

Stealing 2 years of retirement from Canadians  
*unfair*

Anti-worker laws like bills C-377 and C-525  
*unfair*

Attacking, ignoring veterans, women, the environment, First Nations communities  
*unfair*

Ending Canada Post home delivery  
*unfair*

### Liberals



Promised national childcare for 13 years but never delivered  
*Questionable*

Made cuts and tightened Employment Insurance rules  
*unfair*

Blank cheque for Conservatives' Bill C-51  
*unfair*

Removed federal minimum wage in 1996  
*unfair*

Cancelled National Housing Program  
*unfair*

### NDP



Raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour  
*Fair*

\$15-a-day childcare  
*Fair*

Investing in manufacturing and small businesses to create middle-class jobs  
*Fair*

Restoring retirement age to 65  
*Fair*

Abolishing the unelected, unaccountable Senate  
*Fair*

# Steelworkers Share a Family's and a City's Heartache

When they heard the alarming news on the picket line, David Elines and his fellow Steelworkers knew they had to act.

"It was all over the radio, this little boy was out there alone, in that cold," says David.

David and his fellow members of USW Local 9176 know all about cold. During a 20-month strike against union-busting multinational Crown Metal Packaging in Toronto, they've endured two of the most brutal winters on record.

In the early morning hours of Feb. 19, the temperature had plummeted to -33°C with the wind chill.

After staring down the scabs waiting

to cross the picket line, some of the early-morning USW picketers took refuge in their strike shack to warm up. It was then that they heard the shocking news on the radio. Elijah Marsh, a three-year-old boy from a nearby neighbourhood, was missing and believed to be outside, alone in the bitter cold.

Local 9176 member Bob Lapchuk brought the news to his colleagues, suggesting they join the search underway for little Elijah.

"We're all dads, so we understood we had to go," says striker Steve McHugh. "We were doing what we thought was right."

Seven Steelworkers – David, Steve, Bob, Bert Pavese, Ian Pearson, Kevin Murty and Ken Houghton – jumped

into two vehicles and headed to the neighbourhood where Toronto police had set up a command post to co-ordinate the search.

David Elines teamed up with Bert Pavese, who was familiar with the area, having often played hockey at the neighbourhood arena.

Elijah Marsh had spent the previous night at his grandmother's home, as he had many times before. Video surveillance would later show the little boy – who had never ventured anywhere by himself – inexplicably pushing open the door of the apartment building's foyer and heading outside into the dark, freezing morning. He was wearing only a diaper, a thin T-shirt and snow boots.

The USW Local 9176 members

knew these details, which made their search even more desperate. They looked in cars and garbage cans, under stairs and playground equipment and every possible nook and cranny where a child might seek shelter.

could revive him – they can do amazing things sometimes," says Bert. "But not this time."

After the dreadful news was confirmed and it was revealed that striking Steelworkers had found

In the ensuing days, despite their unimaginable grief, Elijah's family members reached out to thank David and his fellow Steelworkers.

The Steelworkers were welcomed at the funeral and later, at the

*"Every once in a while, you think of that three-year-old boy ... you break down."*

– Bert Pavese



## Desperate Search for a Little Boy

Photo: Toronto Star

By now, it had been a few hours since Elijah had disappeared. The searchers knew they were hoping against hope.

"In the back of your mind, you know it's not good," says David. "But you're thinking that maybe he was taken in by a neighbor. Maybe he's inside somewhere, that he's alright."

It was David who made the tragic discovery, under a small wooden deck outside a house only 300 metres from Elijah's grandmother's home.

"I saw his little boots first," David recalls, then pauses, struggling with the memory. "And then, there he was, looking peaceful. I put my coat on him and so did Bert and we just yelled for the police. They got an ambulance there, probably in two minutes."

"We were hoping the paramedics

Elijah's body, media clamoured for interviews with David and Bert.

Some reports referred to them as heroes, a suggestion they flatly rejected. That night, David wrote a statement for the media, with the help of his daughter Erica.

"I couldn't sleep, so I just started writing stuff down. My thoughts were all over the place, so my daughter helped me with it," he says.

The statement, published in the *Toronto Star*, read in part:

"We were not heroes ... We did everything we could to try and assist in a happier end. Every person involved did what he or she could in order to better the outcome. I wish as all others that we could have been faster or more efficient in our search, anything to change the heartbreak. My heart, as well as my coworkers', is with the family of Elijah. I only have to hope that the little boy is in a better place."

cemetery, David was invited into the family circle to help bury little Elijah.

"The ground was frozen, but the family didn't want to have a machine there to dig. They wanted to do it themselves, quietly, by hand," David says. He humbly accepted the invitation to help Elijah's father, stepfather and uncles dig the grave.

The tragedy of little Elijah "is something we'll never forget. We know that," David says.

"Every once in a while, you think of that three-year-old boy ... you break down," adds Bert.

"However, it's better to remember Elijah, than try to forget," he says.

"I have a little monument at home, with Elijah's picture and a little toy car, because his mom said he loved cars and always had a little car in his hand.

"I look at his picture every day. It's nice to see." ■

A police officer accompanies Bert Pavese, left, and David Elines after the two Steelworkers found the body of Elijah Marsh, 3, on Feb. 19 in Toronto.

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# Transitioning as a Steelworker

# MIRACLE ON THE BOILER SHOP FLOOR

*“Know who your friends are. And have a plan.”*

As you walk across the shop floor at Cleaver Brooks Boilers in Stratford, Ont., it seems so ordinary. The flash of bright blue light from arc welding, the stream of golden sparks from the grinding wheel, and the hum of cranes flying 750-pound valves across the room. Three middle-aged men are trying to figure out how to fit an industrial heater on the side of a massive boiler tank, while a young, muscular man pours sweat as his hammering nearly shakes the walls. It seems oh so ordinary as a forklift comes whizzing around the corner driven by a woman with flowing brunette hair who smiles at you and says “just doing my job.”

It is all so ordinary, just like thousands of shop floors across this country. Except for the fact that this brunette driving the forklift, Hudson Morin, initiated a collective miracle to make this shop floor seem oh so ordinary.

Two years ago, in this self-described “man’s man” culture of a workplace, Hudson, a long-time and well-liked employee, had become determined to change his life into her life, and educate everyone in the process.

As Hudson says, “I wanted to bring out the best in all of us.”

Hudson, 41, had known from an early age that female was what she

was. But the world was not so kind as to let her decide, nor open enough to let her see a way to change things.

At age 12, Hudson got caught desperately stealing his mother’s estrogen. Hudson’s mother fortunately assumed the object of thievery was intended for Hudson’s sister. Following puberty, Hudson, a fun-loving jokester by all

*“I wanted to bring out the best in all of us.”*

– Hudson Morin

accounts, tried to deny the reality and did everything people would attribute as male behaviour: fights, chauvinism – anything that might convince the world Hudson was truly a man.

But Hudson found the strength to tell his wife and daughter the truth – and the truth is transgendered. Hudson was committed to fully becoming a transgendered woman,

in mind, body and spirit, and that included in the workplace.

Throughout this journey the odds were against Hudson. Trans people face an attempted suicide rate of 47%. Transgender assaults, murders, firings and social isolation are all too common.

Hudson was determined to ‘come out’ to the entire shop. Determined to ‘come out’ in the way that would be safe for her and most likely to bring people on board. Hudson wanted this “great group of workers,” who knew little about LGBT issues, let alone transgender issues, to see that the new Hudson was the same person they had known all along, but now happier and more honest.

The key to keeping this from getting ugly was ‘the plan’.

**Step 1:** Educate the leadership. Hence, two long off-site meetings where Hudson and an LGBT activist educated the Plant Manager, the Production Manager, the Human Relations Officer, the USW Local President and national union staff. As a group, they formulated a plan for the workplace.

**Step 2:** Educate and train co-workers. Hence, training sessions on human rights, anti-harassment, the company non-discrimination policy and the protective elements of the collective agreement.

**Step 3:** Build the inner core. Hudson had told a few friends outside work and started telling select co-workers and work pals.

**Step 4:** The coming-out announcement. In a stroke of brilliance, Hudson insisted that it was her job to tell everybody and to do it all at once. Not everybody in the core group agreed, but Hudson would not be dissuaded.

So, the 130 employees were summoned to the receiving bay (the only place large enough to handle the crowd) for a company/ union meeting.

Brad Shiell, the Plant Manager, started by reaffirming the company’s equity policy and their commitment to ensuring a harassment-free environment.

Don Dolton, President of USW Local 7257 and a devout Christian, reminded everyone that “the same basic human right that protects me from discrimination against being a

Christian also protects all of you on all protected grounds – race, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.”

Then it was Hudson’s turn. Hudson was so nervous that to this day she can’t remember what she said. Her workmate John recounts that “she made it easy for all of us – she simply told us who she really is. She said, ‘I’m the same person you’ve always known. I just happen to be transgendered.’”

Hudson does remember what happened next. The workers applauded and smiled. And so many came up to Hudson spontaneously that it formed what appeared to be a ‘wedding receiving line’.

Hudson says that of all the things that have happened during her process of transitioning, the thing she most cherishes is the fact that almost everyone shook her hand or gave her a hug.

**Step 5:** Leave for a week’s vacation, master ‘the look’ and return presenting yourself as a woman. No doubts, no apologies and no regrets, but always a smile on your face.

Hudson has proven that with a lot of courage, a good measure of understanding and getting the union and management to work with you, you can miraculously avoid ignorance and bad behaviour and maintain the oh so ordinary. ■



## Jason: 'We make those huge wind towers'

It's a source of pride for Jason Gladney and fellow Steelworkers in Pictou County, N.S. to be helping build a green, sustainable economy.

Since the DSME Trenton plant opened in 2011, USW Local 1231 members have been manufacturing massive towers – up to 90 metres (300 feet) in height – for wind farms in Atlantic Canada.

"We build the towers from scratch," says Jason, Local 1231 President and a welder at DSME. USW jobs at the plant include machinery operators, welders-fitters, painters, blasters, internal component installers and crane drivers.

"We cut and roll the steel plate, fabricate the tower sections, blast and paint them, install all the internal

components and then ship everything to the site where the sections are bolted together and the blades and turbine mechanisms are installed," Jason says.

"These things are huge – a base section can weigh 68,000 pounds – so they're transported one section at a time, on a transport truck."

There is room for major expansion at the still-fledgling DSME facility, located in the former Trenton Works railcar plant, he notes.

"There are a lot of Steelworkers here, former Trenton Works and Maritime Steel employees who have the experience and the skills that are needed for this industry to grow."

Jason Gladney, USW Local 1231, DSME Trenton, Pictou County, N.S.

*"There are a lot of Steelworkers here who have the experience and the skills that are needed for this industry to grow."*

Jason Gladney, USW Local 1231



USW Local 8300, Barrymore Furniture



Photo: Steve Dietz

USW Local 8328  
Welded Tube of Canada

## Güler: 'really multicultural and still very equal'

Güler Arasan has been working at the InterContinental Hotel in Toronto for seven years. She's a server in the hotel's award-winning restaurant, Signatures. She got started at the hotel through a co-op placement after she came to Canada from Turkey in 2007.

"When I first came, I didn't know we had a union. I don't think I would survive without it. . . the union helps a lot with workers' rights, a voice in the workplace, if you get sick, they can't fire you, better wages, better insurance, vacation pay, working conditions, health and safety.

"I have the right to refuse unsafe

work. . . If they bring in a new coffee machine, they have to teach us how to use it. . . All these things together make [having a union] very valuable to me.

"Recently, I wasn't feeling well, and I was able to keep my job and return to work. If I didn't have a union, I don't think that would have happened.

"What's unique about our workplace is that it's really multicultural and still very equal. My colleagues are from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Jamaica, Holland. . . We're 'little Toronto'."

Güler is proud to be a new Canadian – she got her citizenship in early February.

Güler Arasan, USW Local 9466, InterContinental Hotel, Toronto



Photo: Steve Dietz

USW Local 7619, Highland Valley Copper

## Heather-Ann: 'at least four different positions'

Over her 13-year career at Queen's University in Kingston, Heather-Ann Thompson has had at least four different positions. Currently, she's a Program Assistant in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Heather-Ann works off-campus in St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital, one of a number of hospitals associated with the university.

Supporting her department head, a physician, Heather-Ann's administrative work includes "scheduling, mailings for the residents, budgets, note-taking and attending meetings."

What's unique about working at Queen's is "being able to collaborate with students, residents and alumni.

Sometimes the role crosses over faculties. We have monthly meetings to discuss shared issues, and so you begin to build relationships with fellow staff through meetings, \$5 lunches on Fridays, expanding your network."

The Treasurer of USW Local 2010, Heather-Ann notes her union is involved in the community in a number of ways, for example, taking part in the Pride Parade, donating to a Kingston food bank and through social activities.

Since staff at Queen's won union representation in 2010, "there has been more opportunity for consistency and equality," Heather-Ann says. "The union has definitely shown that they are there for members if they're being treated unfairly."

Heather-Ann Thompson, USW Local 2010, Queen's University, Kingston



Photo: Steve Dietz

TWU-USW Local 1944, Shaw Cable



Photo: Steve Dietz

USW Local 8922, Glencore CCR Refinery



Photo: Steve Dietz

USW Local 2010, Queen's University

## Martine: 'It's better to prevent an emergency in the first place'

Martine Dufresne is a member of USW Local 8922, a massive composite local representing 14,000 security guards in numerous workplaces across Quebec.

But for Martine and the 20 other Local 8922 members who work at Glencore's CCR copper refinery in Montreal East, the job description extends far beyond a typical security guard position.

With a background as a municipal firefighter, Martine is a highly trained emergency response and prevention officer, specializing in fire prevention and protection in a potentially hazardous industrial setting.

"Essentially, it amounts to being an industrial firefighter,"

says Martine, who has been on the job for 18 years.

"You have to be equipped to respond, but it's better to prevent an emergency in the first place."

Martine's skills and knowledge were validated last year when the company assigned her and a colleague to review and update the refinery's entire emergency response and prevention manual. In the past, such a mammoth task was outsourced to outside engineering consultants.

"It was a nine-month project and it was very rewarding," Martine says. "It showed they had lot of confidence in our expertise."

Martine Dufresne, USW Local 8922, Glencore CCR Refinery, Montreal East

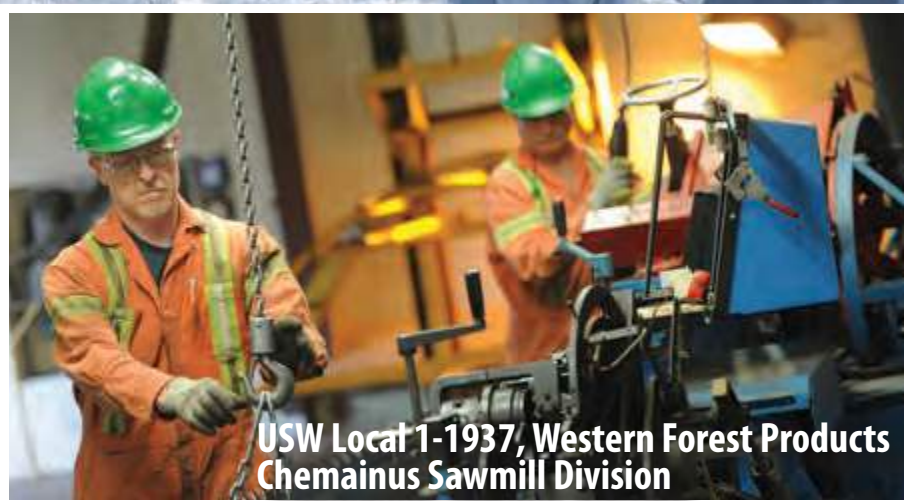


Photo: Steve Dietz

USW Local 1-1937, Western Forest Products Chemainus Sawmill Division

**"Our products are built on quality and I strive to produce that quality. I work hard and I take pride in my work."**

Richard Tyndall, USW Local 8328, Welded Tube of Canada, Vaughan, Ont.

## Stephanie: Enjoying her perch

She may not be on top of the world, but Stephanie Kestle loves a job that routinely has her perched high above ground in a bucket truck, working on a utility pole.

"I enjoy working outside and I love the technical aspects of the job – splicing fibre (optic cable), analyzing the signal, making sure the circuits are good," says Stephanie, a member of the Telecommunications Workers Union, USW National Local 1944.

A journeyman fibre splicer at Shaw Cable in the Vancouver area, Stephanie was working as a manager at a Shaw call centre in the mid-1990s when she decided she wanted a blue-collar job.

Stephanie Kestle, Shaw Cable, TWU-USW Local 1944, Vancouver

"We had a training session to learn about technical issues related to the business and that's when I fell in love with the tech side," she says. "So I went to British Columbia Institute of Technology for my electronics common core and I got out into the field in '97."

An avid proponent of the TWU-USW merger, Stephanie says she'd like to get involved in the union's efforts to encourage women to pursue careers in male-dominated professions, like hers.

"There are just as many guys who are afraid of spiders and heights, so there's no reason why women can't do this job," she laughs.



USW Local 4120, University of Guelph



Photo: Steve Dietz

USW Local 13571, Mirolin

## Richard: 'I take pride in my work'

For 16 years, Richard Tyndall has been producing what he believes is the best steel tube in North America.

"Our products are built on quality and I strive to produce that quality. I work hard and I take pride in my work," says Richard, a USW Local 8328 member and a mill operator at Welded Tube in Vaughan, Ont., north of Toronto.

Richard started as a labourer in 1999 and soon aspired to a mill operator's job. When a position came open, he benefitted from a fair bidding process spelled out in his collective agreement. And he got the job.

"The union is very important, to ensure all the workers know their rights," Richard says. "I became a mill operator because of the

Richard Tyndall, USW Local 8328, Welded Tube of Canada, Vaughan, Ont.

opportunity that was provided to get those kinds of jobs."

Local 8328 members produce steel tube products used across North America in agricultural equipment, the oil and gas industry, the auto industry, building construction, home construction and for various retail and commercial purposes.

There's no disputing the quality of those products, says Local 8328 President John Manfre.

"For example, we supply tubing for John Deere tractors across North America," says John. "We've received a 'partner' designation from John Deere – which is the highest level that can be achieved – and that has everything to do with the quality of products our members make."

# Our Men and Women of Steel

## Bill: 'We see elk, bears, cougars...'

Bill Fraser and Brad MacLeod work in the woods. Bill's a faller and Brad's a landing buckler on Vancouver Island with Western Forest Products, Nootka Forest Operations in Gold River.

"I've always worked union. I'm a union member since day one. Having a union job – it's stable and has good benefits," says Bill.

"My equipment is a chain saw, a wedge belt and wedges, an axe, a packsack with lunch, tools, spare wedges, gas and oil," says Bill.

As a buckler, Brad cuts the logs, trims the branches and makes the logs into a specific length. In Gold River, they harvest hemlock, fir, red cedar, yellow cedar and balsam. Once they finish up in one area, they move to another. Years ago the job was clearcutting, but now it's select areas.

"We're in the mountains.

We have scenery that lots of people pay money to see," says Bill. "We see elk, bears, cougars. A couple of months ago, my buddy came over. There was a cougar about 20 feet away... Maybe the cougar had a den or a kill nearby. If we have any problems like that, we just pack our saws out so that we're safe... Bears in the wild seem to leave us alone."

Brad also appreciates his work environment. "I like the mountains – it's the best place on earth. You can see the ocean. In some places you can actually see the curvature of the earth."

"The union means a fair wage, and I appreciate the time and effort," says Brad. "Safety is huge – the biggest part of our job... Every Monday we have a safety meeting at the marshalling yard with the company, the safety rep, the foreman. The union reps keep us up to date."

Bill Fraser and Brad MacLeod, USW Local 1-85, Western Forest Products, Nootka Forest Operations, Gold River, B.C.



Photo : Steve Dietz

SL 9490, Rio Tinto  
USW Local 9490, Rio Tinto

*"I like the mountains – it's the best place on earth. You can see the ocean. In some places you can actually see the curvature of the earth."*

– Brad MacLeod



Photo : Steve Dietz

SL 9466  
Hôtel InterContinental  
USW Local 9466  
InterContinental Hotel



Photo : DSME

SL 1231, DSME Trenton  
USW Local 1231, DSME Trenton

*«J'aime les montagnes. C'est le meilleur endroit au monde. Vous pouvez voir l'océan. À certaines places, vous pouvez même voir la courbure de la Terre.»*

– Brad MacLeod



Photo : Steve Dietz

SL 1-1937 Opérations forestières Nootka de Western Forest Products, Gold River (C.-B.)  
USW Local 1-1937 Western Forest Products, Nootka Forest Operations, Gold River Logging Div.

## Bill : «nous voyons des wapitis, des ours, des cougars...»

Bill Fraser et Brad MacLeod travaillent dans le bois. Bill est bûcheron et Brad tronçonneur au chantier de façonnage des opérations forestières Nootka de Western Forest Products à Gold River, sur l'île de Vancouver.

«J'ai toujours été syndiqué, dès mes débuts. Un emploi syndiqué apporte la stabilité et de bons avantages sociaux», de dire Bill.

«Comme matériel, j'utilise une scie à chaîne, une ceinture et des coins d'abattage, une hache, un sac à dos pour mon dîner, des outils, des coins de rechange, de l'essence et de l'huile», explique Bill.

Brad coupe les grumes et les branches, et en fait des rondins de longueurs particulières. À Gold River, on récolte le bois de pruche, de sapin, de cèdre rouge, de cèdre jaune et de sapin baumier. Lorsqu'on termine dans une zone, on se déplace à une autre.

«Nous nous trouvons dans les montagnes. Nous admirons des scènes gratuitement, alors que beaucoup de gens doivent

Bill Fraser et Brad MacLeod, section locale 1-85 du Syndicat des Métallos, opérations forestières Nootka de Western Forest Products, Gold River (C.-B.)

payer pour les voir, poursuit Bill. Nous voyons des wapitis, des ours et des cougars. Il y a quelques mois, mon copain m'a accompagné. Il y avait un cougar à vingt pieds de nous... Le cougar avait peut-être une tanière ou une proie tout près. Face à tout problème du genre, nous ramassons nos scies afin de nous mettre en sécurité... Les ours dans leur milieu naturel semblent nous laisser tranquille.»

Brad apprécie aussi son environnement de travail. «J'aime les montagnes. C'est le meilleur endroit au monde. Vous pouvez voir l'océan. À certaines places, vous pouvez même voir la courbure de la Terre.»

«Le syndicat nous garantit un salaire équitable, et je lui suis reconnaissant du temps et des efforts qu'il déploie à cet égard, souligne Brad. La sécurité est primordiale, l'aspect le plus important de notre travail... Tous les lundis, nous assistons à une réunion sur la sécurité avec l'entreprise, le représentant à la sécurité et le contremaître. Le représentant syndical nous tient informés.»



SL 1998, Université de Toronto  
USW Local 1998, University of Toronto

# La grande famille Métallo à l'œuvre