

USW@Work

A magazine for the United Steelworkers

June 2017

The Trump Threat
Child Soldier's Story
Westray – 25 Years
Sponsoring Refugees
Convention 2017



USW@Work
June 2017

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On the cover: Local 3950 member Joyce Griffiths and Local 6486 member Vincent Barrette were among hundreds of Quebec and Ontario Steelworkers who came together in April to protest at the Noranda Income Fund annual general meeting in Toronto.

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The Power of

The Day of Mourning on April 28 is always a sombre occasion in the Steelworkers' calendar, when we mourn and remember those killed or injured at work.

This year's ceremonies marked the 25th year since the tragic Westray explosion killed 26 miners needlessly. We will never forget.

The end of April also marked four years since the Rana Plaza collapse killed 1,129 garment workers in Bangladesh. Rana Plaza was another needless, senseless and preventable tragedy and the families who lost loved ones are still struggling.

In the wake of Westray and Rana Plaza, things needed to change. We accomplished change through the power



f Unity

of unity – working together to demand action from corporations and governments. More needs to be done to stop workers being killed on the job.

Read more about Westray and Bangladesh in this issue of *USW@Work*.

Through our unity, we are making a difference for our members in many ways.

We are using the power of unity to take on the latest trade fights that threaten our members on both sides of the border. We are fighting together to make sure that workers are protected in our softwood lumber, steel and aluminum industries.

Our members of USW Local 6486 in Quebec, on strike against CEZinc, are united in their fight to preserve their pensions against a greed-based attack from the employer for concessions. Two busloads of strikers came for a rally outside a Toronto shareholders meeting, where they were joined in solidarity by members of USW District 6.

The power of unity is winning new contracts at bargaining tables across the country – read more in this issue about some of our recent USW bargaining successes.

Our Women of Steel are using the power of unity to bargain domestic violence leave provisions into our collective agreements – measures that will make workplaces safer for all, while supporting our sisters experiencing violence.

The Power of Unity is our union's 75th anniversary theme – celebrated at our recent USW International Convention in Las Vegas. Standing together to win rights for workers is how our union began and how we continue to prevail today.

Canadian Steelworkers were an impressive force at the convention – speaking on many of the resolutions and receiving awards recognizing our work in our communities – making us proud. At our convention closing, more than 3,000 delegates and observers joined hands to sing our labour anthem, Solidarity Forever.

We remain dedicated to the belief that every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, to be able to support themselves and their families at a decent standard of living. We achieve this through our solidarity – by standing strong together – through unity.

So resolve to keep up the fight. Draw power from unity.

Ken Neumann
National Director

Photo: Peter Boyle

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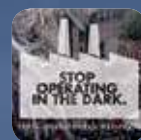
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Trade in the TRUMP ERA

Liberals dither on Trump's bullying and irrational attacks on Canadian workers, communities

While the Canadian government dithers, Steelworkers leaders at all levels are fighting for fair trade policies to defend working families, communities and entire industries that are under attack.

"The Canadian government must get off the sidelines and act decisively to stand up to the bullying and the irrational trade decisions being made by the right-wing administration in the United States," said USW National Director Ken Neumann.

"From softwood lumber to aluminum, steel, dairy – the list goes on – the Trump administration and Republican Congress in Washington have decided they can target Canadian workers and families, with little push-back from Canada's government," Neumann said.

Liberals abandon steel workers, pensioners

Since it was elected in 2015, Justin Trudeau's Liberal government has abandoned its promise to stand up for tens of thousands of Canadian workers and pensioners affected by the steel industry crisis.

The Liberals have refused to end the massive, illegal dumping of



U.S. President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greet each other at the White House.

subsidized foreign steel that has led to plant shutdowns and layoffs of Canadian workers. They have provided no help to thousands of workers and pensioners affected by the bankruptcy-protection proceedings at two of the country's largest steelmakers – Stelco and Essar Steel Algoma.

The Liberals broke their pledge to provide transparency on the secret deals struck between the federal government and U.S. Steel for the takeover of Stelco.

"Steel industry workers and pensioners were hoping for change when the Trudeau Liberals replaced

the Harper Conservatives," said Marty Warren, USW Ontario and Atlantic Canada Director.

"As workers and pensioners suffer blow after blow, the deafening silence from the Liberals shows there is no real change," Warren said.

"This government has not been engaged and has not offered any meaningful support to help communities across the country hurting from the steel crisis."

Discredited softwood policy

In April the Trump administration imposed punishing tariffs on

“This government has not been engaged and has not offered any meaningful support to help communities across the country hurting from the steel crisis.”

– USW District 6 Director
Marty Warren

Canadian softwood lumber exports to the U.S., even though its rationale has been widely discredited and rejected repeatedly in the past by international tribunals.

“We cannot survive another attack from another right-wing government,” USW Wood Council Chair Bob Matters said after the tariffs were announced.

“Where is the voice of our government standing up for Canadians? The lack of action by the prime minister and premiers in softwood lumber producing provinces is disconcerting,” Matters said.

“The tariffs filed by Trump have nothing to do with protecting jobs in the U.S. The fact is that on softwood lumber, Trump is just wrong. U.S. softwood is working at 100% capacity; it’s at the highest price it’s been in 20 years,” USW International President Leo W. Gerard said.

“It has more to do with U.S. lumber companies trying to drive up prices and increase their profits. And some Canadian lumber companies stand to benefit too. They’ve taken profits from B.C. to buy mills in the U.S. and hedge their bets. It’s the small operators, the value-added sector, and most importantly our members and their communities that get hurt the most,” Gerard said.

USW forest sector strategy

The USW developed a comprehensive strategy to defend Canada’s forest workers and communities, but the federal and B.C. Liberals have not supported such proposals. The USW program includes: raising fees charged on exported raw logs; incentives for higher-value manufacturing; and greater investments in manufacturing, reforestation and skills training.

“Let’s remember the B.C. Liberals closed over 100 mills and killed 35,000 forestry jobs, while allowing raw log exports to skyrocket,” Gerard noted.

Aluminum under investigation

USW leaders on both sides of the border are actively lobbying for Canada to be excluded from the Trump administration’s investigation into the impact of aluminum imports on America’s national security. The USW represents thousands of workers in the aluminum industry in Canada

and the U.S.

“Our industry is not a threat. It is a stable and reliable source of aluminum and is a valuable asset coming from an ally to the United States,” said Steelworkers’ Quebec Director Alain Croteau.

“Quebec aluminum is not in competition with aluminum made in the United States, but with production from other countries with questionable environmental and labour standards,” Croteau said.

“We will make sure that we are heard in Washington so that Quebec workers and families do not become collateral victims of the U.S. desire to support its own viable aluminum industry,” he added.

“China’s the problem, not Canada. China’s overcapacity is swamping world markets and driving down prices,” Gerard said.

“Our goal should be fair trade. That’s what the Steelworkers have fought for, for years. Our objective is to work with our members in both countries,” he said.

“Rather than tackle foreign dumping and overproduction from China, the U.S. administration has found Canada is an easier target to bully and to score political points,” Neumann said.

“Canadian families and communities need a federal government that will forcefully defend our interests, not kowtow to Trump’s bullying.” ■

Photo: ResistFromDay1 on Flickr, used under CC BY 2.0



Photo: Steve Dietz

25 Years Since Westray Mine Disaster

As has been the custom for more than two decades on May 9, family members of the 26 miners who died in the 1992 Westray Mine explosion met at dawn in front of the memorial in the Stellarton, N.S. park dedicated to the memory of their loved ones.

But this May 9, marking 25 years since the preventable



Vernon Theriault at the 25th anniversary commemoration. A former Westray miner, Theriault was one of the first draegermen to go back into the mine during rescue attempts. He received the Medal of Bravery for his work on the rescue and recovery team and has become a life-long advocate for worker safety.

explosion that killed an entire shift of workers underground, they were joined by more family members, many of whom had left the Nova Scotia community over the years, friends, supporters from as far away as B.C., media, students, government representatives and others, for a day filled with prayers of remembrance, tributes and a pledge to never give up the struggle for justice.

And like they have been since the days before the disaster, when Westray miners were signing union cards because they felt the mine was unsafe, Steelworkers were there, including USW National Director Ken Neumann, District 3 Director Stephen Hunt and District 5 Director Alain Croteau.

The day began at 6:45 a.m. with a procession to the Memorial Park and a short program. Later, at the Museum of Industry, local high school students participated in an event that was live-streamed. There, Ken Neumann announced a \$2,500 scholarship to be awarded to a student in the Stellarton area, who is completing high school and pursuing post-secondary education.

“This scholarship is intended as an award that will help keep the memory of Westray in the hearts and minds of generations to come. It is another way we can maintain the pledge we have made for the last 25 years – No More Westrays,” said Neumann.

The afternoon featured a book-signing at the New Glasgow Library. Author Tom Sandborn read a passage from *Hell’s History*, which tracks the Westray story from “the predictable path to disaster” to the current enforcement campaign.

“... Alan Doyle has bitter memories about the dangerous practices encouraged at Westray.

“That mine was a place called hell. It was run through intimidation. The inspectors were led around by the nose and mainly ignored. Once an inspector caught a bulldozer underground with unshielded sparks coming off it. The



Photos: Peter Boyle

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No More Westrays

*foreman ordered my brother to take the bulldozer back underground, if he wanted to keep his f*****g job.”*

Back at the Westray Memorial in the evening, those attending the service led by Reverend Glen Matheson were accompanied by the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Honour guard and the Union Fire Club Pipes and Drums along with RCMP and regional police. A performance by the miners’ choir Men of the Deeps ended with the late Nova Scotia singer Rita McNeil’s classic ballad about coal miners, “Working Man.”

“Westray has been a symbol of our union’s struggle for health and safety for a quarter of a century,” said Hunt. “And when we come here and meet the families once again, the memory of what happened 25 years ago becomes all too real and immediate. The wound is still open until workers are no longer killed for the sake of profit.”

Croteau said, “No job should be a potential death sentence. We cannot – and should not – put the events of May 9, 1992 in the past. It is our job to remember what happened here, and fight to stop it from ever happening again.”

Neumann added that the union’s history is forever linked with Westray.

“We fought for the inquiry in the mid-1990s,” he said. “And we lobbied long and hard on Parliament Hill for the Westray Law to prosecute companies that take workers’ lives for granted. And today we are still fighting to have the Westray Law better enforced.” ■



Photo: Ron Palmer

Minister of Labour Christina Gray and Assistant Commissioner of RCMP ‘K’ Division Marlin Degrand sign the historic Memorandum of Understanding in Edmonton.

Enforcement Campaign Builds Momentum

In the days leading up to the 25-year remembrance of the Westray Mine Disaster, the USW Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law campaign for better enforcement of the Westray Law experienced new milestones.

On the April 28 Day of Mourning, the NDP-led Province of Alberta signed the Westray Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with 10 police services. It defines new protocols for investigating serious workplace incidents and will help investigators determine if criminal charges may be warranted, in addition to occupational health and safety violations.

Marlin Degrand, Assistant Commissioner for the RCMP ‘K’ Division, said, “By defining roles and protocols, police can focus on any criminal activity that may have occurred and investigators can spend their time on the incident investigation – and that benefits all Albertans.”

Meanwhile, Vancouver City Council has become the most recent municipality among dozens across Canada to pass a resolution endorsing the USW-led campaign.

In Ottawa, the federal Justice and Labour ministers issued a statement, saying the government is now committed to “doing more” to ensuring the Westray Law “is being applied effectively to hold those responsible to account who are criminally negligent in workplace death and serious injury.”

“We can’t forget that this law was passed unanimously by Parliament in 2003,” said Neumann. “We hope that it will be backed up with the resources necessary to direct and train police and prosecutors to do their job and enforce the law.” ■



Steelworkers show Up In Force For B.C. Election

An all-out effort by the United Steelworkers (USW) in the British Columbia provincial election led to significant gains for the New Democratic Party led by John Horgan and a significant rebuke to Christy Clark and the BC Liberals.

Steelworkers have been vocal critics of the premier and her government because of their disastrous record affecting many of the industries in which our USW members work.

Over the last 16 years, B.C. has lost over 35,000 forestry jobs and seen hundreds of mills close while the number of raw log exports reaches record levels. In the mining industry, the BC Liberals gave the green light to companies to hire temporary foreign workers over locals. It was the USW that uncovered the scandal by HG Mining of bringing in over 200 temporary foreign miners overlooking many of our trained miners.

“We’ve fought back against Christy Clark’s efforts to sell out our province and she responded with negative American-style attack ads against our unions,” said USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt.

In fact, the USW became a focal point of the campaign

with Christy Clark launching numerous attack ads directly against USW International President Leo W. Gerard.

Luckily these attempts to demonize the Steelworkers backfired and motivated USW members to get active in this election like never before.

“We had hundreds of members involved in this election. Talking to co-workers in lunchrooms, starting conversations with neighbors at home and talking to voters on the doorstep. I’m so proud of the incredible effort that our members put into this election,” said Hunt.

With USW help, the Liberals lost their precious majority. At the time of writing, the final results were unclear with the governing BC Liberals having won 43 seats, the BC NDP elected in 41 seats and the Greens winning 3 seats. The magic number to form a majority government is 44 seats. A number of the results were very close and are still subject to recounts and absentee ballots.

No matter the final outcome of the election, political experts are saying that the results have shaken up the province and there is a possibility that another election may soon be on the horizon. ■



*Steelworkers
Humanity Fund
Support*

Hope for Former Child Soldiers

Abel Learwellie was 16 when his country's civil war caught up to his family in 1990.

Months earlier, as Liberia descended into civil war, Abel and his family fled to his father's home village of Yarpuah in the country's northern region. They were hoping to find refuge from the horrors they heard were spreading across the West-African nation.

In the late spring of 1990, however, a rebel militia stormed into the village, unleashing mayhem.

"One afternoon they entered the village," Abel recalls. "There was shooting everywhere. My sister's husband was killed right there. He was shot and he died instantly."

continued next page

Child soldier continued

Abel and other terrified boys from the village were rounded up by the rebels and led away at gunpoint. They had just been recruited as child soldiers for the notorious National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), a rebel group fighting against the repressive government of then-president Samuel Doe.

Tens of thousands of children, boys and girls as young as eight years old, were abducted and forced to participate in Liberia's civil wars of 1989 to 1996 and 1999 to 2003. They were used as fighters, porters, ammunition carriers, cooks and sex slaves.

“The wars ended years ago, but most of these young people are still suffering because nobody cares for them.”

– Abel Learwellie

The Liberian civil war would become known for widespread atrocities, often perpetrated by and against children. Charles Taylor's NPFL overthrew the government and he was elected president in 1997. Two years later, the second civil war broke out. Taylor eventually lost control of the country and in 2003 he left Liberia and went into exile. He was later detained by United Nations authorities, put on trial in The Hague and in 2012 was sentenced to 50 years in prison for crimes against humanity.

‘You didn't feel who you were anymore’

After their abductions in 1990, Abel Learwellie and his fellow recruits were quickly trained as NPFL rebels.

“We were given guns and a few hours of orientation – how to shoot the guns, how to dismantle and rebuild the guns. Every morning we would have drills. After a few days, we became soldiers.”

In addition to the fear of being beaten or killed, marijuana and alcohol were routinely used to incite the young combatants to carry out orders.

“There was no choice in this. Everybody had to take marijuana, mixed with the locally produced liquor. That made you brave,” says Abel.

“You didn't feel who you were anymore. You were like somebody who was completely out of their mind. You didn't understand the surroundings at all. And the guns gave you power, it made you feel powerful. You felt like you were on top of the whole world.

“A lot of horrible things were happening. People were being killed, they were disemboweled. People were beheaded.”

Escaping the horror

For months, Abel and a small group of friends spoke secretly of escaping the horrors of the war and in 1993 they dropped their guns and fled. Their destination was a UN refugee camp in the neighbouring country of Guinea.

“For two months we were in the bush. It was very dangerous for anyone associated with the NPFL to cross into Guinea. But we took the risk.”

Incredibly, Abel discovered that



his father and mother were also in one of the refugee camps. They were reunited, though Abel and his father had to plead their case that the teenager, suspected of war involvement, was not a threat and should be allowed to stay.

The family spent over three years in the refugee camp, where Abel enrolled in school. In 1996, hearing that peace was on the horizon in Liberia, with talk of a ceasefire and a “unity government,” they returned home.

“But it wasn't the way we heard it. There was still mayhem, atrocities on the ground,” Abel says. “So everyone was running again, for the second time. My parents, all of us, we were on the run.”

In 1997, Abel's father Tormue was apprehended by Charles Taylor's soldiers and murdered. His mother, Gormah Malonminee, would die in 2014 during the Ebola crisis in Liberia.

Later in 1997 Abel made his way to the Liberian capital, Monrovia,



USW Local 480 President Armindo DeMedeiros, second from right, was part of a Steelworkers Humanity Fund delegation that visited the Camp for Peace Liberia program that supports, educates and rehabilitates former child soldiers in the West African nation. Also pictured, from the left, are former child soldiers Abel Learwellie, Camp for Peace Liberia founder; Olifanti, who has been retrained as a mason, and Sumo, a community leader. They are standing in front of a brick building constructed by Olifanti.

where, helped by his family's longstanding involvement in the Lutheran Church, he enrolled in university. He became a youth leader in the church and began advocating for an end to the civil war and to the recruitment of child soldiers.

"It was still chaotic, there was fighting going on everywhere. The good thing was that I was closely connected with the church. It helped me a lot, to be protected to some extent."

As Liberia's second civil war came to an end, Abel was working with a church-sponsored group to encourage and support former child soldiers to reintegrate into society.

"We knew them, we knew their language, we knew how to speak to them, one-on-one."

Hope for former child soldiers

In 2005, Abel and other activists helped establish Camp for Peace Liberia, a non-profit organization

dedicated to supporting, educating and rehabilitating former child soldiers. Now in their 20s, 30s and 40s, thousands of Liberia's former child soldiers remain on the extreme fringes of society in one of the world's poorest nations. They are afflicted by psychological trauma, mental illness, drug addiction and illiteracy. Many are uneducated, unskilled and remain alienated from and ostracized by their communities.

"Their lives were devastated. They were disenfranchised. They were completely marginalized," says Abel.

"The wars ended years ago, but most of these young people are still suffering because nobody cares for them. Nobody wants to know about them. They have been neglected by their families and society."

Camp for Peace Liberia is providing hope for former child soldiers – and for their communities. The group offers a nine-month residential program, open to 30 participants at a time. The program focuses on vocational skills training and education, but also provides vital psycho-social counselling and support.

"We have helped over 150 young people to date. They are now in their communities, applying their skills in agriculture, in building trades, in making clothes, as auto mechanics, etc.," says Abel

"They are using their skills to rebuild community infrastructures that were destroyed by the war. They

are producing local food for the community, they are repairing vehicles and motorcycles and generators, they are building houses, they are producing local clothing for people."

Steelworkers making a difference

For the last three years, Camp for Peace has been receiving crucial support from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

USW members Armindo DeMedeiros (Local 480, Trail, B.C.) and Adam Nichols (Local 5795, Labrador City) were part of a Humanity Fund delegation to Liberia to observe the Camp for Peace program and meet participants.

DeMedeiros says he couldn't be more proud that Steelworkers are supporting such a program in a country beset by crushing economic, social and political problems.

"You can only imagine what these former child soldiers went through," he says. "To see the positive outlook they have, to see them trying to make the best of things, it's incredible. Work is so scarce there, so this training and education gives them a chance to work and to have a better life."

Steelworkers are helping provide hope and optimism to individuals and entire communities in Liberia, Abel says.

"People are learning skills and working to help themselves and their communities. They are taking their rightful places back into society. The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is alleviating poverty and turning people's lives around. It is helping to build reconciliation and a sustainable peace in Liberia." ■

Another **BROKEN** Promise Electoral Reform

Before he became prime minister, Justin Trudeau repeatedly promised that the 2015 federal election would be the last election under our unfair first-past-the-post system.

Nearly 90% called for a proportional voting system.

This was just one of many policies the Trudeau Liberals stole out of the NDP policy books. It's one of the reasons the Liberals won the 2015 election, gaining 100% of the power in Parliament with just 39% of the vote.

It's Not Over

Prime Minister Trudeau's broken promise on electoral reform is insulting to Canadians. The electoral reform promise was a major plank of the Liberal campaign in 2015. The promise was mentioned in the government's first throne speech. The parliamentary committee studying the issue travelled across the country to hear from Canadians and issued a thorough report. Nearly 90% of testimony from experts and the public called for a proportional voting system where the number of seats a party receives matches its share of the vote.

Justin Trudeau and the Liberal government have blatantly walked away from the promise to fix our unfair

voting system. Let's not let the Liberals forget that they broke this promise.

Why Steelworkers Care About Electoral Reform

Fairness and democracy are core union values – and that's what electoral reform is about. Electoral reform gives us the chance to make every vote count. It's time to end our system that encourages strategic voting – where votes are wasted trying to defeat a candidate or a party based on unreliable polling.

Proportional Representation – It's Not Complicated; It's Just Fair

The Liberals have walked away from electoral reform, but Canadians aren't giving up. NDP MP Nathan Cullen sponsored an electronic parliamentary petition last November that earned over 130,000 signatures by the time it closed for signing in March – the most signatures for any parliamentary e-petition.

Steelworkers Won't Give Up

Steelworkers can keep up the fight for electoral reform. We can remind the Liberal government that we are frustrated by their broken promise. And in the next election, we can vote for a party that will deliver a fair, proportional voting system. ■

***All we got was a
selfie**



From Awareness to Bargaining

USW Wins Domestic Violence Leave Provisions in Collective Agreements



Steelworkers Ivana Niblett (District 3), Lynne Descary (District 6) and Ray White (District 3) are having success bargaining domestic violence leave provisions.



Domestic violence

against women and girls continues to be a problem in Canada, with one in three Canadian women over the age of 16 experiencing sexual assault in their lifetimes.

With incidence rates this high, chances are someone in your workplace is a domestic violence survivor, even if you don't know about it. Recent research found that domestic violence often follows people to work, putting safety and jobs at risk.

Collective bargaining can play an important role in keeping people safe and supported at work. It also

breaks the silence around a long-taboo issue.

Steelworkers Leading the Way

An anti-violence initiative developed by the USW National Women's Committee in 2016 is raising awareness about domestic violence and producing tangible action by educating, engaging and mobilizing our members.

The Women's Committee developed an anti-violence kit that USW activists are using for presentations to local and area councils and in workplaces with co-operative employers.

The anti-violence initiative includes a presentation available for download and resources, including model contract language. Activists, union presidents and staff

continued next page

For Bargaining Committees

- ▶ If your USW unit or local does a bargaining survey, ask for domestic violence leave provisions when you fill it out
- ▶ Model collective agreement DV leave language includes:
 - ▶ A preamble to explain the intent of the language
 - ▶ Paid leave (which can be supplemented by additional unpaid leave and which does not use up members' sick leave or vacation)
 - ▶ No requirement to prove the member is experiencing domestic violence (or at least one that accepts proof from a wide range of sources (counsellors, elders, spiritual advisors, doctors, etc.))
 - ▶ Confidentiality and protection from discipline
 - ▶ Employer commitment to accommodate (by changing work schedule, work location, telephone number, email address to increase safety)
 - ▶ Employer commitment to safety planning, paid training for peer advocates and related workplace policies
- ▶ If paid leave is a no-go, bargain a new section on domestic violence leave acknowledging that DV situations exist and consider specifying that existing leave or unpaid leave could be taken in these situations and would not be unreasonably denied
- ▶ Ask your USW staff rep, local or unit president for more information

Domestic Violence continued

reps have in turn brought the initiative to the bargaining table. And it's working.

Steelworkers are winning domestic violence leave provisions (DV leave) in collective agreements across the country including in several workplaces in B.C., Alberta and Ontario so far.

Achieving DV Leave in our Agreements

USW Local 2009 at the Kwantlen Public Interest Research Group (KPIRG) in Surrey, B.C., was the first USW unit to negotiate DV leave provisions with its 2016 agreement. Michelle Laurie was the USW staff rep at the table.

"One of our members had been to a conference where she learned about the domestic violence leave provisions and she proposed it for bargaining," said Laurie.

The unit negotiated 12 weeks of paid leave and up to three months of unpaid leave.

Laurie has worked with three other Local 2009 units that have negotiated DV leave provisions – staff at MoveUP (COPE 388), staff at IATSE 891 and staff at the University of Victoria Students' Society. All achieved paid DV leave, ranging from five days to six weeks, and a commitment to undertake workplace training and safety strategies.

Laurie introduces the concept at the bargaining table by noting that domestic violence is not a new issue.

"Society is saying we need to address it and how it affects employers – people's ability to work, their productivity, safety in the workplace," she said.

"We need to talk out loud about this. It's real and there are real steps to deal with it," said Laurie.

Violence Not Acceptable In Society

Lynne Descary's motivation around DV leave is personal. She was raised in a home where domestic violence was present. Descary knows the situation women face when this occurs in their lives.

"Without domestic violence leave provisions, women are stuck in abusive homes," said Descary, a USW staff representative in Ontario (District 6).



**1 in 3 women in
Canada over
the age of 16
experiences
sexual assault**





Women of Steel Mary Lou Scott and Norma Mohamed present the anti-violence initiative to the Steelworkers Toronto Area Council.

She acknowledges that domestic violence, while not spoken about, was ignored as an issue in society in the past. Not anymore.

Descary has successfully helped at least five bargaining units in Ontario obtain DV leave. Some include flexible hours, up to four weeks of paid leave and up to five months of unpaid leave without loss of benefits or seniority.

A legal clinic in Sudbury (USW Local 2020) had no hesitation accepting the contract language. Other employers have said no at first, but in many cases, they have come around.

“The committees are absolutely behind it,” said Descary.

She Persisted

Staff rep Darlene Jalbert was able to negotiate 10 days of paid leave for contracts at Your Credit Union locations in Ottawa and Cornwall (USW locals 8327 and 13292).

At first, the employer refused the provisions. But the employer came around as bargaining went on and as a result, the employer also added the same provisions for the management team.

Working with the bargaining team, Jalbert has also negotiated unpaid DV leave provisions for 35 members

at another unit of Local 8327, Lanark County Interval House, a women’s shelter.

In bargaining, the teams have appealed to the compassion of the employer, noting that leave provisions are not special treatment. Once employers sympathize with the sentiment, teams persist.

“Put it in writing,” said Jalbert.

Media Coverage Spreads the Word

Two USW locals achieved domestic violence leave provisions within days of each other in B.C. and Alberta. Ray White, President of USW Local 1-207 in Edmonton, was able to achieve DV leave language at Rivercrest Care Centre, a long-term care facility in Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.

“We need to talk out loud about this. It’s real and there are real steps to deal with it.”

–Michelle Laurie

Local media coverage of the achievement in Alberta has made it easier to present the language at other units of the local, even in predominantly male work environments.

Since the achievement at Rivercrest, the local has achieved DV provisions for workers at UNA (United Nurses of Alberta) and a letter of understanding at Shaw Pipe in Camrose, Alta.

Business rep Ivana Niblett showed the Women’s Committee anti-violence presentation at the bargaining table during negotiations with Rivercrest. That helped move an employer that pointed to existing employee assistance (EA) programs as sufficient, even though those programs don’t include time off. Niblett connected domestic violence to workplace health and safety and changed the conversation.

continued next page



**1 in 3 workers
have
experienced
domestic
violence**





“Put it in writing.”

– Darlene Jalbert

Domestic Violence continued

“The provisions may not get used. But if it saves one life, it’s worth it,” said Niblett.

Niblett and White have achieved the language in some form at three units so far. There are 20 agreements to bargain in 2017 and Niblett says the DV language will be at all the tables.

“As soon as we talk about it, people are receptive.”

– Veronica Tanner

USW members in Alberta are proud to include the language in bargaining proposals.

The same is true in B.C., where Local 1-405’s Jeff Bromley achieved DV language for members of a unit at Trickle Creek Resort in Kimberley.

Veronica Tanner is the local’s Women’s Committee co-chair and serves on the District 3 and National Women’s Committees. Tanner presented the anti-violence initiative and model DV language to the local and it has been included in bargaining proposals since, even in male-dominated work environments.

“The provisions may not get used. But if it saves one life, it’s worth it.”

– Ivana Niblett

For both Tanner and Niblett, having USW men on board and supportive has helped get the word out.

“As soon as we talk about it, people are receptive,” said Tanner.

Make it the Law

Momentum is building for making provisions for DV leave the law. Manitoba added domestic violence leave provisions to employment standards legislation in 2016. Private member’s bills are under consideration in Ontario and Saskatchewan. The federal government is looking at it, and Alberta is likely to consider it as part of its labour law review.

In Quebec, the provincial labour federation (FTQ) unanimously passed a resolution in November 2016 calling for paid DV leave in laws and collective agreements.

Part of USW’s Equality Work

Social stigma encourages those experiencing domestic violence to keep their situation secret. Many abusers encourage it too. By talking about the issue and bringing it to the bargaining table, unions are helping to end isolation, recognizing it as a societal problem and taking action by supporting those experiencing domestic violence.

The USW’s recent success negotiating domestic violence leave provisions is part of our equality work; part of our union’s work for women. Domestic violence is also a workplace health and safety issue. While these provisions on their own won’t end violence against women and girls, negotiating it helps break the silence while advancing and prioritizing women’s issues within our union. www.usw.ca/anti-violence ■

**Almost 10%
said they
had lost a
job because
of domestic
violence**



Refugees Welc♥me

USW Sponsorship Involvement Changes Lives

'Thank you for our new home'

Bernie Heintzman's church group in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., began raising money to sponsor a Syrian refugee family. New Beginnings expanded to a network of 40 people from five churches. The group expanded their goals also; instead of one Syrian refugee family, they sponsored three.

So when Heintzman saw the article in the June 2016 issue of *USW@Work* about sponsorship money available from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund for private groups that included USW members, New Beginnings applied.

"The Steelworkers have been very helpful," said Heintzman, a member of SOAR Chapter 17.

Before arriving in Canada last fall, the Syrian families had been living in refugee camps in Turkey and Lebanon. One family had been in a refugee camp for four years. The children range in age from eight months to 13 years.

continued next page



Refugees continued

Volunteers help with transportation, education, housing and finance to help the families adjust to their new lives in Canada.

The adults are in English classes to build language skills towards future employment, while the children's English proficiency is already impressive.

At a recent gathering with the families and the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, one of the children, Ayenda, read a letter she had written in English. It concludes: "Thank you, the people of Canada, for helping me, my family and all the other Syrian families for our new home."

Canada can do more

Liz Brach acted on the idea of starting a refugee sponsorship group after a holiday in Italy made her realize Canada could do more to help refugees. Back home in Powell River, B.C., Brach's parish priest connected her with the church's social justice office in Vancouver.

Knowing there was a network of support and expertise through the church, Brach put out the call on Facebook and Hands Across The Water was started.

Barry Butula, a member of USW Local 816, saw an article on Steelworkers helping refugees in the USW magazine *USW@Work*.

"He was so excited to learn he could assist," said Brach. Butula's wife, Brenda, is a member of Hands Across the Water. With a USW member amongst their group, Hands Across the Water was eligible for refugee support through the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

The Dayekh family arrived in Powell River on June 30, 2016, after living in a refugee camp in Jordan for two years.



Hands Across the Water with their Syrian family and members of the USW. Front: Noella, Rania, Gaby, Rezz, Daniel and Elia Dayekh. Back: Elizabeth Brach, Kate Saunders-Cooper, USW Staff Rep Earl Graham, USW Local 816 President Mick Pancich, Barry Butula

"Thank you, the people of Canada, for helping me, my family and all the other Syrian families for our new home."

– Ayenda Ali, age 11

"They are adjusting very well," said Brach of Gaby, his wife Rania, and their four children. Gaby already has a job four days a week at a window fabrication company in Powell River. The eldest son, Rezzq, 21, had

enough English that he got a summer job at Lafarge on Texada Island, working alongside USW members. He upgraded his English and aced a college course to be accepted to the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in the fall.

The Powell River community has offered wonderful support, said Brach. Through local career and immigrant service agencies, Rania has been linked with a mentor and will be selling food at a local farmer's market in the spring.



Two of the three New Beginnings families: the Alis (left) and the Balachs (right).

Brach has heard people in Canada say our country has enough refugees, but she disagrees. “We have lots of room and so much opportunity.”

Eager to work

Learning English is often the biggest barrier to employment for refugees. The parents in a six-member family from Burma ride an e-bike to their English lessons, more than a year after their arrival in Sault Ste. Marie in November 2015.

Murray McLean is a member of USW 2724 (Essar Steel Algoma) and part of the St. Andrew’s United Church Friends of Refugees group that sponsored the family. Thanks to McLean’s involvement, the group applied for refugee support from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

“Progress with the kids is phenomenal,” said McLean about their English-language abilities. The youngest of the four children is in childcare and will start school in the fall.

The parents are both “eager to work and want to participate in the community” said McLean. The father, Aung Ngwe, is volunteering one day a week with Habitat for Humanity. There’s hope this experience will open doors for job prospects in moving, warehousing or on a golf course.

Although the one-year commitment by the sponsors has come and gone, none of the volunteers have backed away, said McLean. Retired nurses are assisting with medical appointments, two volunteers help with finance, two more help with groceries, though McLean says the family has gone grocery shopping on their own.

As a result of their sponsorship experience, some of McLean’s group

are helping out with the 100-or-so government-sponsored refugees in The Soo, who don’t have the same hands-on support from the community that privately sponsored families do.

Being a refugee sponsor is a great way to make new friends – on both sides, said McLean. “It will change your life.”

Steelworkers Humanity Fund Refugee Sponsorship Assistance

So far the Steelworkers Humanity

Fund has helped 12 groups sponsor refugee families, and is committed to assist another six groups when their refugee families are approved to travel to Canada.

Find out if any members of your local are interested in or already participating in a private sponsorship group. Contact the Steelworkers Humanity Fund at 416-544-5994, humanityfund@usw.ca or 800-234 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, Ont., M4P 1K7. ■



Aung Ngwe and Pow Bow return from their English lessons in Sault Ste. Marie.

Bargaining Good Contracts in Challenging Times

Confronted by economic challenges and employers and governments intent on weakening bargaining rights, Steelworkers continue to achieve strong collective agreements in virtually every sector of the economy. Below are some recent examples of good contracts negotiated by USW members across the country.



Rail workers solidify pension, improve wages, benefits

Approximately 600 members working at CP Rail operations across Canada ratified a five-year agreement in April that includes 2% annual wage increases and additional, target-based 1% increases in the contract's fourth and fifth years. The defined benefit pension plan was maintained and insurance and benefits coverage were improved. Members work primarily in administrative support, intermodal department, yard office and customer service positions at CP Rail.



Emphatic win for limestone miners

Locked out for nearly five months, Local 816 members at Lafarge Canada's Texada Island, B.C., limestone mine ratified a collective agreement in March that beat back all concession demands and made several gains. Members defeated Lafarge's attempts to eliminate seniority rights and job classifications, while securing total wage increases of 9% and improved benefits, pensions and contract language.



2,000 iron ore workers win pension standoff

Demands for pension concessions prompted a fierce response from 2,000 members at ArcelorMittal's iron ore operations in Fermont and Port-Cartier, Que., in May. Workers delivered a near-unanimous notice that they would strike within 72 hours. Two days later, the concession demand was dropped and a fair deal was reached, with improvements to the defined-benefit pension and to wages, benefits and contract language for members of locals 5778, 7401, 7401-FP, 8664 and 6869.



Groundbreaking domestic violence provisions

USW members in Alberta and B.C. are among the latest Steelworkers to negotiate groundbreaking provisions for domestic violence (DV) leave. Local 1-207 members at Rivercrest Care Centre in Fort Saskatchewan, Alta., achieved DV leave in a new contract in January that also provides 3% wage increases, new shift premiums and other language improvements. At the same time, Local 1-405 members at Trickle Creek Resort in Kimberley, B.C., negotiated an agreement providing DV leave, 5% wage increases and improvements in vacations, health-care coverage and bereavement leave.



Workers jettison two-tier benefits

Eliminating a two-tier health benefits plan was a key bargaining achievement for Local 1138 members at the Syncreon automotive component assembly plant in Laval, Que. Young workers and new hires now receive the same health benefits as more senior employees. Members also negotiated annual 50-cent hourly wage increases.



Coal miners improve wages, pensions

Despite challenging industry conditions, 1,800 members at Teck coal mining operations in British Columbia made gains in new five-year contracts in late 2016. Local 7884 members at Teck's Fording River operations and Local 9346 members at Teck's Elkview mine received lump-sum payments ranging from \$18,000 to \$22,000, with 2% wage increases in each of the contracts' last four years, significant pension increases and improved benefits.


**7940
8794**

Strong agreements at Ivaco

Improvements to wages, benefits and contracting-out protections were achieved in three-year agreements reached in February by 370 members of locals 7940 and 8794 at Ivaco Rolling Mills in L'Orignal, Ont. Hourly wage increases and adjustments range from \$3.82 to \$7.11 for trades and \$1.50 to \$3 for production employees, with new retention premiums of up to \$2 per hour for key positions.


1944

Contract ratified in tough bargaining at Telus

Following months of difficult bargaining with telecommunications giant Telus, members of USW TWU National Local 1944 voted 68% to ratify a new collective agreement in late 2016. Throughout the bargaining process, members responded with unprecedented levels of engagement and solidarity to resist attempts to gut their contract. The settlement, covering 10,800 members in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, included significant lump-sum payments and 2% wage increases in each of the agreement's last three years.


4096

Nuclear workers confront privatization, pension issues

Local 4096 members reached new contracts with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories in late 2016 that resolved pension issues caused by the privatization of the former Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. in Chalk River, Ont. Agreements covering 360 employees created a new multi-employer, multi-union pension plan, provided lump-sum payments and annual wage increases ranging from 1.5% to 2% and improved contract language on employee rights and benefits.


9291

Manufacturing workers proud of first agreement

The 70 new Steelworkers at industrial pump manufacturer Technosub in Rouyn-Noranda, Que., unanimously ratified a first contract described as "something to be proud of." Gains include annual wage hikes in addition to salary grid increases for less-experienced workers, elimination of four levels in the pay grid, wage increases of up to 4% in the first year and 2.5% in each of the second and third years.


7226

New deal leads to plant reopening

An employer investment in the reopening of their plant was part of tough bargaining that led to a new contract for Local 7226 members in Calgary. The Tenaris-owned facility, which produces steel pipe, casing and tubing, was shut down in mid-2015 due to foreign steel dumping and low oil and gas prices. More than 100 members of Local 7226 returned to work this spring with an agreement that preserves their defined benefit pension plan, maintains all benefits and improves contract language, but includes wage reductions.


6946

Long-term-care members protect wages, conditions

Guaranteed wages and working conditions during a reconstruction project are among gains made by Local 6946 members at the Valley Manor long-term care facility in Barry's Bay, Ont. The three-year agreement addresses employment stability through to 2019 and provides improved wages, pensions, benefits and vacations.


4796

Retirement home workers like first contract

Local 4796 members at the Résidence Oasis retirement home in Val-d'Or, Que., overwhelmingly ratified their first collective agreement. The contract provides an immediate wage adjustment of up to \$2 an hour as well as annual increases of 40 cents an hour, 2.5% pension plan contributions from the employer, an extra sick day, the option for stat holiday transfers and union leave language.

An Extraordinary Fighter

Steelworker Ian Lavoie talks about his life-changing workplace injuries

In early 2016, Ian Lavoie's life was changed forever. Today, to hear Ian recount these traumatic events is to recognize the story of an extraordinary fighter and survivor.

“Yes, sometimes the employer will try to make us pay the price. But we have to fight all the way and never back down.”

– USW District 5 Director
Alain Croteau

A member of Steelworkers Local 8897, working as a finisher at the ArcelorMittal steel mill in Longueuil, Que., Ian suffered catastrophic injuries on the job on Feb. 19, 2016. He was rushed to hospital and hovered between life and death during lengthy surgical procedures, including the amputation of one of his legs.

In the late afternoon of Feb. 19, during his shift at the steel mill, Ian offered to help out a co-worker in the plant's shipping department. In a split-second, a load of 23-foot steel rods came crashing down on him, causing him to fall onto red-hot steel just coming out of the rolling mill. His left leg was severed below the knee, he suffered third-degree burns, severed arteries and numerous other critical injuries.

A first responder on ArcelorMittal's rescue teams for several years, Ian

knew instantly that he was in a fight for his life. And he knew his chances would be better if he could stay awake.

‘I felt this fury, to live’

“I knew I couldn't lose consciousness, so I fought it, very hard. I felt this fury, to live. As I was lying underneath that load of rods, I was thinking of my kids and Valérie [his partner],” he recalled.

“When I got to the hospital the doctors said it was 50-50. There was so much internal bleeding, two of my arteries were severed.”

Ian thought about how both he and Valérie had already lost their parents.

“There are no grandparents anymore. So there was no way I was leaving. So I fought. I was conscious right up until I got to the operating room,” he said.

Ian ultimately underwent six surgeries, including an initial, 13-hour operation and the amputation of his left leg above the knee. Following the initial surgery, he remained in a coma for three weeks.

“The first thing that came to me when I woke up from my coma was to celebrate life, because I was still alive,” he said.

But Ian's battle was far from over. He spent the next few months in hospital, after which he was transferred to a rehabilitation centre where he stayed until late summer. More than a year later, Ian is continuing his rehab as an outpatient.

Health and safety prevention – ‘super important’

Quebec's workplace health and safety agency, the CNESST, has investigated the disastrous incident at the ArcelorMittal steel plant. While the process continues, the company has been contesting some of the corrective safety measures ordered by the agency.

But Ian Lavoie knows the hazards he and his co-workers were confronted with on the job.

Looking back, he recognizes the traumatic events of February 2016 could have been avoided if greater safety and prevention measures were in place the steel plant.

“I saw things that should never have been sitting in the warehouses. Piles of stuff that did not comply (with safe practices). Maybe we had gotten used to seeing these things. Maybe we closed our eyes and simply ignored them (because this is a steel mill, there are risks everywhere,” he said.

“It was like the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads. And on Feb. 19, at 4:45 p.m., the sword fell.”

Ian was warmly welcomed by his USW brothers and sisters at the Steelworkers District 5 Conference last November, where he paid tribute to his co-workers, family and friends for their support. He also praised the health and safety work being done by his colleagues at Local 8897 and by all workplace health and safety representatives.

"Sometimes, you would hear people say 'they're so tiresome, always going on about health and safety.' I said it myself too, in the past. But it's their job, it's what they do. And now I realize that this vigilance, this focus on health and safety processes is super important, it's there to protect us."

The right to refuse is a duty!

Quebec Steelworkers Director Alain Croteau reminded conference delegates that workers must not be afraid of enforcing their rights to a healthy and safe workplace.

"And now I realize that this vigilance, this focus on health and safety processes is super important, it's there to protect us."

– Ian Lavoie

"Yes, sometimes the employer will try to make us pay the price. But we have to fight all the way and never back down. The right to refuse is more than a right, it's a duty!" Croteau said.

Today, Ian Lavoie is walking again, with his "robocop" prosthesis, and he hopes to eventually return to work.

In the meantime, he continues to celebrate life. ■



Ian Lavoie was warmly welcomed by his USW brothers and sisters at last fall's Steelworkers District 5 Conference, where he paid tribute to his co-workers, family and friends for their support.



‘Hands Off Our Pensions’

Steelworkers launch global campaign targeting Glencore

Waving signs blaring “Hands Off Our Pensions,” hundreds of striking Quebec Steelworkers descended on the Toronto Stock Exchange in April to launch a global campaign against resource giant Glencore.

The 371 members of Local 6486 at the CEZinc refinery in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, west of Montreal, have been on strike since Feb. 12. The dispute was provoked by corporate demands for pension concessions – even though the plan is overfunded. The workers also have denounced the company for rejecting their proposals to pursue other cost-cutting and efficiency options.

CEZinc is owned by Noranda Income Fund, of which Switzerland-based

“Together we can restart this plant and generate significant profits again. But we won’t drop to our knees to make that happen.”

– Manon Castonguay
USW Local 6486 President

Glencore is the largest shareholder.

On April 28, hundreds of Local 6486 members were joined by Toronto Steelworkers for a rousing demonstration at the Toronto Stock Exchange, where Noranda Income Fund shareholders – notably Glencore

representatives – were holding their annual general meeting.

“These striking workers came to Toronto to make themselves heard by Noranda shareholders. And we’re ready to travel all the way to Switzerland to get the attention of Glencore’s shareholders,” USW Quebec Director Alain Croteau said.

“We will be collaborating with unions representing Glencore workers around the world. This company needs to respect the workers on whose backs it built its wealth,” Croteau said.

Local 6486 President Manon Castonguay, who attended Noranda’s annual meeting with a proxy given to her by a shareholder, praised her members’ solidarity and commitment

ns!
aign



Local 6486 President Manon Castonguay and Steelworkers rallied outside the Toronto Stock Exchange.

to defend the pensions of young workers.

"We understand the desire to save money. We're even ready to help find solutions, but Noranda's directors have turned a deaf ear to us," Castonguay said.

"We will not back down. We are determined not to sacrifice our members' pension plan and the well-being of generations to come. Together we can restart this plant and generate significant profits again. But we won't drop to our knees to make that happen. We say, 'hands off our pensions!'"

USW Ontario Director Marty Warren welcomed the Quebec Steelworkers and the launch of the global campaign targeting Glencore. ■

United Steelworkers Local 816 has won a significant victory after a five-month lockout by Lafarge Canada at the Texada Island limestone mine came to end in March.

Lafarge locked out the Steelworkers on Oct. 17, 2016 after members refused to give in to company demands to eliminate seniority rights.

With the support of their community, other USW locals, unions in the region and international solidarity from overseas, Local 816 members stood strong and fought back.

As a result, the USW secured an agreement with no concessions, maintained seniority rights and secured wage and benefit increases similar to other collective agreements in the sector.

For decades USW members on Texada Island have taken great pride in their work and given one hundred percent. It's clear that the actions of Lafarge management have shattered our members' confidence in the company.

Lafarge's mean-spirited and irrational lockout has done tremendous harm to their employees, their families and the entire Texada community.

"The ball is firmly in Lafarge's court. They have a big hill to climb and a lot of work to do if they wish to rebuild the trust and respect that people on Texada Island once had for them," said Stephen Hunt, United Steelworkers Director for Western Canada.

Texada Island has a rich history of mining limestone dating back as early as 1918. The mine is the oldest active mine in the province and produces limestone used to make cement that is critical to many infrastructure projects. ■



Success at Lafarge

NDP LEADER

The USW is excited for the NDP leadership race now underway – to be part of selecting a new leader, to hear the ideas and proposals from the candidates and to share in the energy of the race.

The race to select the next leader of the federal NDP will be in full gear over the summer with the leadership vote beginning Sept. 18, 2017.

Be a part of it! Steelworkers are encouraged to join or renew their NDP membership in order to vote. The membership cut-off is Aug. 17.

At press time, five candidates had joined the race: Charlie Angus, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron, Peter Julian and Jagmeet Singh. More candidates may have already joined after *USW@Work* went to press.

The NDP candidates are principled and progressive with strong track records in their communities and with new ideas to renew our party. Unlike the Conservative leadership race, there are no

GUY CARON *Let's Build a Progressive and Sustainable Economy*

The only candidate so far from Quebec, Guy Caron, 49, is the MP for Rimouski-Neigette-Témiscouata-Les Basques, first elected in 2011.

"The two major challenges of this century are the fight against income inequality and the fight against climate change. These are challenges for humanity that have concrete consequences for Canadians."

<http://en.guycaron.ca>



Leadership Debates Online

NDP leadership debates are live and archived online on CPAC: www.cpac.ca.

- ▶ **Saskatoon** – Tues., July 11, 6 p.m.
- ▶ **Montreal** – Sun., Aug. 27, 2 p.m.
- ▶ **Vancouver** – Sun., Sept. 10, 12 noon

One Member, One Vote

Voting will be online or by mail. Every member gets to vote, but your NDP membership must be up-to-date. Now is a great time to renew or check with your provincial section that your membership is current. Don't miss out on this chance to choose the next leader of our party.

JAGMEET SINGH *Protecting Communities and Jobs*

From the Greater Toronto Area, Jagmeet, 38, is Deputy Leader of the Ontario NDP and MPP for



Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

"Far too many workers in Ontario are unable to find good quality, permanent employment and many end up in precarious work through temporary job agencies. We must commit to protecting workers employed through these agencies, and ensure that they are receiving equal pay for equal work."

www.jagmeetsingh.ca

LEADERSHIP RACE

embarrassments here!

In fact, the largest hurdle for the NDP candidates so far is differentiating themselves. They are respectful, allow each other to finish speaking and largely agree with each others' ideas.

Learn more about the candidates via the NDP at www.ndp.ca/leadership-2017.

USW Townhalls

In the coming months, the USW will be holding telephone townhalls with the NDP leadership candidates.

Our union is a founder of the NDP and steadfast supporter of Canada's labour party. We believe that our party is stronger with Steelworkers as active members of the party. As NDP members, Steelworkers can strengthen our political partnership and continue our shared work to fight for fairness and justice for workers.

Steelworkers: join the party or renew your NDP membership and have a voice in selecting the next NDP leader.

www.ndp.ca/usw ■



CHARLIE ANGUS *Got Your Back*

From Northern Ontario, Charlie Angus, 54, has represented the riding of Timmins–James Bay since 2004.

"I learned about Canadians from working with the homeless in Toronto. I learned more as we stood together on the blockade, fighting against toxic waste incinerators and mega-dumps. I learned by writing books about the struggles of working-class people and publishing stories from northern communities. Then I brought my politics to the floor of the House of Commons."

www.charlieangusndp.ca



NIKI ASHTON *Building a Movement*

From Thompson, Man., Niki Ashton, 34, has represented the riding of Churchill–Keewatinook Aski since 2008.

"The way forward for the NDP is clear. We must work tirelessly for true reconciliation with Indigenous people, for the protection and preservation of our environment, for working Canadians, for women, for people living with disabilities, for racial justice, for Trans* justice, for LGBTQ justice, for the right to be who you are, and to love who you want to love."

www.nikiashton2017.ca



PETER JULIAN *A Better World is Possible*

Peter Julian, 55, has served as the MP for New Westminster–Burnaby in B.C. since 2004.

"Stopping raw bitumen export pipelines and toxic fracking is a start, but where do we go from there? ... Workers in the energy sector and their families must not bear the brunt of the transition. In fact they must be at the centre of it!"

www.peterjulian.ca

THE POWER OF UNITY

UNITED STEELWORKERS

INTERNATIONAL

'The Power of Unity'



The guiding theme at this year's Steelworkers International Convention in April was 'The Power of Unity! The power of unity built by brotherhood and sisterhood within our locals. The power of unity forged in battles with unreasonable or dangerous employers. The power of unity forced on us by bad trade deals and bad health and safety regulations. And the power of unity felt by each of our members as we seek to protect and provide for our families and our communities.

On opening day, International President Leo W. Gerard reminded us that our labour movement's history is built on hard-fought unity. "Our founders risked everything to win the rights that all of us enjoy today. They did it against unbelievable odds. They battled

hired scabs and thugs. They stood down national guardsmen hell-bent on breaking their strikes. They even stood their ground against cops that shot them dead on picket lines," Gerard explained to the crowd of over 4,000.

"And yet, in spite of all that, they prevailed. Their power was – and ours still is – the greatest power ever known – the power of unity, the power of our activism, the power of standing strong, shoulder-to-shoulder, militant if necessary."

Gerard cited Canada to emphasize his point. "In Canada, the USW resisted concessions sought by Rio Tinto in Alma, Que., and 25 years following a mining tragedy known as Westray we are still fighting to hold managers accountable when a fatality occurs."

Photos: Steve Dietz

CANADIAN DELEGATES AT THE MIC • CANADIAN DELEGATES AT THE MIC

Liz Cherry *on Women of Steel Training*

"The Women of Steel training program is awesome." Liz (Local 4120) said, "There seems to be a glass ceiling above the level of president of the local. Women need to be represented in the ranks of higher union officials."



Nik Redman *on Supporting Transitioning in the Workplace*

"It is important for locals to support trans rights." Speaking to a Human Rights resolution, Nik (Local 1998) said his local is among the most diverse and it stuck by him as he made the transition from female to male.



ANNUAL CONVENTION 2017

'Unity' Guides Our Future



The convention heard from passionate, informative and educational speakers and panelists who came from the U.S., Canada and countries around the world.

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath stirred the crowd by reminding them, "thanks to the Steelworkers, people have been able to earn a good living. Thanks to the Steelworkers, people own their own home. Thanks to the Steelworkers, parents send their kids to university."

Horwath also rallied them to unity with a word of caution. "I know it feels like that reality is slipping away. But I also know we can bring it back, sisters and brothers, through the power of unity."

Tom Mulcair, Leader of Canada's NDP, focused on the harm trade deals are inflicting on workers in Canada and the U.S. "It's not surprising that the gap between the wealthy and everyone else is growing. The federal Liberal government is pursuing the same wrong-headed trade deals and policies that have been destroying good jobs for decades."

"The Liberals support NAFTA, have signed a corporate-friendly trade agreement with the European Union and are actively trying to save the Trans-Pacific Partnership. However, USW and the NDP believe a fair economy should lift everyone up, not just the few at the top. We are rooted in the values of equality, justice and opportunity." ■

STATES AT THE MIC • CANADIAN DELEGATES AT THE MIC

Carolyn Egan

on Basic Labour Rights

"We fight to keep basic labour rights." Carolyn (Local 8300) rallied delegates with: "Labour has made such an incredible difference in the lives of people in both of our countries. Corporations know that, and that is why they are engaged in outright attacks."



Inder Johal

on Women of Steel Resolution

"We are committed activists who are supported by our local where the president lifts us up and removes barriers placed in our way," said Inder (Local 2009), a NextGENER.



Delegate Profiles



KYLE JOHNSTON

Local 1944, Unit 205
Red Deer, Alta.

HOMETOWN "In Red Deer when it comes to hockey you either cheer for the Calgary Flames or the Edmonton Oilers. I'm a huge Oilers fan."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "In our last round of bargaining we did a lot of work through our CAT team engaging our NextGen members to build unity."

CONVENTION "Definitely helping to build the Next Generation program and engaging young members in our local, that's my number-one goal."



MANON BERTRAND

Local 1004
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Que.

HOMETOWN "In my area, almost all of the pulp and paper industry has been relocated to China."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "It is vital to be united when we fight to improve working conditions and society. Together, we are stronger."

CONVENTION "The overall feeling of unity in the room. Together we make a difference. Getting involved in activities and building relationships."



AMANDA GIBB

Local 9705
Castlegar, B.C.

HOMETOWN "Castlegar is a town of 7,000 and it's the absolute greatest hockey town, anywhere."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "We're 95% women in our local, with branches that are spread out quite a distance from each other. So unity to us is crucial."

CONVENTION "We're a small local and we don't usually send anyone to convention. I paid my own way to come here, to be part of it, and when I get back I plan to share what the convention is about."



DANAE MOORE

Local 1-425
Williams Lake, B.C.

HOMETOWN "The town I live in has just decided that we're the mural capital of British Columbia."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "It means we're stronger together than when we're on our own, and we see the benefits of that unity in our local and when we mobilize in solidarity with other locals."

CONVENTION "Hearing about all the great works that our union and our members do."



CANADIAN DELEGATES AT THE MIC • CANADIAN DELEGATES AT THE MIC

Colleen Burke on Global Unity and Activism

"We saw first-hand the good work that IndustriALL does," Colleen (Local 1998) said of her visit with struggling garment workers last year in Bangladesh.



Kristy Bard on NextGen Programs

"I have been given tremendous opportunities that I never could have imagined." Kristy (Local 1998) said she has benefitted from NextGen opportunities and informal mentorship.





SYED AKHTAR

Local 5296
Mississauga, Ont.

HOMETOWN "We represent over 5,000 members in many, many workplaces all over the Greater Toronto Area."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "It means our members get representation and dignity in their workplaces, that's what unity gets you on the job."

CONVENTION "I'm impressed by the unity and the diversity that I see in our membership, with people from all kinds of backgrounds who come from all over the world."



TERRI RINTA

Local 2020
Sudbury, Ont.

HOMETOWN "We're a nickel-mining town. We have the Big Nickel – a ginormous nickel that is part of a tourist attraction in the city."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "It means that we need to be united in order to do the work we have to do as a union."

CONVENTION "You hear members' opinions and stories and you realize how similar the struggles are that we all face."



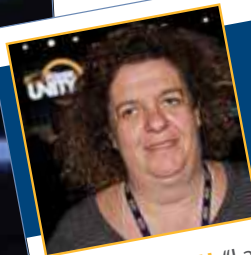
HUGUES VILLENEUVE

Amalgamated Local 9490
Saguenay, Que.

HOMETOWN "What comes to mind where I live is the 2011 dispute at Rio Tinto, the students' strike of 2012, the fight against two-tier clauses at Ciment Lafarge and Resco."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "For me, it means that it is today's reality: workers are not sufficiently aware of the strength of their numbers."

CONVENTION "The importance of unity and mutual support must be reminded at every opportunity. It builds bridges. It binds."



NATHALIE LAPOINTE

Local 1976
Dolbeau-Mistassini, Que.

HOMETOWN "I am worried about the many young people leaving my little village of Dolbeau-Mistassini, Que."

'THE POWER OF UNITY' "It means that the more mobilized we are, the better the group holds together and the stronger we are."

CONVENTION "I hope to spend some time with my colleagues. We can never be reminded too often of the importance of mobilization."

Photos: Steve Dietz

ATES AT THE MIC • CANADIAN DELEGATES AT THE MIC

Mark Austin on Training and Career Development

"The USW scholarship advanced my career as a union worker." Mark (Local 1998) supported the successful resolution calling for expanded training and career development.



Ken Neumann on Anti-Harrassment Campaign

"The Hang Up on Abuse campaign has exposed terrible abuse on the job." Ken (National Director) explained our call centre members receive abuse, including, "Listen honey, could you put a man on the phone who knows how to do his job?"





STOP OPERATING IN THE DARK.

Hold Canadian brands accountable

Four years after the Rana Plaza collapse that killed more than 1,100 garment workers in Bangladesh, an international coalition of human rights and labour rights advocates including the United Steelworkers called on Canadian apparel retailers such as Mark's and Sport Chek to commit to greater transparency with their supply chains.

“Canadian consumers want Canadian retailers to ensure a minimum level of safety in factories to stop fashion killings from ever happening again.”

– USW National Director
Ken Neumann

The Canadian Tire family of brands, including Mark's and Sport Chek, imports products from 67 factories in Bangladesh. While Canadian Tire has made public commitments about “wanting to make a positive difference in people's lives” and “improving workplace safety,” it does not publicly report the garment factories it uses, as other leading brands are doing.

A new report, based on a survey of 72 of the world's leading apparel brands, has identified Canadian Tire among companies, including Walmart, that have made no commitment to publish supplier factory information.

Without transparent supplier information, human rights groups can't independently verify how workers are treated, if needed building repairs have been done or if factories are safe.

The No More Operating in the Dark campaign prompts the public to call, email and tweet at decision makers at Canadian Tire, asking them to publicly disclose the names and addresses of factories used to make clothes for Mark's, Sport Chek and other stores.

Nike and Adidas and 17 other leading brands have taken the Transparency Pledge to disclose information identifying the factories that produce their goods, the Follow the Thread report found. Other companies, including Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), Loblaw and Hudson's Bay company, are taking steps to disclose more information about the factories that manufacture their products.

“We are calling on Canadian Tire, Mark's and Sport Chek to make a clear commitment to transparency and accountability,” said Ken Neumann, USW National Director.

“Canadian consumers want Canadian retailers to ensure a minimum level of safety in factories to stop fashion killings from ever happening again,” said Neumann.

Hold Canadian brands accountable. Tell Mark's, Sport Chek and Canadian Tire that operating in the dark and keeping factories hidden from public scrutiny is unacceptable: www.usw.ca/april24 ■