

# Unite

A Newsletter for United Steelworkers in District 3 – Western Canada and the Territories

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW**  
DISTRICT 3

OCTOBER 2021



## Steelworkers Make A Difference In The Federal Election

Our union is engaged in politics because it shapes the lives of workers and our families. Our votes matter and make a difference.

The Liberals won a minority government, winning 159 seats. The Conservatives won 119 seats, the Bloc Québécois won 33 seats, the NDP won 25 seats and the Green Party won 2 seats.

Despite the snap election call, the District was able to organize in many ways, including a telephone town hall with Don Davies (incumbent NDP candidate for Vancouver-Kingsway) as well as Steelworkers Vote schools, both online and in-person in Edmonton and Saskatoon.

In Edmonton, we were thrilled to see our volunteer efforts help to elect Blake Desjarlais in Edmonton-Griesbach, unseating Conservative incumbent Kerry Diotte. During the Edmonton school, students were joined by Blake Desjarlais, Heather McPherson (incumbent NDP candidate for Edmonton-Strathcona), Siobhan Vipond (Canadian Labour Congress Executive Vice-President), and Christina Gray (MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods,

Alberta NDP Labour & Immigration Critic).

In Saskatoon, Robert Doucette (NDP candidate for Saskatoon-West), Claire Card (NDP candidate for Saskatoon-University), Dave McGrane (former Sask NDP President and former candidate) and Vicki Mowat (MLA for Saskatoon Fairview) joined our class.

We can be proud that Steelworkers helped elect New Democrats to fight for us in Ottawa.

Jagmeet's campaign focused on the issues that matter to workers and everyday people. NDP proposals to make the wealthy pay their fair share, create a million jobs, make housing more affordable and bring in pharmacare and dental care resonated with millions of voters.

The NDP committed to undertake the important work of reconciliation in true and equal partnership with Indigenous communities across the country.

Now that the election is over, we will continue our work with Jagmeet Singh and the NDP to pressure the Liberals to deliver on their promises.



## Mark Your Calendar

OCT  
4

National Day to Commemorate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

OCT  
11

Thanksgiving

NOV  
10

Solidarity in Hard Times: A Fair and Equitable Recovery Online Conference

NOV  
19-21

B.C. NDP Convention Virtual Convention



# Member Spotlight



**Tracey Gausdal**  
USW Local 9705

Tracey works for Kootenay Insurance Services (KIS) in Trail, B.C. She has been a Steelworker for over 15 years. She handles all kinds of insurance for home, auto and travel.

To have the union on her side was very important for Tracey coming into the job.

"I had never worked in a union position before and didn't know what that meant. In the office at the time, we had just split from Kootenay Savings Credit Union. When our new unit was formed, we never had a shop steward who was actively involved. That is why I stepped up and got involved as the health and safety rep and now as Unit Chair," said Gausdal.

"The biggest thing, when I became the Unit Chair, was that I wanted to be able to go to bat for my colleagues. Being part of United Steelworkers, I knew the union would be there and it didn't matter if we were an insurance company or an industrial company. We knew the Steelworkers would be there to support all of us," added Gausdal.

Tracey has taken a variety of courses through the union, is a current Leadership Development Scholarship student and is the Treasurer for her local.

## Remembering: Joe Benn

District 3 is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Brother Joe Benn from USW Local 1944.

Following a catastrophic stroke in the early morning on Sat., September 4, and having no chance of recovery, Joe was taken off life support as his sister Sue held him tight when he left us behind.

Joe was a great activist and Local Union Representative who cared deeply about his work and supporting Steelworkers. Joe had been servicing Units 207, 208 and 214 in northern Alberta.

Prior to becoming a Rep, Joe had been a long-time rank-and-file activist from TWU Local 207, Edmonton Clerical.

"I met and worked very closely with Joe from 2000 through 2005, spending days and nights together seemingly without end when we both served on the TWU-Telus Bargaining Committee, and we have been the best of friends ever since.



We were like Frick and Frack; where one went so did the other, always having each other's backs through thick and thin. I will miss him every day of my life," said Donna Hokiro, President of USW Local 1944.

Joe was heavily involved with political action and was a strong supporter of the NDP and Rachel Notley.

On behalf of all Steelworkers in the District, we extend our deepest condolences to Joe's family.

Rest in power, Brother.

## Slamming The Door On 64!

Manitoba's 16,600 public school teachers called on the government to put students first and withdraw regressive legislation.

The government's Education Modernization Act (Bill 64) was set to open the door to drastic, harmful reforms to K-12 public education in Manitoba. It was an attempt to rewrite the conditions of teaching and learning for the next generation.

Bill 64 was set to open the door to:

- politicians, not teachers, controlling the classroom, content and testing,
- shifting responsibility onto parents for decisions best suited to trained teachers, principals and vice principals,
- replacing democratically elected trustees with political appointees.



Warren Luky, President of United Steelworkers Local 6166 in Thompson, Man., joined in solidarity with teachers, standing strong to slam the door on Bill 64!

Bill 64 will not move forward in the Manitoba legislature.



The USW International Union Elections will be held on:

**Tuesday, November 23, 2021.**

Confirm with your local union how and where you can vote.



## School Support Staff Walk Off The Job

Members of Local 8223, which represents support staff in two bargaining groups at the School District of Mystery Lake, Man., walked off the job on August 30 for a five-day strike.

About 180 clerical staff in the school district, which includes educational assistants, custodians, maintenance, I.T. and other support positions were without a contract for four years.

“The employer went radio silent all summer,” said Matt Winterton, USW Staff Representative. “The biggest hurdle was getting to the table to have discussions. It left us no choice but to take action ahead of the school season.”

The strike came to an end on Labour Day after a fair contract was achieved including wage increases and retroactive pay along with changes to non-monetary language in the collective agreement and repayment of benefit premiums the union paid during the strike.

## Making It Public, Again

USW welcomes the B.C. government’s announcement to bring cleaning and dietary health care workers back into B.C. hospitals. The BC NDP made a number of important commitments in the last election campaign including bringing contracted out hospital housekeeping and dietary workers back under the direct employment of health authorities.

Your union representatives have been fighting for many months urging the government to act. We continued to pressure the government to do the right thing for all of our healthcare workers.

Our members made a sacrifice for more than just themselves, but for all public sector workers being attacked in Manitoba. This is another chip out of the unconstitutional suppression of workers’ rights that is taking place. This strike and it’s success have implications to benefit many others who are at the bargaining tables with their employers, trying to move them from a point of dictatorial mandates to fair and just settlements.

Going forward, our goal will be to establish a productive working relationship and partnership with the school district for the benefit of all, especially the children who attend these schools.

The support staff at the school district cannot thank everyone enough for the support that was shown. This is a success story for everyone.



The announcement to repatriate approximately 4,000 of these workers, including hundreds of Local 2009 members, is welcome news and is an important step in bringing basic fairness to public health care in our province.

The act of repatriation will immediately address inequality and enhance working conditions for employees in healthcare facilities.

# 2021 Winners of USW Scholarships

### Post-Secondary

**Kolton Martin**  
Saanich, BC  
USW Local 2009

**Gianna Dusecina**  
Thompson, MB  
USW Local 6166

**Reegan Lane**  
Maple Ridge, BC  
USW Local 1-1937

**Caitlin Clatney**  
Saskatoon, SK  
USW Local 7689

**Leyton Hiebert**  
Saskatoon, SK  
USW Local 7458

**Christian White**  
Castlegar, BC  
USW Local 1944

**Paxton Klassen**  
Seddon's Corner, MB  
USW Local 1976

**Seyi Orenuga**  
Calgary, AB  
USW Local 1944

### Indigenous

**Emily Fedora**  
St. Andrews, MB  
USW Local 5442

**Taylor Tedford**  
Regina, SK  
USW Local 5890

### Lifelong Learning

**Angela Hosni**  
Thode, SK  
USW Local 5917

**Graham Miller**  
Delisle, SK  
USW Local 7552

**Stuart Holmes**  
Kamloops, BC  
USW Local 7619



## Training Top Officers: Leading Together

Top Officer training is underway across the District to train Local Union Executive members following the Local Union elections this past spring.

Sessions begin with a presentation from the District Director with an overview of District 3, the Canadian National Office and the International Office, as well as various departments and the resources that are available to locals and their members.

The class splits into two with the financial officers and trustees meeting to go over financial protocols, forms and resources as well as practising the skills they need as a financial officer or trustee. The remaining officers continue with their session, learning more about the governance of locals, committees and

their responsibilities, understanding the International constitution, parliamentary procedure, building solidarity and activism, and much more.

Sessions were held with locals in Kamloops, Trail, Sparwood, Saskatoon and Regina.

Due to unexpected Local Union scheduling conflicts, safety concerns and restrictions, courses in Manitoba and Alberta have been postponed. We will be closely watching the situation and following the provincial Health Authority to determine when to reschedule the sessions.

If you are a Local Union officer or trustee and wish to join a future Top Officer training, reach out to your Local Union President or Staff Representative.



## Backpacks For Kids

The Women of Steel committee from USW Local 9346 prepares for their annual “Kids Back to School Backpacks” campaign to make sure all kids are equal on the first day of school. This is the tenth year of the campaign.

With the generous support from USW and community partners, the WOS committee will fill 99 backpacks for underprivileged kids in Fernie, Sparwood, Elkford, Jaffray and the Crowsnest Pass.

## 2021 David Ellis Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to our four District 3 recipients of the 2021 David Ellis health and safety scholarships!

Leyton Hiebert  
Saskatoon, SK  
USW Local 7458

Brandon Chilagan  
Saskatoon, SK  
USW Local 7552

Callum Cutler  
Nelson, BC  
USW Local 1-405

Gavin Damstrom  
Kimberley, BC  
USW Local 1-405

**WELCOME!**

WORKERS AT  
**QUADRA WOOD PRODUCTS**

**BETTER WORK NOW.** UNITED STEELWORKERS **USW** DISTRICT 3

**WELCOME!**

WORKERS AT  
**BLACK SHEEP INSTALLATIONS**

**BETTER WORK NOW.** UNITED STEELWORKERS **USW** DISTRICT 3

Do you have news to share from your local union?

Send in news, events, bargaining updates and photos to [bbarden@usw.ca](mailto:bbarden@usw.ca)