



WINTER 2021

## Signing off as District 6 Director with deep gratitude

Hello Steelworkers,

I want to thank you for your many years of support, guidance and activism!

For the past nine years, you have allowed me to be your director, work with you and create a better future for our families, our union and our communities.

It is with mixed emotions that I write my last Director's report for *News@6*.

I remember the honour and sense of responsibility that overcame me when I became the director in 2013.

With the encouragement I received from members, local union leaders and staff, it became apparent that solidarity, patience and listening would become key pillars to grow as your director and advance District 6 forward.

It became a nine-year journey of challenge, change and personal growth. As director, I always surrounded myself with activists who were passionate and energetic about creating a better future for workers.

Leadership is the challenge of bringing ideas together, respecting each other's differences, and making decisions that build solidarity and encourage and support our current and future activists.

Aggressive and divisive leadership can be seen as strength and power, but it doesn't accomplish growth or long-term change for our members or union. It is not about news clips or sound bites ... it is truly about inspiring our members, providing hope and together creating our future.

Life brings work challenges, personal challenges, along with many opportunities.

It is what you do with those challenges and opportunities that defines you as a person, an activist, a mentor and a leader.

*continued on p. 2*





With all that I have experienced, and the knowledge I gained as your director, I believe my time in District 6 has prepared me to take on the challenge to become the next Canadian National Director.

I want to thank Steelworkers from across District 6 and Canada for the support they expressed to allow me to become the next National Director. I am once again honoured by our members' trust in me and proud to continue Ken Neumann's legacy and work to build our great union into the future.

I want to thank each of you for allowing me the pleasure and honour to be part of creating a better future for Steelworkers and our union over the last nine years.

Last but not least, I share my gratitude to the District 6 staff and support staff. You allowed me to lead with steadfast support, taught me patience and made me the best director I could be. I thank you.

It is all about constant change, evolving, and hard work to meet our members' expectations, needs and hope for a better future.

I am looking forward to working with incoming District 6 Director Myles Sullivan, who will take the district to another level and meet the future challenges head on.

Most importantly, I want to thank everyone for their friendship. I had the time of my life working with so many amazing District 6 members.

Cheers,

**Marty Warren**

USW District 6 Director and  
USW National Director-elect

# Workers in the Legislature

## *Elected Steelworkers bring worker voices to the table in Ontario*

In the 2018 provincial election, six Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) were elected to the Ontario Legislature who have ties to the Steelworkers union. All of them are members of the Ontario NDP Caucus, the Official Opposition.

**Jamie West**, a member of USW Local 6500 and former Sudbury and District Labour Council President, was elected in Sudbury. West keeps a pair of work boots in his Queen's Park office to remind him of "where he comes from," as a smelter worker and health and safety representative.

**Guy Bourgouin**, former president of USW Local 1-2010, was elected in Mushkegowuk-James Bay in Northern Ontario, the first MPP for the riding that was created in 2017. Bourgouin says the training and support he gained as a Steelworker prepared him for his role as an MPP, representing constituents and bringing their concerns to Queen's Park.

Four other Steelworkers were re-elected in 2018 as part of the ONDP Caucus and Official Opposition: **Michael Mantha** (Algoma-Manitoulin) - Local 1-2693 (now part of Local 1-2010); **Gilles Bisson** (Timmins) - Local 4400; **Jeff Burch** (Niagara Centre) - Local 5295; and **Paul Miller** (Hamilton East-Stoney Creek) - Local 1005.

The USW's legislators belong to a diverse group within the 40-strong ONDP, under Official Opposition Leader Andrea Horwath. The caucus is 50% women. Five ONDP MPPs formed the first-ever Black Caucus at Queen's Park, to work with Black



Guy Bourgouin says the training and support he gained as a Steelworker prepared him for his role as an MPP.

Ontarians to fight anti-Black racism and build Black perspectives into provincial politics.

This diversity is the ONDP's strength heading into the next Ontario election in June 2022.

"The Ontario NDP is the true party of unions and the working class, always speaking out for good jobs, health and safety at work and paid sick days," says West. "We're the party for workers all the time, not just at election time."



Steelworker and Sudbury NDP MPP Jamie West at the legislative building at Queen's Park.

# BARGAINING



## **Local 6500: Sudbury miners take principled stand, win two-month strike**

Following a two-month strike, 2,500 members of Local 6500 in Sudbury, Ont., beat back concession demands from mining giant Vale and achieved a five-year contract with several gains.

Members stood up for future generations by opposing Vale's plan to virtually eliminate retiree health and medical benefits for all future hires, which provoked the strike on June 1. They voted on two separate occasions to reject concessionary offers from Vale, and in early August their solidarity prevailed with a five-year agreement that achieved their goals.

The new contract preserves retiree health and medical benefits for future hires, while also providing a minimum wage increase of 13% over the term, pension increases and improvements to contract language and benefits including vision care, bereavement leave and maternity and paternity leave. Members also received a \$3,500 signing bonus and a \$2,500 payment in recognition of their efforts in 2020 when they extended their contract for a year during the pandemic.



## **Local 2020: Bus drivers take the wheel on working conditions**

After joining USW last year, two groups of school bus drivers in Northern Ontario have achieved their first collective agreements. Drivers at Alouette Bus Lines in Sturgeon Falls achieved pay increases of 11% (3.5, 2, 2, 3.5) over four years for regular route rates, 12% for charter rates and a \$750 signing bonus. Drivers at Northway Bus Lines in Sudbury also reached a four-year agreement, with total pay increases of 10.3% (4.3, 2, 2, 2) as well as language to provide fairness and improve working conditions.

The new Steelworkers are the first group of school bus drivers in northeastern Ontario in recent memory that have unionized. Their contracts set a solid foundation for future improvements to their respective working conditions and serve as an example for other school bus drivers who currently have no collective voice to address their sub-standard wages and conditions.



## **Local 13292-17: Rubber recyclers ratify renewal**

Members at Moose Creek Tire Recycling in Moose Creek, Ont., ratified a three-year agreement that will see their wages increase by a total of up to 11.3%. Over the contract's term, wage rates will increase from \$21.08 to \$23.52 for operators, and from \$30.33 to \$33.75 for mechanics. The agreement also increases shift premiums and boot allowances, improves contract language and co-pay amounts for extended health and dental coverage, and creates a new senior mechanic job classification.



## **Local 13691-01: New contract signals improvements for cell tower manufacturers**

Members at Tylon Canada in Elmira, Ont., who manufacture cell phone towers, negotiated a three-year agreement providing total wage increases of 8%. The contract also improves bereavement language and the grievance procedure and doubles life insurance coverage for members.

# SUCCESSSES



## **Local 3789-01: Retirement home staff achieve new gains at bargaining table**

Members at Highland Manor Retirement Home in Fergus, Ont., negotiated a three-year agreement providing 6% wage increases over the contract's term, improvements in their vision care plan, uniform allowance and shift premium, as well as two new additions to their contract – a weekend shift premium and two paid personal days per year.



## **Local 1998: University residence dons bring the union home**

University of Toronto student residence dons achieved the first collective agreement of its kind at Canada's largest university. The dons are students who live in residence and who provide vital services and support to fellow student residents. The unique collective agreement codifies and enhances working conditions, including health and safety language, work schedules, leaves, job postings and hiring and improves the dons' compensation package which is based largely on in-kind payment for room and board.



## **Local 4045: Brass fitting producers assemble 3-year agreement**

Members at Cambridge Brass, a manufacturer of brass fittings for the waterworks industry in Cambridge, Ont., reached a three-year-deal with general wage increases totalling 5.5% and additional wage adjustments for several job classifications. The contract also improves pensions and health benefits as well as pensioners' life insurance.



## **Local 9350: Improvements recognize value of retirement home workers' care**

Members at Spruce Hill Lodge, a retirement home in Timmins, Ont., negotiated a three-year contract with improvements that recognize the value of the care and services they deliver each day to seniors. The agreement includes total wage increases of 12%, premium increases and an increase to pay in lieu of benefits to 8%. Members include personal support workers, housekeepers, kitchen staff and maintenance workers.



## **Local 9042-23: Joints and bearings makers remove friction with contract improvements**

Members at NTN Bearing, makers of bearings, joints and other precision industrial and automotive equipment in Mississauga, Ont., negotiated a five-year contract with wage increases of 2.75% for each of the first three years, and 3% for the last two years for a total of 14.25%. Other gains include increases to the safety boot allowance, improvements to afternoon and midnight shift premiums, a paid sick day in the first year of the agreement and two paid sick days in subsequent years. The contract also has increases in dental benefits and vision care.

# Barrie Steelworkers make great neighbours

USW members in Barrie, Ont., recently helped raise \$5,000 for relief efforts for victims of a devastating tornado in the community.

“We’re proving that our union cares and that our members live up to our motto that Steelworkers Make Great Neighbours,” said Chris Thompson, secretary of Unit 2311 of TC Local 1976 USW and a delivery driver with Canpar Express in Barrie.

The July 15 tornado left many Barrie families homeless and injured several residents. Fortunately there were no deaths.

## Sault Ste. Marie Steelworkers mark first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On Sept. 30, the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, USW Local 9548 partnered with Indigenous elders from the Batchewana First Nation and Garden River First Nation for a day of reflection and commitment to ongoing reconciliation.

The local union was invited on Batchewana First Nation’s traditional lands on Whitefish Island and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people were invited to share space.



From left to right, Frank Schroeder, TC Local 1976 USW-Unit 2311 member, Chris Thompson, Unit 2311 Secretary; Doug Tomlinson, Canpar Area Manager; Sheila Palmer, Director of Business, Salvation Army, Barrie.

The devastation led Thompson to contact USW Local 1976 President Steven Hadden about a union donation, and the local authorized a \$1,000 contribution. The union also called on the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, which contributed \$2,000. Thompson then reached out to his employer, Canpar, which matched the Humanity Fund

donation, for a total of \$5,000 to the tornado relief campaign.

“We’re happy that we could help out in a meaningful way,” said Thompson.



Community members experienced traditional drumming at USW Local 9548’s event for the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Attendees experienced drumming, learned about Indigenous teachings from Traditional Knowledge Keeper Don Waboose and visited the sacred fire maintained by Sacred Fire Keeper Cliff Waboose.

“We wanted to put action to our words and truly begin building the bridges required for healing in our quest for truth and reconciliation,” said Cody Alexander, USW Local 9548 President in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

USW Local 9548 began its Indigenous work after holding the USW’s Unionism on Turtle Island course in 2020. The local started an Indigenous Circle, now recognized in its collective agreement.

# Post-secondary sector updates

## *Ground-breaking pension plan for members at three Ontario universities*

After a decade of efforts to find a long-term solution to concerns over their retirement security, 35,000 employees working at Queen's University, the University of Guelph and University of Toronto, have a new pension plan, managing more than \$10 billion in assets.

The University Pension Plan (UPP) is a defined-benefit, jointly sponsored pension plan (JSPP). Representatives of the USW and other unions and faculty associations at the universities hold joint governance with the employers over the plan.

The UPP is a ground-breaking achievement and has been years in the making. Single-employer, defined-benefit pension plans have been under constant attack by governments and employers. Our union and our representatives in the post-secondary sector realized we needed to find a way forward to ensure retirement security for our members. The multi-employer UPP achieves this goal.

The UPP took effect on July 1, 2021, will cover 6,000 USW members from USW Locals 1998, 2010 and 4120 working at the three universities. Staff at other universities will be able to join the UPP in the future.



## *USW Local 1998's Casual Unit wins new contract*

After pandemic-related delays at the bargaining table, the USW Local 1998's Casual Unit has reached a new contract with the University of Toronto, covering 3,500 members. In this set of negotiations, the local union demanded better treatment for casual workers, who work alongside full-time workers on the same projects, programs and departments.

The local union came away with some wins, despite being constrained by the provincial government's Bill 124, which prevents the union and the employer from bargaining more than a 1% increase. Casual Unit members received a 1% wage increase, paid sick days, better protection for members facing discipline or termination and improvements to their dental benefit.

Members of USW Local 1998's Casual Unit celebrate their new contract with the University of Toronto that includes wage increases, paid sick days and better treatment.

# New alliance calls for compensation reform

There is a powerful new force in Ontario politics. The Occupational Disease Reform Alliance (ODRA), made up of clusters of workers experiencing work-related illnesses, is calling on the Ontario government to fix the broken Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) system.

The USW represents the majority of workers included in the ODRA, with thousands of workers from four clusters in Ontario.

Steelworkers who are providing expertise to the alliance include Andy LaDouceur and Adam Guizetti, Local 2251, working with former steel workers from Sault Ste. Marie and ore mine workers from Wawa; Jessica Montgomery, Local 2020, working with former workers from the Neelon Casting foundry in Sudbury; Janice Martell, representing the McIntyre Powder Project; and Gord Assmann, Local 677 retiree and SOAR member, representing the Ontario Rubber Workers Project.

“Workplace illnesses can affect anyone – from cancer to respiratory disease or hearing loss. The challenge with occupational disease is that people who are sick may not connect their symptoms to exposures they had at work,” said Sylvia Boyce, USW District 6 Health and Safety Co-ordinator, who is also assisting the alliance.

NDP MPP Wayne Gates (Niagara Falls) hosted a virtual press conference with the ODRA in October to hear the heartbreaking stories of widows who have been chasing compensation for the workplace-derived diseases that killed their spouses.



**Gayle Wannan with USW District 6 Director and former rubber worker Marty Warren at the USW’s rubber worker clinic in 2019. Wannan’s husband Lynden died from pancreatic cancer after working at Uniroyal for 26 years, aged 49. Wannan believes workplace exposure to chemicals contributed to his illness and death.**

The ODRA has four demands for the provincial government to reform the system and bring justice for workers and families trying to access occupational disease compensation.

The USW made a submission opposing the Ontario government’s Bill 27 that cashes out \$3 billion in WSIB surplus premiums to employers on the backs of sick workers who are too often dying in poverty from their work-related illnesses before the compensation they are owed is awarded.

**[ofl.ca/advocacy-groups-odra](https://ofl.ca/advocacy-groups-odra)**





## Unions the only sure-fire way to help workers: Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath

USW activists join NDP Leader Andrea Horwath in the campaign for paid sick days for all Ontario workers.

In early November, Ontario NDP Leader and Leader of the Official Opposition Andrea Horwath joined delegates at the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) convention and laid out her vision for what's at stake in the June 2022 provincial election, what she would do as Premier to support workers and families and how she will support organized labour.

In her remarks, Horwath noted, "Doug Ford has spent the entire pandemic making choices that help out his buddies, and leave everyday people on their own." Reminding delegates of the McGuinty/Wynne years, she added, "whatever Steven Del Duca and the Liberals say now, they had 15 years to choose Ontarians. But Steven Del Duca and the Liberals chose not to."

Horwath reiterated her support for organized labour and went a step further by talking about her own roots, the role unions have played – from the moment it was created – in the NDP and how unions are an essential part of building a stronger, more equal province.

"I am the daughter of a unionized auto worker, proud to be born and raised in working-class Hamilton and proud of my working-class roots ... when it comes down to it, we all know there's one sure-fire way to help workers in this province and give more people a ticket to the middle class – and that is a union card!"

Andrea talked about her priorities, including the need to expand Medicare, improve long-term care, ensure

workers have the jobs, wages and respect they deserve and close the gap between the very richest and the rest of us.

Horwath reminded delegates, "in this movement, we've always known who we are, and who we fight for!"

"This is the Ontario that we are fighting for – the future we will build together."



USW District 6 Director Marty Warren with NDP Leader Andrea Horwath and USW staff Alexandra Eshelman during the 2018 Ontario election.



Andrea Horwath and Steelworkers staff member Mary Lou Scott at Toronto's Labour Day 2021 Cavalcade: Rise Up for a Just Recovery.



Safety harnesses used by members of the mine rescue team are hung to dry off after all the miners were safely on surface.

# A 'never-ending commitment' to improving mine safety

In late September 2021, news organizations around the world reported on the plight of 39 miners stuck more than one kilometre underground at the Totten Mine in Sudbury, Ont.

Following a remarkable two-and-a-half-day rescue operation, all of the miners – most of them USW Local 6500 members – were brought to the surface, safe and uninjured. Though the ordeal was distressing, they were rescued without incident due to safety improvements achieved by unions – and the USW in particular.

"Unions have made important advances in mining safety over decades, which is part of why miners found safety underground and were able to be brought to

the surface safely," USW District 6 Director Marty Warren said.

Steelworkers have been successfully fighting for greater mining health and safety protections – at the bargaining table, on picket lines and in legislatures – for generations.

## Historic change

In 1974, Elliot Lake Steelworkers, uranium miners, went on a wildcat strike to demand action on the high rates of illness and death from silicosis and lung cancer. Their actions led to the Ham Commission, whose recommendations resulted in historic change in Ontario, including the Occupational Health and Safety Act in 1978. Similar

reforms to improve workplace health and safety were then enacted across the country.

Steelworkers were front and centre in the 1980s when a joint federal-provincial inquiry on mining, the Burkett Commission, led to further progress including greater involvement and influence for unions on health and safety issues.

In 2013, following a series of preventable mining deaths in Ontario, the USW joined with families of miners killed at work to lead a public campaign for another, long-overdue commission of inquiry on mining safety.

While the Liberal government of the day sided with mining corporations to oppose a

full-fledged public inquiry, the campaign prompted the Ministry of Labour to launch the Mining Health, Safety and Prevention Review in 2014. USW representatives held key advisory positions which led to mining safety improvements in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

### Making real progress

“Our union has always been actively engaged in the process, and we’ve been able to make real progress,” said Nick Larochelle, USW Local 6500 President.

The numerous regulatory changes for which the USW has successfully advocated include reducing hazards in water management, traffic management, workplace risk assessments and ground control, Larochelle said.

There is much more work to do, given the challenges of a process that largely requires a government-labour-industry consensus in order to strengthen regulations, he added.

“There are more health and safety improvements we could be making right now, but they’re not happening because there isn’t a consensus from corporations,” Larochelle said.

“We’re going to keep fighting to protect workers. It’s a never-ending commitment for us. It’s the kind of work that we do – that unions do – every day to improve health and safety.”



Mayson Fulk: USW District 6's Trans Liaison

## Supporting trans Steelworkers

Trans people can be any race, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Steelworker trans members work in manufacturing, hospitality, health care, education, finance and security and virtually every sector of the economy. Steelworkers who are transitioning on the job need additional support during what can be a difficult or isolating time.

District 6 Trans Liaison Mayson Fulk worked with the union to develop the USW Transition Handbook: *A Helpful Guide When Gender Transitioning in the Workplace*. The guide is a resource for local union executives, committee members, shop stewards and USW members to better understand the experiences of trans workers and how to support Steelworkers who are transitioning. [usw.ca/D6SteelPride](http://usw.ca/D6SteelPride)

**Please note that the contact information for Mayson Fulk has changed to: [mfulk.usw@gmail.com](mailto:mfulk.usw@gmail.com)**



## **USW NextGen member Jessica Montgomery elected as Sudbury and District Labour Council President**

In 2014, Jessica Montgomery organized her workplace to join the USW and quickly became a Steelworker NextGen activist. When her unit was locked out by Care Partners in 2019, Jessica led the mobilization effort. Seasoned union activists in Sudbury took notice and she was nominated and elected as the Sudbury and District Labour Council's (SDLC) Vice-President for a three-year term. Earlier this year, the SDLC President stepped down and paved the way for Montgomery to be the Interim President. It became official in September when she was acclaimed as President.

In the Sudbury and District Labour Council's 64-year history, Montgomery is the second female president and the first NextGen-identified president. She is leading the way as part of the next generation of activists in Sudbury. As president and as a young worker and mother, her main goal is to advocate for affordable child care for workers: "Women are vital parts of our communities and workplaces. Women must be a part of our recovery from this pandemic – that means providing affordable child care so we can get back to work."

## *Holiday wishes to you*

On behalf of District 6, we wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season. We hope this time will bring you joy, peace of mind and good health.

As we go into the new year we look forward to bargaining solid collective agreements, organizing new workplaces and working with you to make real gains for our USW members.

Steelworkers, thank you for the hard work you do every day – we are proud of what we accomplish together.

Wishing you all the best now and in 2022.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Marty Warren".

Marty Warren  
USW District 6 Director and  
USW National Director-elect

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Myles Sullivan".

Myles Sullivan  
USW District 6 Director-elect



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United Steelworkers District 6 • 300-200 Ronson Drive • Etobicoke, ON • M9W 5Z9  
Telephone: 416-243-8792 [usw.ca/District6](http://usw.ca/District6) USWDistrict6 USWDistrict6