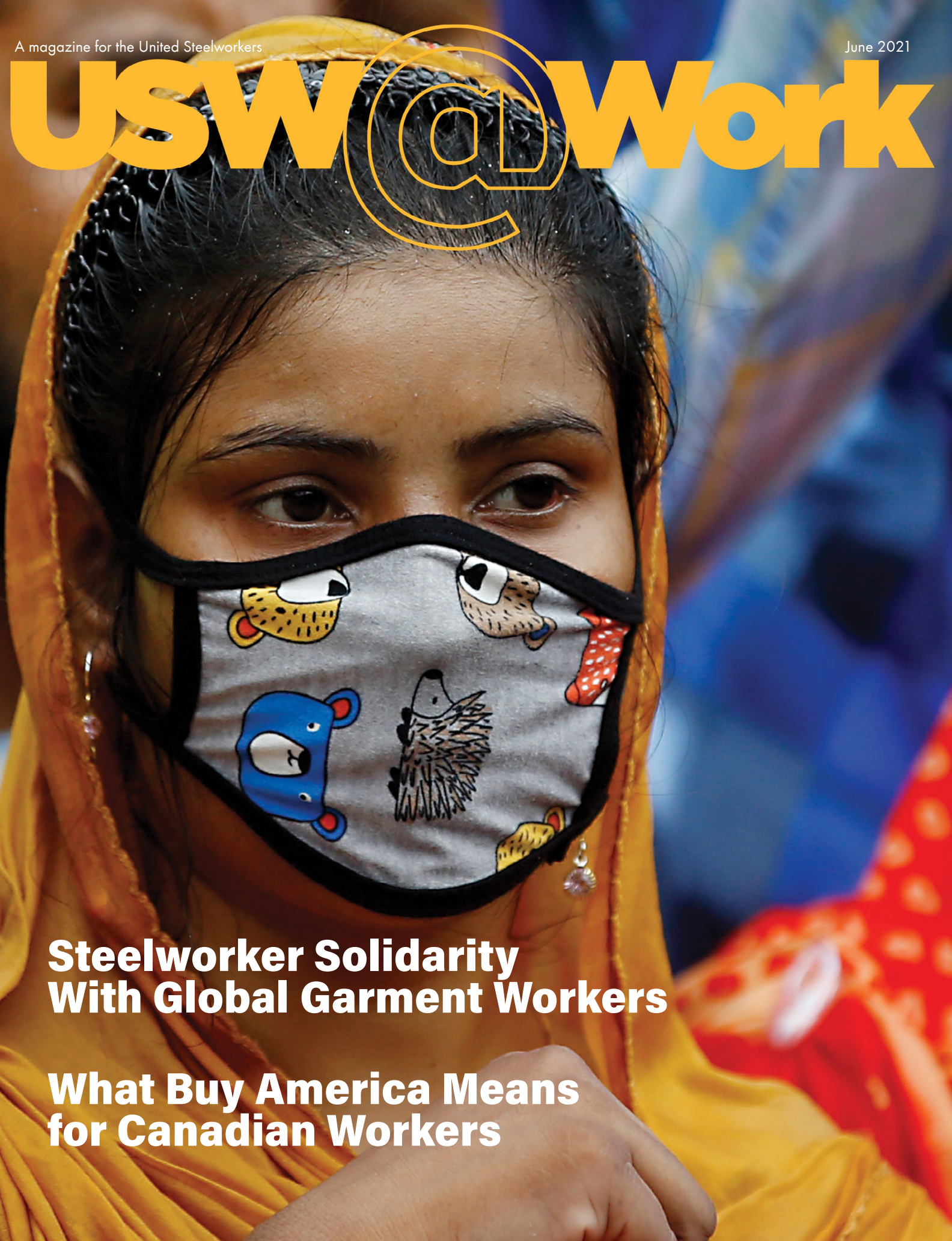


# USW@Work



**Steelworker Solidarity  
With Global Garment Workers**

**What Buy America Means  
for Canadian Workers**



USW@Work  
June 2021

Official Publication of the United Steelworkers in Canada

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**ON THE COVER:** A Bangladeshi garment worker protests in Dhaka to get her job back, August 2020. Photo: Anisur Rahman

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# Reflecting on my Year

**B**y now you may have heard that I have decided I will not seek another term in the USW international elections this fall. With 45 years of service for our great union, this was not an easy decision, but it's the right decision. After 18 years as National Director, it's time to pass the reins to someone else. I have no doubt that my successor will build on our union's incredible work and legacy. In the meantime, I will serve the rest of my term until March 2022.

Since I joined Steelworkers Local 5890 in Saskatchewan at a teenager, I have held many elected roles –Local 4728 president in Regina, an instructor, organizer, area council president, District 3 Director and finally as Canadian

National Director. I've always been proud of our union and I know I could not have accomplished anything without the hard work and dedication of our members, local leaders, staff and District Directors.

Together we've helped elect



# ars as a Steelworker

NDP governments in several provinces, completed mergers with unions including the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers and the Telecommunications Workers' Union (TWU), and built global solidarity networks to help fight historic campaigns such as the victory of our locked-out members at Rio Tinto in Alma, Que. I'm especially proud of our work with global union federation IndustriALL and with the Los Mineros union and its General Secretary – and now Mexican Senator – Napoleon Gomez.

As you will see in these pages, we have an ambitious agenda as Steelworkers, including our work on both sides of the border to ensure Canadian workers are included in the new Buy America provisions. As International President Tom Conway – and Leo W. Gerard before him – have said, Canada and Canadian workers are not the problem – we are a vital ally and trading partner. It is refreshing to have a new U.S. administration that understands this fact.

Please also read up on the groundbreaking efforts of our Steelworkers Humanity Fund to defend workers in Canada and around the world, including a renewed campaign to support Bangladeshi garment workers hit hard by the pandemic.

The pandemic also is taking a terrible toll on many Canadians, including USW members. While the response of employers and our governments fall short, our union is fighting on the frontlines every day, including with our national campaign on Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety.

Even in retirement, I will remain dedicated to the Steelworkers. I will always stand with you to uphold our commitment to improve the lives of our members and working people everywhere.

In solidarity,

Ken Neumann  
National Director

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**A NEW REPORT** by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund establishes for the first time a clear connection between Canadian retailers and specific garment factories in Bangladesh that keep workers – primarily women – in lives of poverty.

The report, *Not Even the Bare Minimum*, calls on Canadian retailers and brands to commit to paying living wages and ensure other vital supports to impoverished workers in their global supply chains.

The report links Canadian retailers like Joe Fresh, Lululemon, Mark's and others to specific poverty-wage garment factories in Bangladesh.

"Canadian brands have been largely silent on their respon-

*I ask you to take action, as Canadians, to stand with us and to work with Bangladeshi trade unions and our local and international allies to bring change.*

– Kalpona Akter, Executive Director, Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity



sibility to respect the human right of workers to decent work throughout their supply chains," said Ken Neumann, President of

the Steelworkers Humanity Fund and National Director of the United Steelworkers union (USW).



# JUSTICE

## FOR GLOBAL GARMENT WORKERS

Canadian clothing brands have a responsibility to pay garment workers in Bangladesh living wages, says a Steelworkers Humanity Report.

Photo: Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund, a registered charity funded through USW members' contributions, commissioned a researcher in Bangladesh to interview garment workers and to examine their working conditions.

Women working in Bangladeshi garment factories supplying Canadian brands earn only \$6 to \$7 a day. The report includes extensive testimony from these women demonstrating how they struggle in a cycle of poverty and precarity.

"You work and you work, six days a week, 12- to 15-hour shifts, thinking your luck will change. Thirty years and I still constantly worry about when I will get my next paycheque, whether I will have enough money this month," said a worker from Standard Stitches, a factory producing for Mark's.

"Canadian companies have a responsibility to workers in their supply chain to pay living wages, respect workers' rights, and to cushion the impact of COVID-19 and make sure workers and their families survive," said Kalpona Akter, internationally renowned advocate for Bangladeshi garment workers.

Steelworkers can help. Read and share the Steelworkers Humanity Fund's **Not Even the Bare Minimum** report and sign a pledge of solidarity with Bangladeshi garment workers.

Find the Justice for Global Garment Workers campaign at [usw.ca/garmentworkers](http://usw.ca/garmentworkers). ■



**LILY CHANG**  
FOR CLC SECRETARY-TREASURER

**BEA BRUSKE**  
FOR CLC PRESIDENT

**SIOBHAN VIPOND**  
FOR CLC EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

## Team Unite Takes Charge

**THE USW ENCOURAGED** its members to attend the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) convention scheduled for June 16-18, 2021.

The virtual convention will be hosted live from a studio in Ottawa, with delegates participating remotely to elect leaders, debate policy and determine the actions that will set the agenda for Canada's labour movement.

Our union is proud to endorse Team Unite CLC, a group of strong, dedicated and experienced, change-minded leaders: Bea Bruske for CLC President, Lily Chang for CLC Secretary-Treasurer and Siobhan Vipond for CLC Vice-President.

Bruske, Chang and Vipond are all lifelong labour activists who have been strong leaders in their own unions – UFCW, CUPE and IATSE, respectively.

The CLC is the largest labour organization in Canada, bringing together dozens of national and international unions, provincial and territorial federations of labour and community-based labour councils, representing more than three million workers across the country.

The labour movement is a driving force for democratic social change.

At the convention, Steelworkers will be able to vote to reform the CLC constitution to make the 'house of labour' fairer and more representative.

Instead of a system of credentials based on an affiliate's number of locals, we have been advocating for years for a system of credentials based on the number of members, mirroring how we run our own USW International Convention.

*"We need to get back to workers recognizing that we have collective power. I've been a labour activist since I was 18 years old. Lily, Siobhan and I – we all want to make a difference and work hard to make the CLC the organization it needs to be for Canadian workers."*

– Bea Bruske, UFCW Vice-President and candidate for CLC President

*"Our labour movement is strongest when we work together. I'm proud to support Team Unite CLC – Bea Bruske, Lily Chang and Siobhan Vipond. With consensus solutions and a commitment to fight for workers' rights we can engage the members of our movement and rebuild our solidarity."*

– Ken Neumann,  
USW National Director ■

[CanadianLabour.ca](http://CanadianLabour.ca)  
[TeamUniteCLC.ca](http://TeamUniteCLC.ca)



# Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety

## **No Access to Washrooms.**

Safety equipment that doesn't fit. It was women's stories from the microphones at our 2019 USW National Policy Conference that sparked the Raising the Bar campaign.

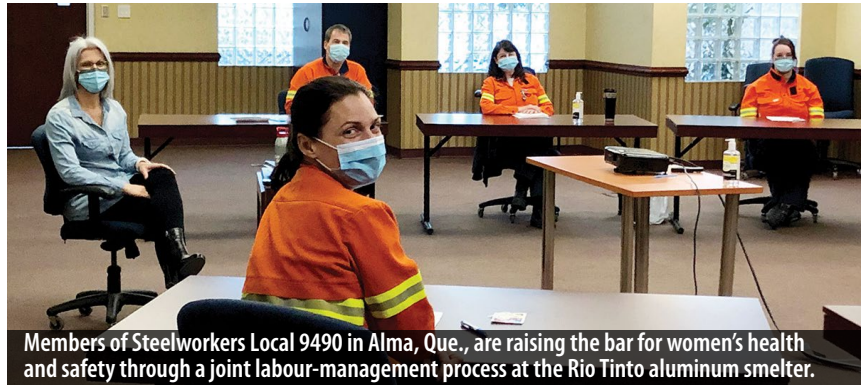
Sister after sister spoke passionately about the health and safety issues women face on the job.

Most workplaces, machines, personal protective equipment and safety programs have been designed to suit male workers. Women face different health and safety risks because of biology and social attitudes. Yet when women voice their concerns, they're often dismissed or ridiculed.

We know that when we take women into account, we make workplaces safer.

The USW's Raising the Bar campaign aims to do just that: to act on women's health and safety and amplify women's voices in the workplace.

The campaign supports women and health and safety committees in addressing the hazards and health issues women workers face.



Members of Steelworkers Local 9490 in Alma, Que., are raising the bar for women's health and safety through a joint labour-management process at the Rio Tinto aluminum smelter.

The campaign website, [usw.ca/raisethebar](https://www.usw.ca/raisethebar), includes an action guide, inspection checklist and presentation package to help activists present the campaign at their workplace or local union.

Since the campaign's launch, the USW has held virtual events in every Canadian district to hear women discuss their successes and struggles.

Inspired by the campaign, Steelworkers Local 9490 leaders launched a joint labour-management process to tackle women's health and safety issues at the Rio Tinto aluminum smelter in Alma, Que.

"It opened the door to a discussion of women's issues and the irritants that women still face in the plant, even 20 years after it opened," said Suzie

Fournier, Local 9490 Women of Steel Committee Chair. "We hope it will lead to improvements."

Donna Wingrove, Local 8782 Financial Secretary at Stelco in Nanticoke, Ont., held a Raising the Bar event for women members in March, beginning a process to help women facilitate discussions with health and safety representatives in their workplace.

At the Fording River coal mine in Elkford, B.C., Local 7884 leaders negotiated groundbreaking contract language creating an official Joint Women's Committee to address women's issues, with meetings paid by the employer.

Let's make women's health and safety issues a priority for action!

[usw.ca/raisethebar](https://www.usw.ca/raisethebar) ■

# Celebrating Pride

## New National Transitioning at Work Guide

**BEGINNING IN JUNE,** Steelworkers from across Canada join lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirit, intersex and asexual (LGBTQ2SIA+) communities to celebrate Pride 2021. As a union dedicated to social justice, we support equity-seeking groups in our union, our workplaces and in society.

To celebrate Pride 2021, our union is excited to announce the launch of the national *Guide When Gender Transitioning in the Workplace*, a helpful handbook for trans Steelworkers, their co-workers and allies.

Trans people can be of any race, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Trans Steelworker members work in manufacturing, hospitality, retail, health care, education, finance and security – basically, in every sector of the economy. Unfor-

tunately, many trans individuals find keeping their jobs during transition to be an added challenge. Steelworkers who are transitioning on the job need additional support during what can be a difficult or isolating time.

This is why, in 2018, the Steelworkers' District 6 Trans Liaison, Mayson Fulk, worked with the District 6 Human Rights Committee to create the *Guide When Gender Transitioning in the Workplace* for the district. This guide was meant for all Steelworkers, whether they were considering transitioning, in the middle of doing so, or allies in the workplace. The guide became a useful resource for local union executives, committee members, shop stewards and USW members to better understand the realities and experiences of trans workers and learn how to support Steelworkers who are transitioning.

As demand for this guide has grown well beyond workplaces located in District 6, the union has adapted the original handbook and turned it into a national resource for all Canadian Steelworkers. The national *Guide When Gender Transitioning in the Workplace* is available at [usw.ca/human-rights](https://usw.ca/human-rights). Members are also invited to order hard copies of the guide.

Simply email [info@usw.ca](mailto:info@usw.ca) and include the number of copies requested and the mailing address to send to.

USW stands in solidarity with trans members, all trans people and the wider LGBTQ2SIA+ community and we will continue fighting to make our workplaces safer and more accessible for all. Wishing all Steelworker members a happy Pride 2021! ■

USW District 6 Trans Liaison Mayson Fulk received the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Solidarity and Pride award from Patty Coates in 2018.



# Buy America – An Opportunity for Ca

## U.S. PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S

'Buy America' commitments have been getting a lot of attention on both sides of the border lately.

Obviously, American workers are happy to hear their president standing up for their jobs. Understandably, some Canadians are worried about how it could affect us here.

But, as USW International President Tom Conway says, "Canada is not the problem facing U.S. manufacturing and workers." In fact, we can help.

As the largest private-sector union in North America, representing more than 850,000 members on both sides of the border, the USW – your union – is in a unique position to take a lead in helping to build on the co-operation and longstanding productive trading relationship between Canada and the U.S. to achieve the stated goals of President Biden and our Canadian government and make sure workers come out ahead.

If you scratch beneath the surface of the 'Buy America' slogan, you can see, if we manage it right, that the Biden administration's plan could actually benefit Canadian workers, too. Since his election, beyond fighting the pandemic, talking about investing in infrastructure and standing up for workers, President Biden has made big commitments to tackle climate change.

*The Canadian government must employ stronger tools to address the transshipment of illegally dumped imports, and take pride in the products that Canadians harvest, mine, manufacture and produce.*

– USW National Director Ken Neumann

As part of that plan, the USW has been advocating for a North American 'buy clean' strategy, which would prioritize consideration of the environmental impact of materials used in public construction projects.

### Buy Clean, Buy Canadian

The recent *Buy Clean* report prepared by Blue Green Canada, an alliance of labour and environmental organizations founded by the USW, demonstrates that steel, aluminum, cement and wood products produced in Canada have some of the lowest carbon emissions in the world.

Far from being a threat to Canadian jobs, or an excuse to impose and increase tariffs on Canadian products, President Biden's commitments are an opportunity.

To actually move forward with a procurement strategy that emphasizes the use of North American-made products that are high in quality and low in environmental impact, the U.S. will have to include Canadian-produced, lower-environmental-impact products.

We can build on that need to

secure across-the-board exemptions to 'Buy America' legislation and finally get a solution to the decades-long softwood lumber dispute.

This is a chance for us to rebuild and strengthen the critical supply chains that decades of unbalanced trade policies and unfair trading practices have severely damaged.

"If you've ever crossed the border, you've seen those trucks lined up for miles and miles. They aren't empty," said USW National Director Ken Neumann, while talking to members of a Parliamentary committee studying the Canada and U.S. border. "They're running with products made in each of our countries. Produced by workers we represent on this side of the border or the other. That's what trade is all about."

It is true that trade is also about trust. The Americans continue to be concerned about the Trudeau Liberals' refusal to solve the serious problem of overseas countries dumping their products – like steel – in Canada.

While speaking to the same committee, Neumann noted,



# Canadian Workers (Yes. Really.)

"The Canadian government must employ stronger tools to address the transshipment of illegally dumped imports, and take pride in the products that Canadians harvest, mine, manufacture and produce."

## **Steelworker Strong on Both Sides of the Border**

During the previous U.S. administration, Steelworkers stood strong against the Section 232 tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum products. And, a decade ago, we worked with the Obama administration to create a North American strategy that benefited workers on both sides of the border.

Just like in the United States, Canada's bridges, buildings and public transportation systems are in need of upgrades and development. It is as inexplicable as it is unacceptable

that some of the recent public projects have used materials shipped in from overseas, instead of products that could have been produced in Canada by Canadian workers.

It all comes down to political will. USW members in both the U.S. and Canada are ready to supply the infrastructure needs of North America and to promote co-operative and coordinated trade enforcement strategies that benefit people in both our countries. ■



USW National Director Ken Neumann with USW International President Tom Conway: "Canada is not the problem facing U.S. manufacturing and workers."





## USW Welcomes New Members

The 40 workers at Machinerie Laurin in Laval and 125 former members of the CSD labour federation employed by the Weston bakery in Gatineau also voted recently to join the ranks of Quebec Steelworkers.

*We feel like we're joining a big-league union, especially when you look at the way the Steelworkers have responded to the pandemic.*

"We feel like we're joining a big-league union, especially when you look at the way the Steelworkers have responded to the pandemic," said Sylvain Laplante, one of the leaders of the Steelworkers organizing campaign at Weston. The bakery employees have formed the first bargaining unit in the new Steelworkers Local 9584, which aims to represent many more workers in the Outaouais region in the future.

Workers at Machinerie Laurin, who manufacture industrial metal containers, are equally enthusiastic about their decision to join the USW.

"We're proud to be members of a strong union that is able to confront and evolve with changing realities in the working world," said Marc-André Magnan, a member of the new USW bargaining unit. ■

## Unionizing Campaign

**AFTER MANY ANXIOUS DAYS**, 250 Montreal airport workers – confined to their homes but brought together in a video conference meeting last December – breathed a simultaneous and long-awaited sigh of relief.

After a lengthy organizing campaign in which they chose to join USW, followed by challenging negotiations with their employer, the results were in: the workers had voted overwhelmingly to ratify their first collective agreement that provides job security in the midst of the pandemic.



*We slowly created a family of members. It was very touching to see this being built.*

"The fact that we are unionized is what saved our jobs after the pandemic hit," said Yuri Georges Szabo, chair of the bargaining unit representing the employees of Services alimentaires Québec SSP, which operates 15 restaurants and bars at Montreal's Dorval airport.

Due to the near-complete shutdown of food services at the airport, all but five of the 250 workers were laid off during the pandemic, forcing them to turn to government assis-



# a Bonding Experience for Airport Workers

tance programs. However, their new collective agreement includes provisions that protect jobs for two years against the pandemic's effects.

"Our members are sleeping better today because we have joined the union. It has provided job protection and help with EI and CERB applications, health and safety issues, etc.," said Youri.

Youri acknowledged many of his co-workers were hesitant about the airport organizing campaign in its early stages in 2019.

## Overcoming fear

"People were afraid to bite the hand that feeds them. There were a lot of recent immigrants, many of whom didn't speak either French or English very well, and who were not very aware of the laws and their rights as workers," he said.

When the employer began cutting hours, showing favouritism and weakening working conditions, things changed, said Youri, a bartender with experience in unionized workplaces – including the Sheraton Laval hotel, where workers are represented by USW Local 9400 – the same local the airport workers have joined.

"I knew how the people of Local 9400 work, that there is a lot of heart in this union. I knew they would do as much as possible for the workers," he said.

Youri and organizer Geneviève Baril, also an airport worker, began the painstaking work of establishing networks of union supporters in various sections of the airport.

"We found trustworthy people of different nationalities. We slowly created a family of members. It was very touching to see this being built," Youri said.

Sharing leaflets and accurate information helped to overcome fears, he said.

"I remember leaving home at midnight to distribute leaflets in everyone's lockers. The next day, people started talking more openly. They

were more curious. We were able to explain how the union would protect our rights and working conditions."



Support for the union snowballed. The majority of workers signed cards and the bargaining unit was certified in December 2019.

More than a year later, in the midst of a pandemic causing anxiety and uncertainty, the new union members remain tight-knit. The workers are anxious to return to their jobs and to come together as a union family, Youri said.

"We're looking forward to seeing our big family at work, and to see the passengers again, to see children who are excited to go on a trip ... to see life!" ■

**STEELWORKERS WERE AT THE FOREFRONT** of Day of Mourning ceremonies across Quebec on April 28 that amplified the labour movement's fight against proposed rollbacks to workplace health and safety standards.

USW members gathered outside the Montreal headquarters of Quebec's workplace health and safety agency for a moment of silence in honour of workers killed or injured on the job, followed by a demonstration warning of the perils of Bill 59.

Steelworkers led similar actions in numerous communities, from Rouyn-Noranda to Rimouski and Sept Îles to Sherbrooke. They warned how Bill 59, proposed by the right-wing Coalition Avenir Québec

(CAQ) government, will turn back the clock on health and safety

standards, increase risks in workplaces and cut assistance to injured and sick workers.

In Repentigny, USW Local 9238 members demonstrated against Bill 59 outside Quebec Premier François Legault's constituency office. They erected a cross in the memory of their union brother Philippe Cusson, who was killed in an explosion at the General Dynamics manufacturing plant on Feb. 10 this year.

Long-awaited health and safety reforms were expected to address serious shortcomings in existing legislation, Steelworkers Quebec Director Dominic Lemieux noted. Instead, the CAQ government wants to weaken the laws even further, Lemieux said at a demonstration in the Montérégie region.

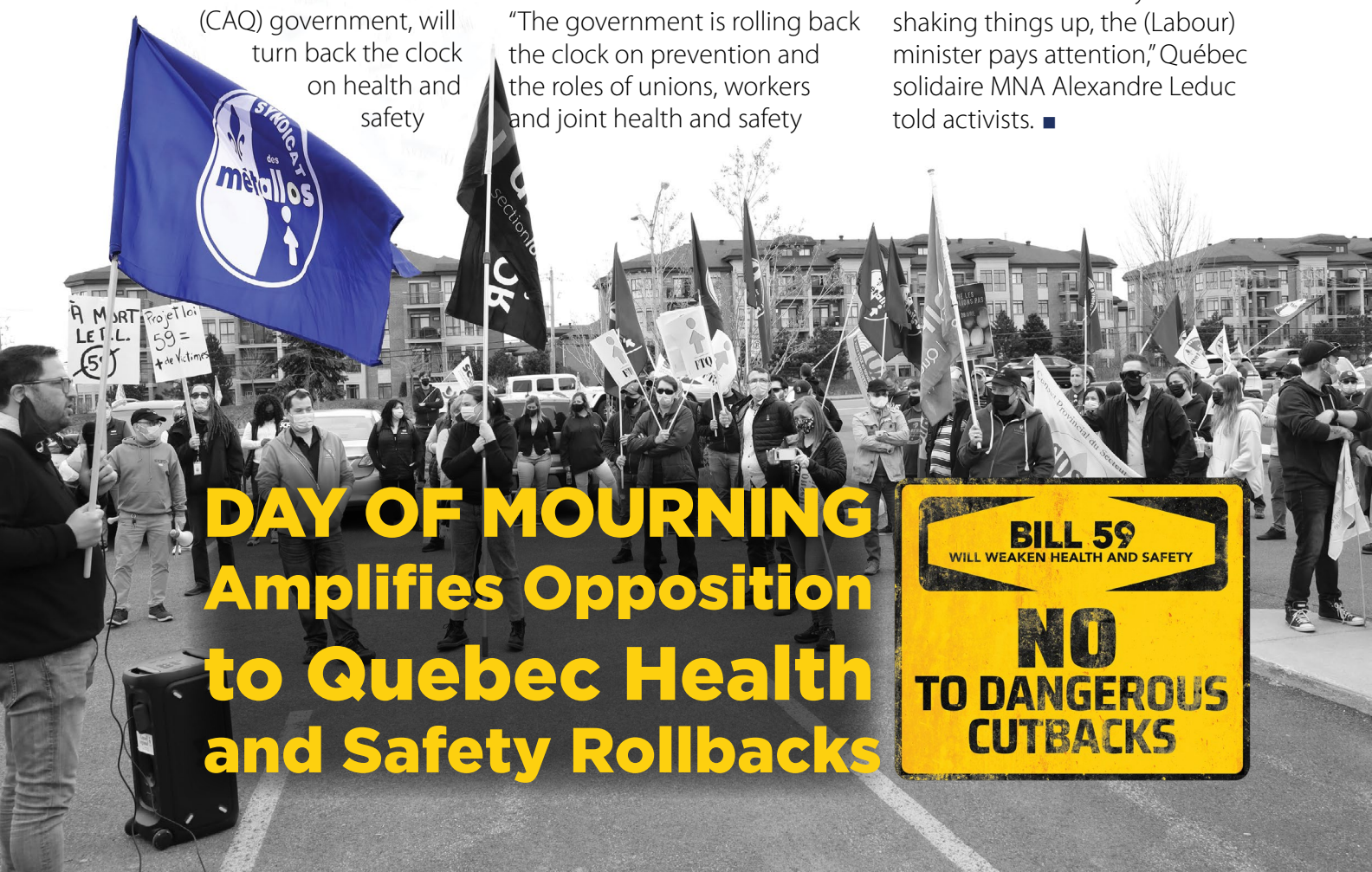
"The government is rolling back the clock on prevention and the roles of unions, workers and joint health and safety

committees. They're weakening a system that made it possible to reduce workplace deaths and serious injuries since 1979," he said.

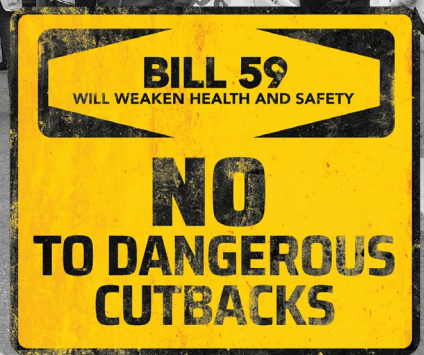
"This so-called reform is a gift to the bosses. They're restricting access to compensation, care and rehabilitation for injured and sick workers. The Minister of Labour is acting as a reverse Robin Hood. He's going to take \$4.3 billion over 10 years out of the pockets of injured and sick workers and give it back to business. It's disgraceful."

At a demonstration outside the National Assembly in Quebec City, political allies urged Steelworkers and the labour movement to keep up the fight against Bill 59.

"Mobilization works. This is trench warfare. When you're shaking things up, the (Labour) minister pays attention," Québec solidaire MNA Alexandre Leduc told activists. ■



# DAY OF MOURNING Amplifies Opposition to Quebec Health and Safety Rollbacks





USW Local 7884 members at Fording River coal mine in Elkford, B.C., negotiated historic collective agreement language establishing a Joint Women's Committee.



## Steelworkers Negotiate Historic Language to Support Women's Issues at Work

**MEMBERS AT FORDING RIVER** coal mine in Elkford, B.C., have negotiated language to establish a Joint Women's Committee. This is historic language – a first for any Steelworker collective agreement.

Three years ago, Del Paré from Local 7884 set a goal to bargain language for joint meetings with the employer specifically for women, paid for by the employer.

"I laid out a plan to achieve the goal by educating the executive and membership about the issues affecting women, electing a woman to the bargaining committee and researching bargaining language and history," said Paré. "There were many hurdles and challenges along the way. However, we were successful at forming a committee and hosting a District 3 training

seminar on what a Women of Steel (WOS) committee should look like."

"We heard many negative comments when we announced that the local was going to spend \$15,000 on educating sisters and we heard comments like 'why are you spending all the men's money?'" said Adam Connell, Local 7884 President. "Del Paré and I set our goals high and we wanted to create language in our contract that recognizes the female workforce and the issues that they deal with each day."

"We have been fighting for equality and opportunity for years. With this language, women workers now have a say in their workplace and can work without fear of reprimand, being ignored or having to take unnecessary safety risks that could have severe

health consequences," said Tara Cavanagh, District 3 WOS Network Co-ordinator.

"This is an incredible accomplishment. We now have language in a contract that acknowledges the importance of women's issues and needs in the workplace. Through joint women's committees and our WOS Network, sisters will have a vehicle to drive forward the demand for recognition of our differences in the workplace and break the practice of a one-size-fits-all attitude," said Ginette Talbot-Hoogeveen, District 3 WOS Network Co-ordinator.

Local 9490 at the Rio Tinto aluminum smelter in Alma, Que., has also been successful in obtaining a joint labour-management process to tackle women's health and safety issues. ■



Prison chaplains, members of USW Local 1976, have ratified a first collective agreement, improving their working conditions as well as spiritual care for thousands of inmates across the country.



## Prison Chaplains Win First Contract

One of the USW's newest and most-unique bargaining units – federal prison chaplains – overcame daunting challenges to secure their first collective agreement this spring.

The prison chaplains, members of USW Local 1976, persevered through a full year of tough bargaining. For several months, all of the chaplains were laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing many to turn to government assistance programs.

Bargaining also was complicated by the federal government's tendering of prison chaplaincy services to the private sector, which meant the chaplains were negotiating with a contractor – a subsidiary of a U.S.-based organization.

The chaplains ultimately succeeded in achieving a first contract that aims to improve their working conditions as well as spiritual care for thousands of inmates across the country. Wages will rise by 9% over the next year, with the average member earning an increase of \$3.30 per hour. The contract addresses several other issues, including codifying employer practices around expenses, employment status, seniority, promotions and job security.

"Chaplains demonstrated tremendous commitment and solidarity and made great strides in re-establishing chaplaincy as the vocation it was meant to be," said USW National Director Ken Neumann. "This agreement recognizes the important contributions chaplains make to ensure a more humane and just correctional system." ■





### **Manitoba School Workers Defy Government Austerity Agenda**

Members of Locals 7106 and 8223, working in northern Manitoba school districts, negotiated contract improvements that defy the provincial government's public-sector austerity agenda that was declared unconstitutional in the courts. Members rejected government demands for wage freezes and negotiated a five-year deal, retroactive to 2017, with improvements including wage increases of 6.5% in the first four years and a cost-of-living increase in the fifth year. The USW locals represent education assistants and custodial, maintenance, office and technical employees at schools serving nine northern communities.



### **Long-Term Contract Builds Hope for Major Investments**

Local 6658 members at Ciment Lafarge in Saint-Constant, Que., negotiated a five-year agreement with gains including total wage increases of 13.25%. The contract maintains the defined-benefit pension plan, increases employer contributions to the Quebec Federation of Labour Solidarity Fund RRSP, and improves benefits and severance provisions. The contract builds hope that the company will follow through with investments of hundreds of millions of dollars to modernize operations and reduce green house gas emissions.



### **Shaw Cable Workers Improve Wages, Contract Language**

Members of USW Local 1944, Unit 60, reached a five-year agreement with Shaw Cable in Abbotsford, B.C., that improves wages and contract language. Members, whose jobs include construction and maintenance on the Shaw plant, as well as residential and business services and installations, secured wage increases of 10.15% over five years. The contract strengthens language on issues including overtime and protection against discipline and introduces new language related to the creation of a new warehouse position.



### **First Contract Protects Airport Jobs Against Pandemic Upheaval**

Local 9400 members, employed by SSP Quebec Food Service Inc. at Montreal's Dorval Airport, negotiated a first collective agreement that protects jobs for two years against the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. While many of the 250 workers have been laid off due to the pandemic, their employment status and their benefits remain intact for 24 months. The contract also improves or entrenches language on benefits, vacations, statutory holidays, sick days, uniform and shoe allowances, RRSPs and seniority.



## Pressure Vessel Manufacturing Workers Secure Good Contract

Local 003-09 members employed by Chemetics Inc. in Pickering, Ont., negotiated a three-year agreement that will see wages rise 2.75% annually, for a total increase of 8.25%. The contract also improves provisions on paid sick days, shift premiums and bereavement leave. Members, who include welders, grinders, assemblers, machinists, drillers, plasma/laser cutters and maintenance workers, manufacture pressure vessels for the oil and gas industry.



## Calgary Steel Plant Workers Ratify Improved Contract

Local 6034 members at steel products manufacturer Varsteel Ltd. in Calgary, ratified a three-year collective agreement that increases wages in each year of the contact. The agreement strengthens several other monetary and language provisions, including increases to the employer share of premiums for benefits (life and AD&D insurance, extended health and short-term and long-term disability coverage, dental and vision care) and clothing and boot allowances.



## Mining Camp Workers Achieve First Contract

Food and accommodation services workers in Labrador have made significant gains in their first collective agreement. The members of Local 6185-11 are employed by a subsidiary of U.S.-based Aramark, which has a contract with the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) to provide services at a fly-in mining camp and several residences in Labrador West. Members, including cooks, housekeeping, maintenance, front desk and clerical workers, will receive total wage increases of 8.5% over three years. The contract provides language and improvements on issues including paid sick leave; benefits; vacations; parental, bereavement and domestic violence leave; contracting out; and wage and benefit protection from missed shifts due to weather emergencies.



## Hardwood Workers Improve Job Security and Conditions

Local 8748-20 members employed at the Boniferro Mill Works sawmill in Sault Ste. Marie negotiated a five-year contract that strengthens job security and seniority rights. The workers, who produce high-quality hardwood for commercial manufacturers, will receive wage increases ranging from 1 to 5% in the first year, following by total increases of 6.5% in the following four years. Other gains include improved pensions and benefits, and employer contributions to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.



**6034** 

### **Metal Recycling Workers Renew Contract for Four Years**

Local 6034 members at Navajo Metals (Evraz Recycling) in Calgary negotiated a four-year contract with wage increases in each year of the agreement and increased employer contributions to the group RRSP. The contract introduces a new production bonus and new language on training and protection of bargaining unit work, and increases boot and safety glasses allowances, as well as coverage for eye examinations.

**7065** 

### **Smelter Workers' Contract Recognizes Indigenous Cultural Issues**

Local 7065 members employed by Tshuetin solutions industrielles, a subcontractor at the Aluminerie Alouette aluminum smelter in Sept-Îles, Que., reached a five-year contract that recognizes Indigenous cultural needs within the membership. The agreement improves provisions that allow Innu workers to take unpaid leave for hunting and other traditional activities. The contract also provides total wage increases of 8.5%, premium increases and improvements to holidays, meal allowances and overtime language.

**7580** 

### **Strong Second Contract for Timmins Industrial Workers**

After reaching a good first contract in 2019, Local 7580 members employed by INEOS Calabrian Corporation in Timmins, Ont., made further gains with their second agreement providing total wage increases of 6.5% over four years. Existing hourly wages rates are \$43.51 for operating engineers and \$44.78 for maintenance workers. The contract improves pensions and introduces floating days off, banking of statutory holiday time and service bonuses. The workers produce sulfur dioxide used in mining and other industrial applications.

**7885** 

### **Drummondville Workers Reject Mandatory Overtime**

Local 7885 members at ventilation systems manufacturer Venmar HDH in Drummondville, Que., made gains in a five-year contract while also rejecting demands for mandatory overtime provisions. Overtime remains voluntary and will be paid at double time when it reaches more than four hours per week. The contract includes total wage increases of 11.3% and improvements in shift premiums, statutory holiday pay, personal leave, an early-retirement program and employer contributions to the Quebec Federation of Labour Solidarity Fund.



**“We’ve shown what we can accomplish when you elect New Democrats – how we can fight for people and deliver the help that people need.”**

**– NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh**

## NDP: Results for Workers

**DESPITE RISING COVID-19** cases, rumours of an early federal election continue.

The Liberal government wants an early election because it suits them.

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP are making Parliament work – getting

results for workers and helping people who need it most.

The NDP forced the Liberals to get more help to Canadians:

- Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) doubled from \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month.

- Wage subsidy for businesses enhanced from 10% to 75%.
- Ten paid sick days for workers through the Canada Sickness Recovery Benefit – a first in Canada.

Who do Liberals and Conservatives look out for? Corporations and the well-connected.

Liberals tried to please everyone with their budget, but will they stick to their commitments this time? They have abandoned pharmacare and failed to bring in a tax to make the wealthy pay their share.




Elections matter and Steelworkers vote. Whenever the election is, be sure to vote! ■

## Did you know?

**Email Newsletters:** You can sign up for e-newsletters from the Steelworkers to get union news, member stories and information in your inbox.

Sign up at [usw.ca/newsletters](https://usw.ca/newsletters) and choose your subscriptions.

### Follow USW on Social Media

Steelworkers	District 3 Western Canada	District 5 Quebec	District 6 Ontario & Atlantic Canada
 <a href="https://www.facebook.com/uswmetallos">uswmetallos</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/USWDistrict3">USWDistrict3</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SyndicatdesMetallos">SyndicatdesMetallos</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/USWDistrict6">USWDistrict6</a>
 <a href="https://twitter.com/SteelworkersCA">@SteelworkersCA</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/USWDistrict3">@USWDistrict3</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/MetallosQc">@MetallosQc</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/USWDistrict6">@USWDistrict6</a>
 <a href="https://www.instagram.com/uswmetallos">@uswmetallos</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/uswdistrict3">@uswdistrict3</a>		

**District 3 Networks:** For Steelworkers members in Western Canada, join a network of Steelworkers: Women of Steel, NextGen, Veterans of Steel, Political Action, Steel Pride, District 3. [usw.ca/districts/3/networks](https://usw.ca/districts/3/networks)

**USW Scholarships:** Members of the Steelworkers union and their families are eligible for scholarships and paid internships. You can apply for both Canada-wide opportunities and district awards. Don't miss your opportunity to apply – a number of scholarships have June 30 deadlines.

New for 2021, USW is offering six post-secondary scholarships for Indigenous Steelworkers and their family members. [usw.ca/scholarships](https://usw.ca/scholarships) ■



Margaret Hynd with Harry Hynd, retired District 6 Director, who died Dec. 29, 2020, aged 87.



## *“A Trade Unionist of Great Character and Integrity”*

### **OVER SEVEN DECADES,**

Harry Hynd was a champion for workers’ rights and social democracy.

“Harry was a consummate trade unionist, a man of great character and integrity, and a true gentleman. We’ve lost a tremendous leader,” Steelworkers National Director Ken Neumann said after the former USW District 6 director died on Dec. 29 in Hamilton, at age 87.

Neumann was a Steelworkers Area Co-ordinator in British Columbia in 1989 when Harry was appointed interim director of USW District 3.

“I developed a bond with Harry very quickly. He was committed, above all else, to providing the best representation to our members. We had the same passion for our union, for social democracy and our party, the New Democrats,” Neumann said.

Harry’s union activism began as a teenaged member of the National Union of Mineworkers, toiling in a Scottish coal mine. He immigrated to Canada in 1957 and became a Steelworkers’ activist soon after getting a job at Stelco’s Hamilton steel mill and joining Local 1005 in 1958.

Harry was hired as a USW staff representative in 1971. His leadership skills led to his hiring as Assistant to the District 6 Director, followed by his appointment as interim District 3 Director in 1989. He became District 6 Director in 1991 and served two more terms before retiring in 2002. He served as SOAR International Vice-President from 2005 to 2019, when he was appointed SOAR Vice-President Emeritus.

Over the years, Harry and his wife Margaret developed a

deep affinity for Cuba and its people, visiting often and bringing all manner of donations – from clothing to car parts – to Cuban workers and families. They even ‘adopted’ a Cuban family and helped them acquire a home. The Cuban couple in turn chose Harry and Margaret as godparents to their children.

“Harry and Margaret did everything together, they were a team,” Neumann said. “It was a great partnership, a great love affair.”

Harry is survived by Margaret, their daughters Carol Craig (Bill) and Susan D’Angelo (Sebastiano), three grandchildren and one great-grandson.

The USW is planning a memorial tribute to Harry. Due to pandemic-related issues, memorial plans had not been finalized as of the time of publication. ■



## OVER A YEAR HAS PASSED

since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. The USW proudly represents thousands of essential workers across the country who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, keeping us all safe and making sure the world is still running. We checked in with a few of them and how they have been coping and working through it. USW Local 9211 member Audra Nixon works in a long-term care facility in Maxville, Ont., that went almost nine months before an outbreak struck and workers' days became longer and more gruelling than ever. From changing in and out of full personal protective equipment (PPE) 75 to 100 times a shift, to witnessing the sadness of residents in isolation, the load was heavy.

For Pierre Ho, a sous chef at a retirement home and a member of USW Local 8300 in Toronto, the first wave felt the most intense.

"This disease was new and none of us knew what to expect," said Pierre. Supplies were scarce and required him and his team to think outside the box to source food and water to feed over 75 residents of the home, as well as PPE for the workers. Pierre has grown accustomed to the health and safety routine at work but reminds himself every shift that complacency isn't an option.

Janis Trotman, another member of USW Local 8300, observed that people, in general, were on high alert in the first wave. Janis fears that as the pandemic continues and cases surge,

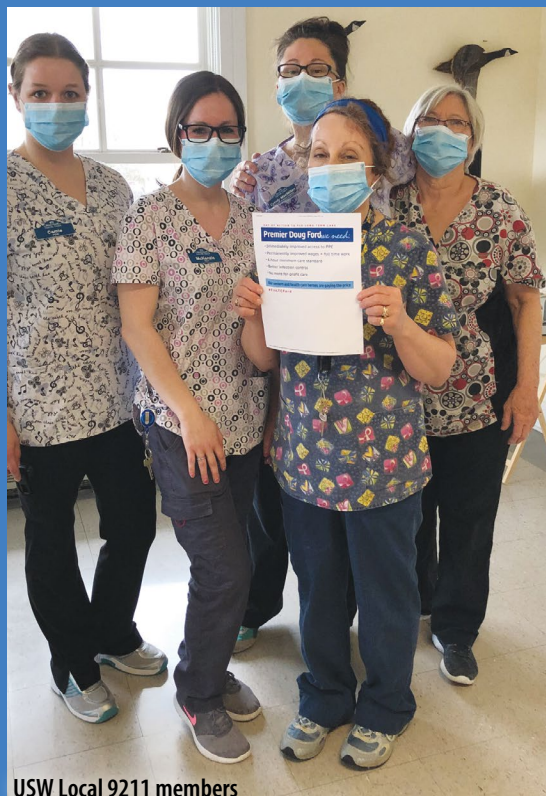
people are getting tired. But she works with a vulnerable population, so she remains extra vigilant.

"I have a mask on from the moment I leave my house, until I return. I only take it off to eat!" Janis said.

Cheri Sorenson, a member of USW Local 9329, working at a long-term care home in Windsor, Ont., tested positive for COVID-19 and was fortunate to recover and be able to continue working.

Over the course of the pandemic, Cheri's workplace has brought in extra hands to help and has provided a bit of relief with workloads. Still, Cheri knows it will take maximum effort from all of us to flatten the spike in infections and get this disease under control. ■

## Checking in on Those Keeping Us Safe



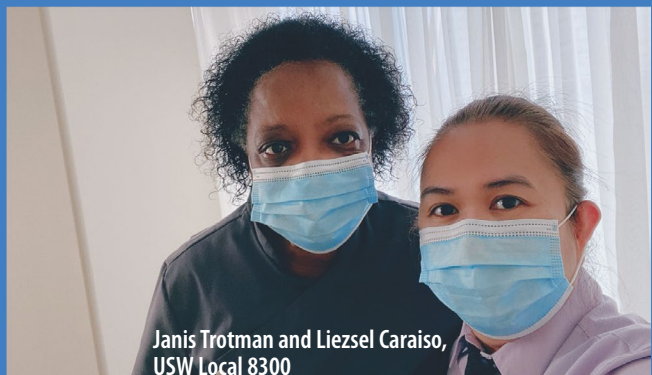
USW Local 9211 members



Pierre Ho, USW Local 8300



Cheri Sorenson, USW Local 9329



Janis Trotman and Lieszel Caraiso, USW Local 8300





# Staying Connected Online Connecting Circles

**To STAY CONNECTED** during the pandemic, the USW National Aboriginal Committee hosted a series of online Connecting Circles in early 2021. The events, all with simultaneous English-French interpretation, offered an opportunity for Indigenous Steelworkers to continue our union's work on advancing Indigenous rights – inside the workplace and in our wider society.

Valarie King, Traditional Knowledge Keeper from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, was the guest speaker at the events in January and March: Staying Focused in Mind, Body and Spirit.

Some members from USW Local 7619 (Highland Valley Copper) in Logan Lake, B.C., attended the March event to ask questions and find out how they could start a local committee for Indigenous Steelworkers.

"We work to keep connected. We still need to keep informed on what's happening that affects workers' rights and

what's going on with each other. Through the Connecting Circles we can communicate what's happening across Canada," said Darcy Whitecrow (USW Local 1-2010), who is Ojibwe from Treaty 3 territory, living in northwestern Ontario near the Manitoba border and a member of the USW National Aboriginal Committee.

Leah Gazan, NDP MP for Winnipeg Centre and longtime Indigenous activist, spoke at the April event, on Political Action for Indigenous Rights.

*As Steelworkers,  
we learn skills we  
can bring to our  
communities, and as  
Indigenous workers,  
we can bring teachings  
to our unions.*

– Christian Chouinard, Local 9344

"The pandemic doesn't care if you are housed," Gazan said, noting that the human rights issues Indigenous people face



Leah Gazan, NDP MP for Winnipeg Centre and longtime Indigenous activist.

have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Gazan thanked the USW for the union's work on key political issues that impact Indigenous rights. She champions a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income (GLBI) and is working to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.

For Christian Chouinard, a Trustee with Local 9344 (Rio Tinto IOC) from Sept-Îles, Que., and a member of the Maliseet of Viger First Nation, the Connecting Circles maintained momentum. "As Steelworkers, we learn skills we can bring to our communities, and as Indigenous workers, we can bring teachings to our unions. It is heartwarming to see this exchange continue virtually." ■

**June  
June 21**

**National Indigenous History Month  
National Indigenous Peoples Day**

Learn more about Indigenous history where you live. Find an event near you or online to attend. Help keep Indigenous issues on the political agenda.

# There is no place for silence or inaction in the fight against racism.

**You have the power to take action.  
If you know better, do better.**

## ***Express your solidarity:***

**1**

Jokes or thoughtless comments cause real harm. You don't need to be an expert to know when something isn't right. Say something to perpetrators of racist jokes or comments. Even if it's your best friend, say why it just isn't OK.

**2**

Human rights are workers' rights. It is everyone's responsibility to combat racism wherever we see it. Take time to consider your own biases and how they have shaped your perception. We all have biases.

**3**

Do you know of someone who is being treated differently because of their race, language or country of origin? Contact your local union president, steward, staff rep or the USW Education and Equality Department for help.

**4**

Form a Human Rights Committee in your local union. Contact [info@usw.ca](mailto:info@usw.ca) for more information on how to set this up.

**5**

Support the ongoing struggles against anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Indigenous racism and other forms of racism and systemic discrimination, right in your community.

