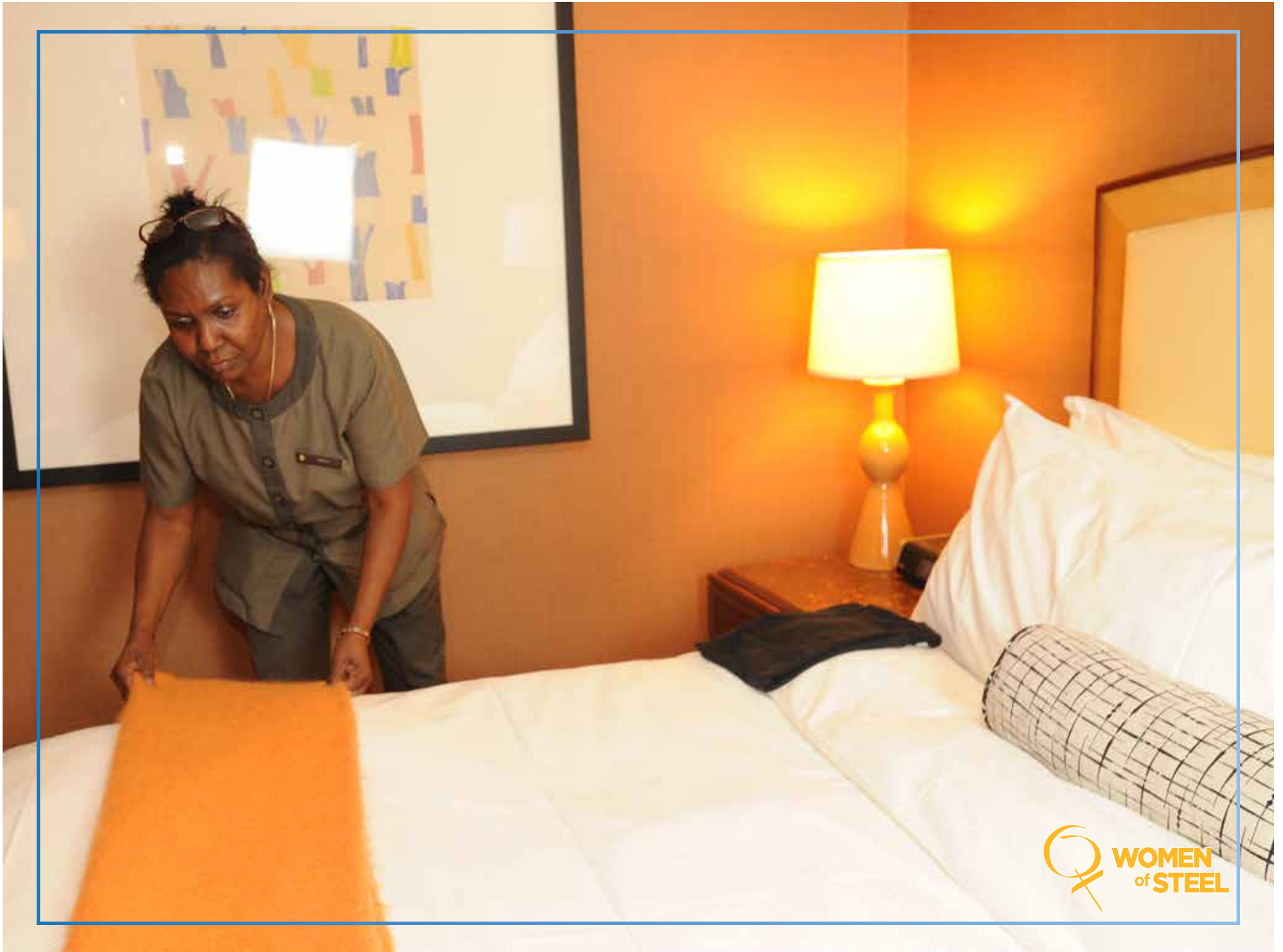


Putting Together Your Plan:

Women of Steel Action Calendar



**Women of Steel
Working for Equality**



Contents

Creating Your Own Agenda

January	4	Environment for your Women's Committee Events	33
Creating Your Own Agenda	7		
February	8	August	34
<i>Getting Down to Work in February</i>		September	36
Black History Month	11	<i>Getting Down to Work in September</i>	
March	12	Labour Day	39
<i>Getting Down to Work in March</i>		October	40
International Women's Day	15	<i>Getting Down to Work in October</i>	
<i>Getting Down to Work in March</i>		National Day to Commemorate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls	42
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	17	<i>Getting Down to Work in October</i>	
April	18	Persons Day	43
<i>Getting Down to Work on Equal Pay Day</i>	21	November	44
May	22	<i>Getting Down to Work Anytime</i>	
<i>Getting Down to Work in May</i>		Politics Matters in Women's Lives	47
Mayworks Festival	25	December	48
June	26	<i>Getting Down to Work in December</i>	
<i>Getting Down to Work in June</i>		National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	51
Celebrating Pride	28	<i>Getting Down to Work in December</i>	
<i>Getting Down to Work in June</i>		International Human Rights Day	53
National Aboriginal Day	29	Bread and Roses	54
July	30	Solidarity Forever	55
<i>Getting Down to Work Anytime</i>			
Creating a Welcoming Cross-Cultural			



January

January 1

In 1971, the United Stone and Allied Product Workers of America merged with the Steelworkers.

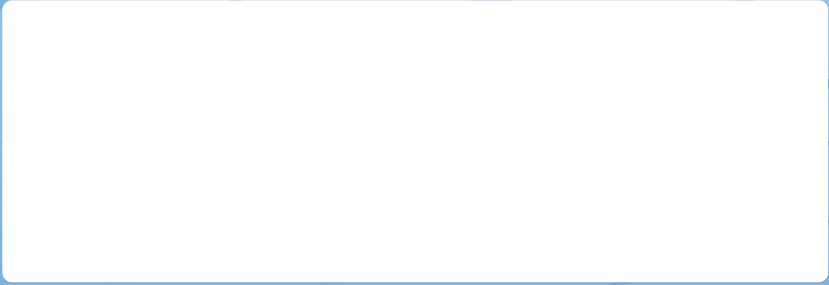
In 2016, the Telecommunications Workers Union merged with the Steelworkers.

January 29

In 1946, Judge Rand introduced the “agency shop” (known as the Rand formula) to settle the recognition strike at Ford in Windsor, Ont. Non-union employees whom the union is required to represent as part of the bargaining unit must pay the same initiation fees, dues and assessments as union employees as a condition of continued employment.

“I myself have never been able to find out exactly what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.”

Rebecca West, 1913



January

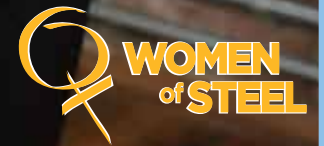
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Creating Your Own Agenda

You can use this calendar to help keep track of key events from your Women's Committee action plan.

Use it to keep track of key dates in the life of your local union that have an impact on committee work, things like:

- › Deadline for submitting committee budget requests to the local executive
- › Local membership meetings
- › Nomination deadlines and voting dates for local union elections (every three years: 2018, 2021, 2024, etc.)
- › Nomination deadlines and voting dates for international elections (every four years: 2017, 2021, 2025, etc.)
- › International conventions (every three years: 2020, 2023, 2026, etc.)
- › National and district conferences
- › USW educational events
- › Women's labour schools (organized by provincial and national labour federations)

You can also plan events for the year that celebrate the role of women in the labour movement. Use the events listed in this calendar or do your own research. Post "Today in history ..." notices on your workplace bulletin board or local union website, Facebook page or Twitter to draw people's attention to the day.

Want to do even more? Look into your local's history and mark key dates like:

- › When your workplace was organized
- › When the first grievance was filed
- › When a strike took place where you work
- › When a woman was elected to executive office in your local



February

February is Black History Month

February 14

In 1949, 5,000 asbestos workers walked out at Canadian Johns-Manville in Asbestos, Que. The strike was to last for four-and-a-half months and was characterized by police violence.

February 17

In 1944, a Canadian wartime government was forced to pass a law supporting the collective bargaining process. It was Canada's first comprehensive labour policy.

February 24

In 1986, Tommy Douglas, the father of Medicare, the first federal leader of the New Democratic Party and voted the Greatest Canadian in 2005, died.

"Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it."
Rosemary Brown, the first black woman elected to a Canadian legislature.



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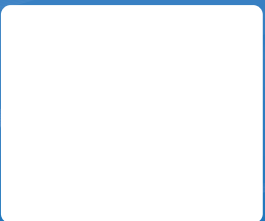
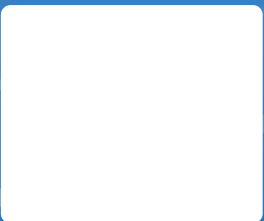
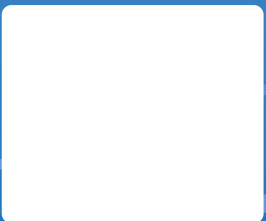
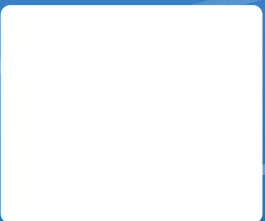
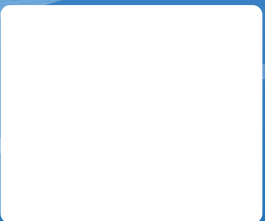
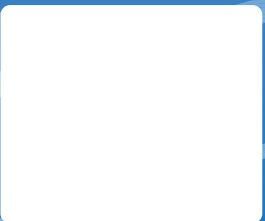
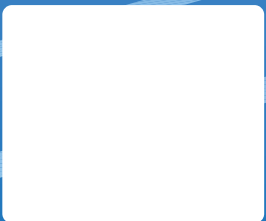
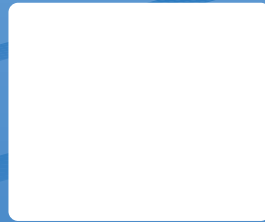
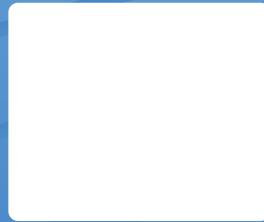
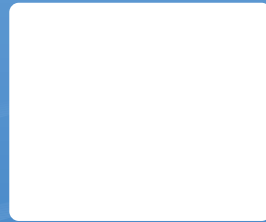
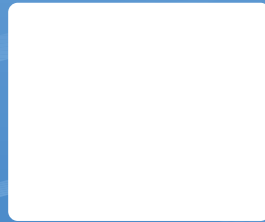
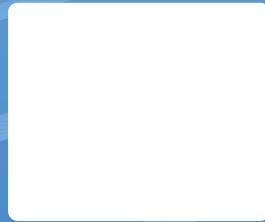
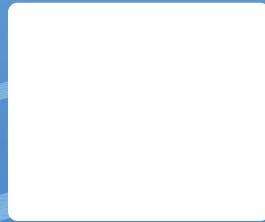
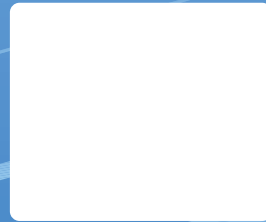
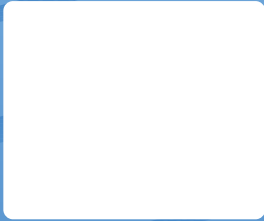
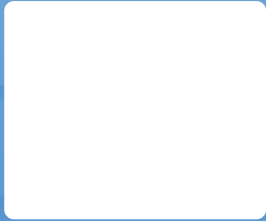
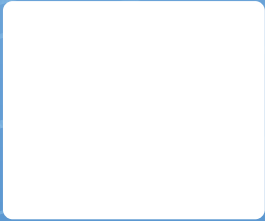
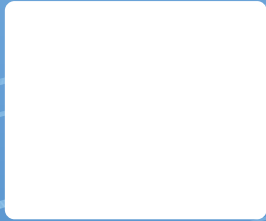
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Getting Down to Work in February

Black History Month

Black people have lived in Canada since the early 1600s, but their role has not always been recognized as a key feature of Canada's history.

Most of us don't learn that some of the Loyalists who settled in the Maritimes after the American Revolution were Black. Or that Black Canadian soldiers were making sacrifices in wartime as far back as the War of 1812.

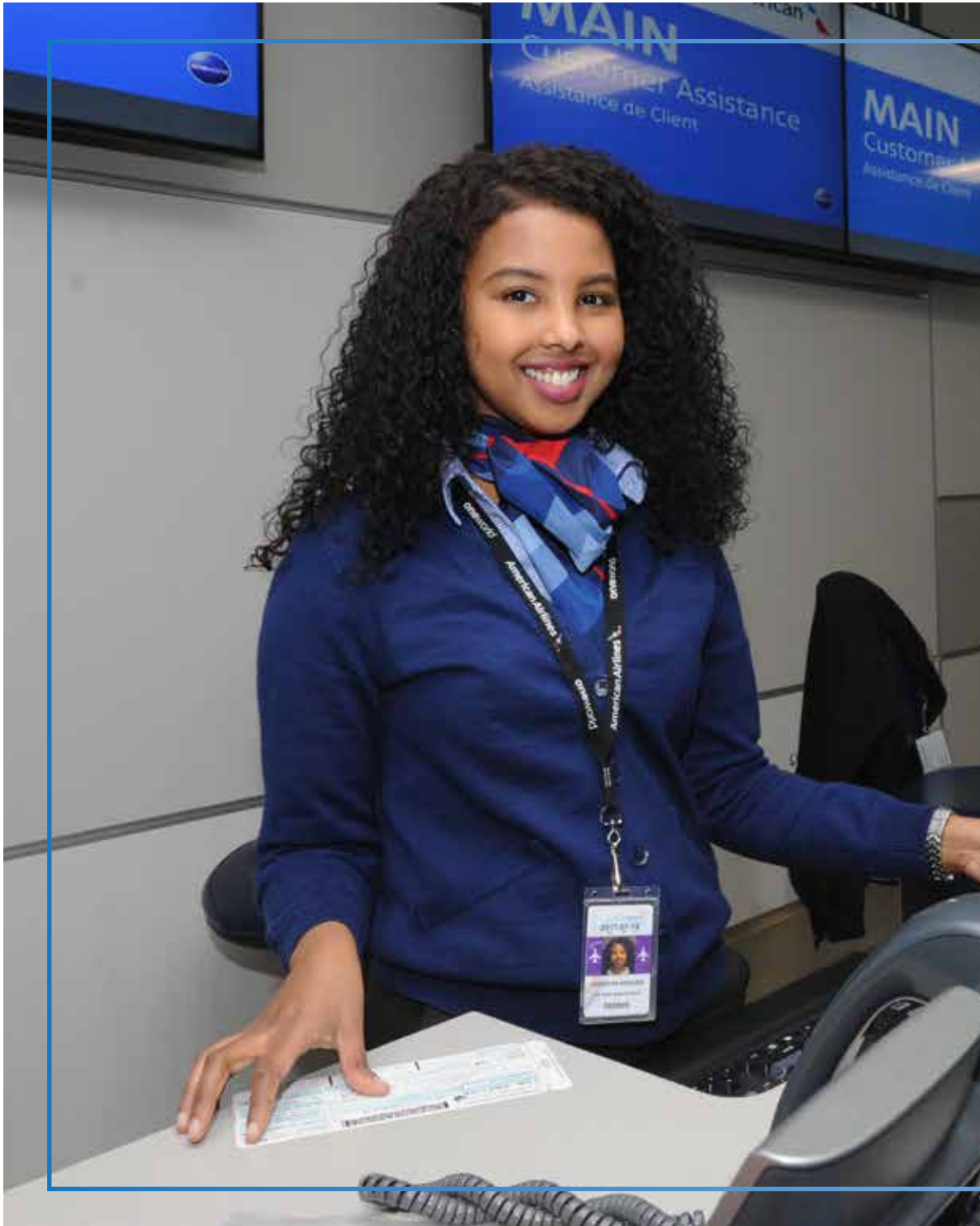
Few of us know that Canadians once owned African people as slaves, or about how they fought to end that slavery.

Black women have played a major role in building this country and the world, so it only makes sense for Women's Committees to celebrate our sisters' contributions and acknowledge continuing struggles.

Black History Month is a time to learn more about the many important contributions of Black Canadians to Canada's development, and about the diversity of Black communities in Canada.

What can you do?

- › Create displays to educate workers about Black history in Canada and around the world.
- › Post anti-racism information on your workplace bulletin board.
- › Invite a speaker to your Women's Committee meeting or other union meeting to talk about the history of Black activism in the labour movement and community.
- › Coordinate members of your committee or local to attend community events.
- › Attend or sponsor Black History Month events in your community.



March

March 6

In 1978, 75 female workers at Fleck Manufacturing in London, Ont., went on strike for five months. Riot police, squad cars and paddy wagons were out in force, along with a helicopter and police camera surveillance of the picket line. Hundreds of people joined the Fleck women on the picket line to show support for their struggle. Unexpectedly, Fleck management capitulated on one of the main strike issues: the Rand formula. The women at Fleck had won! The pay was not as high as hoped for, but they had union security.

March 8

International Women's Day

March 10

In 1957, miners in Murdochville, Que., began a seven-month illegal strike to get union recognition.

March 21

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 21-28

Week of Solidarity with People Struggling Against Racism and Racial Discrimination

"Women should never accept the back of the bus behind men. It is one of our traditions that there should be balance between men and women. That doesn't mean we should always be in front of men, but that there needs to be a balance. Women need to know that they can succeed."

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.



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Getting Down to Work in March

International Women's Day: March 8

On March 8, 1857, immigrant women garment workers in New York City marched to protest their horrible working conditions.

In 1903, 50 years later, 15,000 women protested in New York to demand the same rights earlier denied to their sisters: shorter working hours, an end to child labour, safe working conditions and better pay. "Bread and roses" was their slogan.

"Bread and roses" continues to symbolize women's struggle: the bread of economic security and the roses of social justice.

What can you do?

- ▶ Join events and demonstrations in solidarity on March 8. Recognize this date by celebrating with Steelworkers and activists in the community.
- ▶ The Steelworkers' Toronto Area Council Women's Committee sponsors a breakfast in memory of Mary Spratt, a long time Steelworker activist. Breakfast is provided by the brothers in the Area Council and the event is open to the community. Does your local labour council hold an event?
- ▶ Can you get space in a local mall to give out information?
- ▶ Is there a parade or demonstration on International Women's Day?
- ▶ Can you make a banner or signs to carry in a march or parade?
- ▶ Can you post something on your bulletin board at work that recognizes the history and importance of International Women's Day?



Getting Down to Work in March

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: March 21

March 21 marks the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa when peaceful demonstrators against apartheid were wounded and killed. In 1966 the United Nations declared March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in commemoration of this tragic event.

What can you do?

- ▶ Post anti-racism information on your workplace bulletin board.
- ▶ Invite a speaker to your Women's Committee meeting to discuss how we can work together against racism.
- ▶ Get space at your local mall and set up a table to distribute Steelworkers leaflets and posters on preventing and dealing with racism.
- ▶ Have you negotiated the Steelworkers' policy on racial and sexual harassment in your collective agreement?
- ▶ Post or share CLC and USW resources such as statements or activities.



April

Equal Pay Day is marked in April to bring attention to the fact that women still earn less, on average, than men. The exact date varies by year and province/territory.

April 14

In 2005, the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union merged with the United Steelworkers.

April 21

In 1921, Agnes MacPhail became the first woman to be elected to the Parliament of Canada. It was not until 1988 that Ethel Blondin-Andrew became the first Indigenous woman MP and 1993 that Jean Augustine became the first Black woman elected to Parliament.

April 22

Earth Day

April 23

In 1956, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) was formed, uniting three-quarters of the Canadian labour movement.

April 28

National Day of Mourning for Workers Killed and Injured on the Job

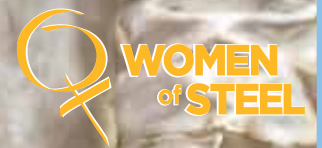
"I do not want to be the angel of any home. I want for myself what I want for other women: absolute equality. After that is secured then men and women can take turns at being angels."

Agnes MacPhail



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Getting Down to Work on Equal Pay Day

Equal Pay Day is not a celebration; it's a reminder. Because women in Canada earn, on average, 20-30% less than men. We call that the gender wage gap.

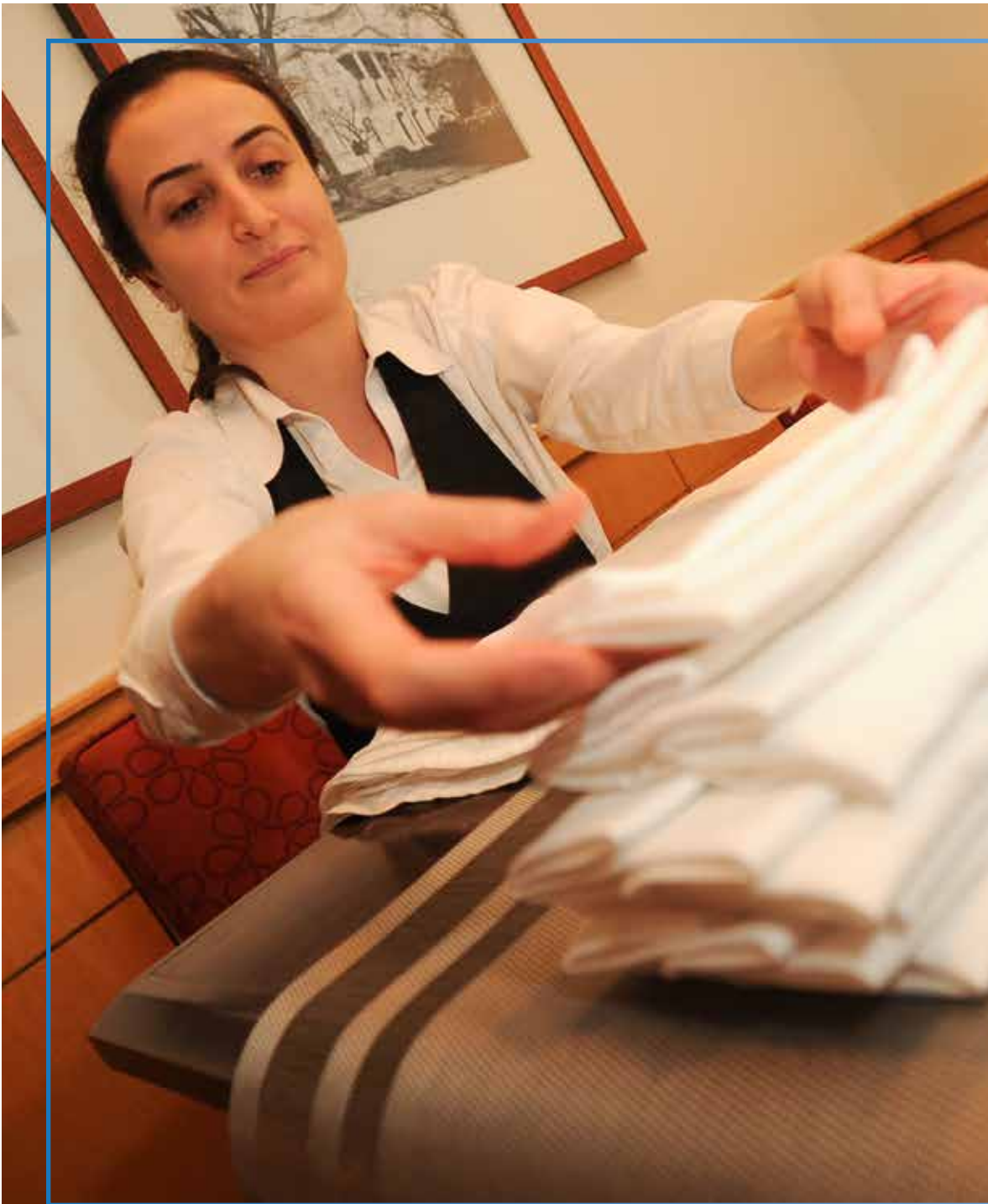
Equal Pay Day marks the extra weeks into the New Year that women need to work to have earned the same as the average man did the year before. Put another way, it will take women more than 15 months to earn what men earn in 12.

And the gap is even bigger for women who are racialized, disabled, Indigenous, migrant and immigrant, or sexual minorities or gender variant.

USW is committed to closing the gender wage gap.

What can you do?

- ▶ Attend an Equal Pay Day event in your community and bring along sisters and brothers from your local.
- ▶ Ask local members to wear red on Equal Pay Day to symbolize that women will be in the red financially as long as the gender wage gap continues. Educate members about the gap.
- ▶ Check your collective agreement to make sure it doesn't perpetuate a gender wage gap. Use USW's Closing the Gender Wage Gap: We Can Do it Through Collective Bargaining available at www.usw.ca/womenofsteel
- ▶ Lobby your provincial, territorial or federal politicians to put proactive pay-equity legislation in place and enforce it.



May

May is Asian Heritage Month

Since 1993, cities across Canada have celebrated Asian history and culture during the month of May. In December 2001, the Senate of Canada passed a motion officially designating May as Asian Heritage Month.

May 1

In 1890, workers in Europe and North and South America began celebrating May Day, an international festival of working-class solidarity.

May 15

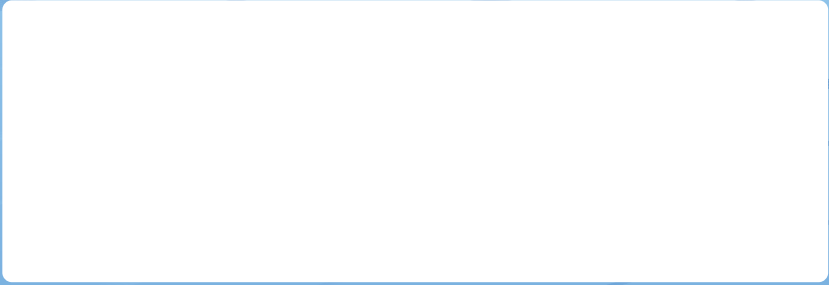
The Winnipeg General Strike began in 1919. Whether unionized or not, 30,000 workers went on strike in support of building and metal trades workers who were fighting for recognition of their union by employers. People were also frustrated with high unemployment and bad working conditions. The City of Winnipeg was shut down. Some six weeks in, the strike ended after the government ordered the RCMP to break up a protest, killing two strikers and seriously injuring dozens more.

May 22

Happy Birthday! In 1942, the United Steelworkers of America was formed.

“Feminism is based on social justice, for it claims but the equality of rights and possibility between men and women.”

Idola Saint-Jean



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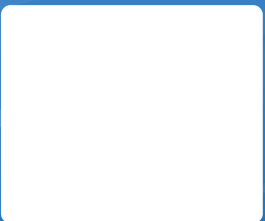
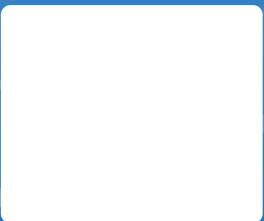
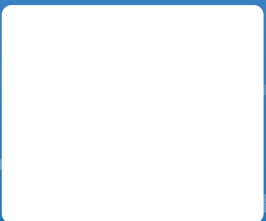
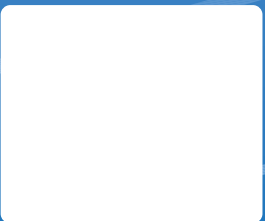
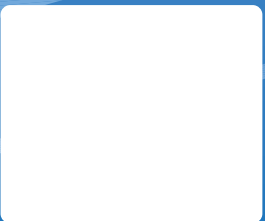
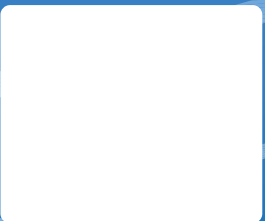
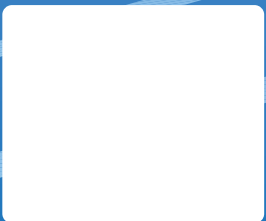
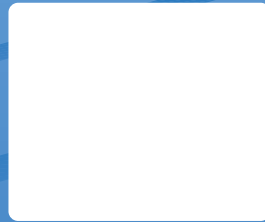
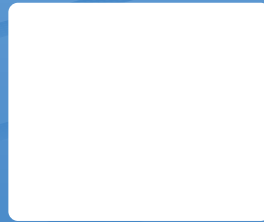
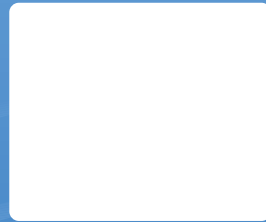
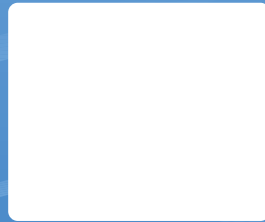
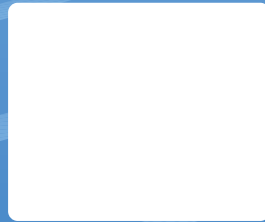
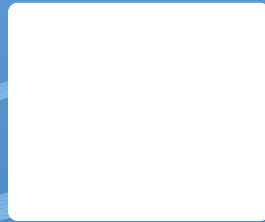
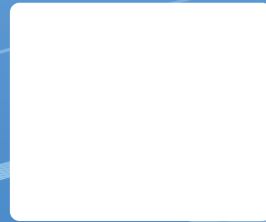
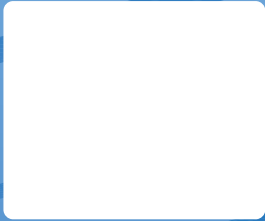
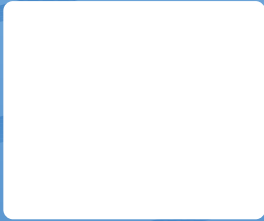
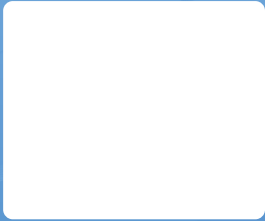
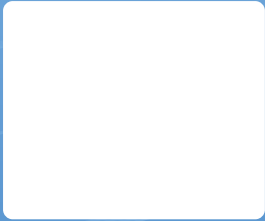
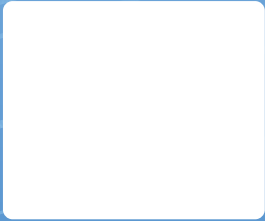
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Getting Down to Work in May

Mayworks Festival

The first Mayworks festival was held in Toronto in May 1986, and was intended to be a one-time thing. Now it has become an annual event, and the idea has spread across the country: Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Windsor, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

Different cultural events are planned throughout the beginning of May in celebration of workers. Mayworks Committees encourage workers – like you – to submit their contributions and participate in the festival.

Unions have made links with cultural workers, especially musicians and artists, to promote art, music, poetry, theatre and films that reflect the experience and aspirations of working people. These events encourage an alternative culture that values labour, justice, equality and struggle.

What can you do?

- › Photograph your co-workers in the workplace.
- › Create a display in your union hall or community centre that chronicles the achievements of your local union or Women's Committee.
- › Learn about the women artists in your community. Organize within your local to sponsor an event featuring a performance.
- › Sponsor an essay-writing, song-writing or poetry contest.
- › Form an all-union labour choir – guaranteed to boost morale at picket lines and rallies! Write some new chants and short songs for rallies.



June

June is Pride Month. Pride celebrations take place on different days in cities across Canada.

June 5

World Environment Day

June 11

In 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada formally apologized to former students of Indian Residential Schools, on behalf of the Government of Canada.

June 17

In 1936, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) was formed.

June 21

National Aboriginal Day is an opportunity for Steelworkers to support the achievements and the ongoing struggles for the rights of Aboriginal peoples to land, language, economic and cultural practices, law and government.

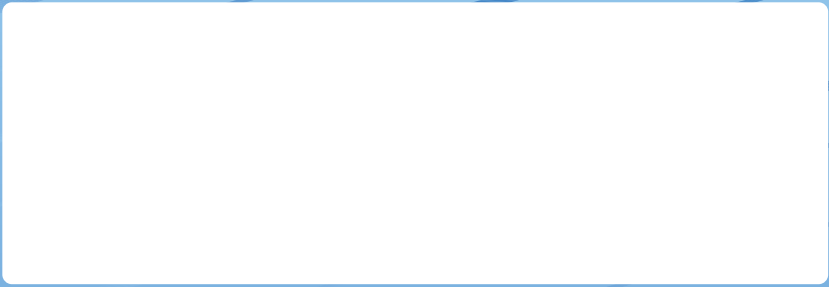
June 30

In 1944, the Aluminum Workers of America International Union merged with the Steelworkers.

In 1967, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers merged with the Steelworkers.

"If you're not annoying somebody, you're not really alive."

Margaret Atwood



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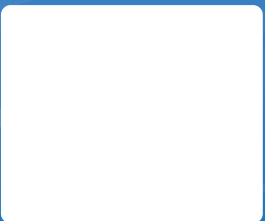
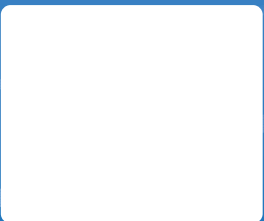
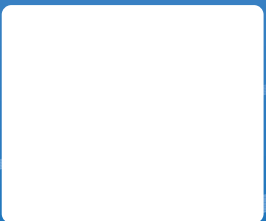
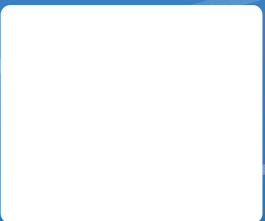
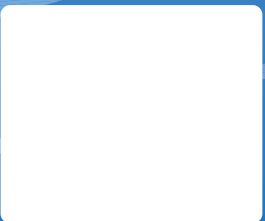
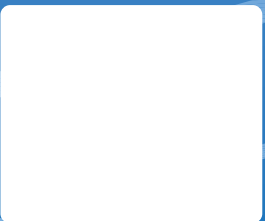
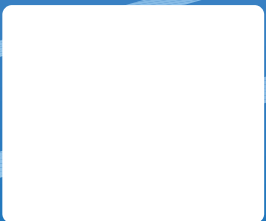
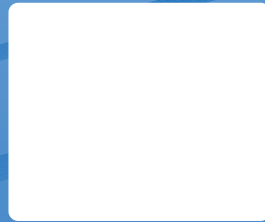
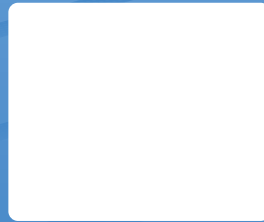
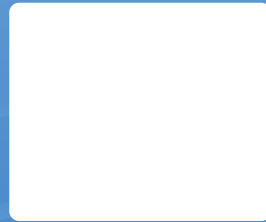
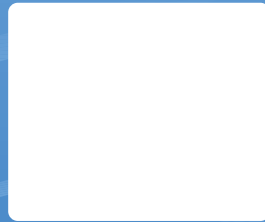
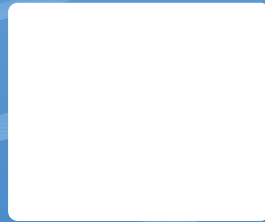
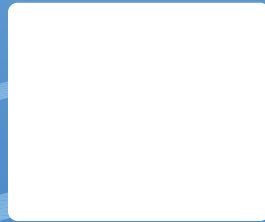
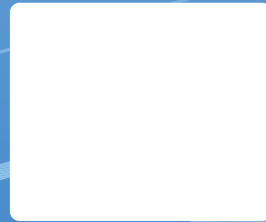
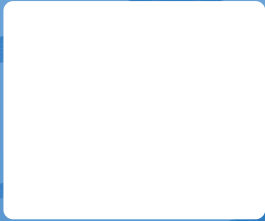
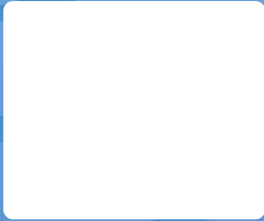
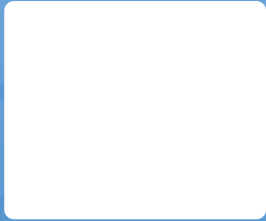
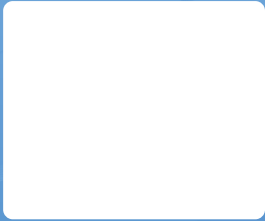
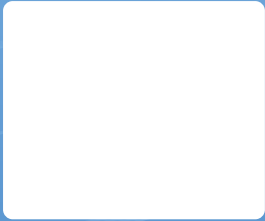
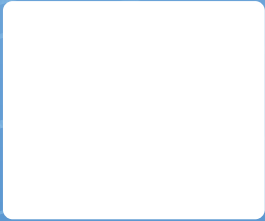
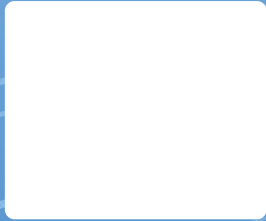
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Getting Down to Work in June

Celebrating Pride

More and more communities are hosting events in June or other summer months to acknowledge and celebrate humanity's diverse sexualities and gender identities.

Check with LGBTQ2S+ organizations in your community to find out what is being planned this year. Events can include parades, fairs with community booths, live entertainment and educational events.

What can you do?

- › Organize a group of local members to march in the parade carrying a USW banner.
- › Set up a USW booth at a community Pride fair.
- › Help raise awareness and understanding by organizing an educational event about gender identity and gender expression.
- › Check if your collective agreement ensures there will be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- › Check if your collective agreement and benefit plan protect and support workers who are transitioning gender.
- › Check if anti-harassment policies include language on gender identity and gender expression.



Getting Down to Work in June

National Aboriginal Day: June 21

National Aboriginal Day is an opportunity to celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding achievements of Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

In many communities, National Aboriginal Day is celebrated on June 21 with an all-day picnic and music festival as well as a fair with displays of crafts, books and other items. Check with any First Nations office, Friendship Centre, other Aboriginal association or town/city hall in your community for specific events.

What can you do?

- ▶ Participate in the day's events, and encourage other local members to do so too.
- ▶ If your community doesn't have anything planned, organize something for your friends and family to honour the day.
- ▶ Commit to reading the summary report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- ▶ Work with local, area, regional or district leaders to put on a Kairos Blanket Exercise for members.
- ▶ Find out which Indigenous languages are spoken by the First Peoples on whose territory you live and work, and learn to say a few words, like Hello and Thank you.
- ▶ Bargain National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday in your collective agreement.



July

July 1

In 1960 Indigenous women could legally vote in federal elections. White women won the right to vote in federal elections in 1919. Asian Canadian women won the right in 1947-49.

In 1995, the United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America merged with the Steelworkers.

July 20

In 1933, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) adopted the Regina Manifesto at its first annual convention. The CCF would later become the NDP.

In 2005 Canada became the first country outside Europe and the fourth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

July 31

In 1961, the NDP founding convention began in Ottawa; over 45% of the delegates were from the CCF and 30% were from unions.

"We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based on economic equality, will be possible."

Regina Manifesto



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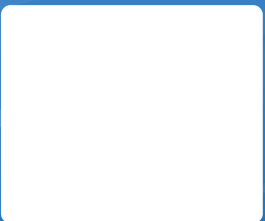
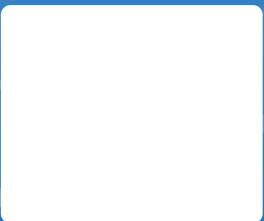
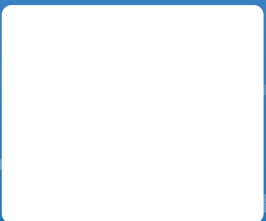
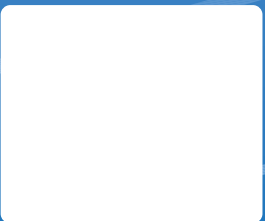
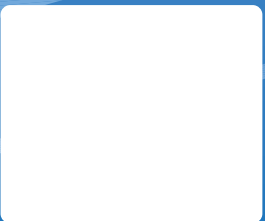
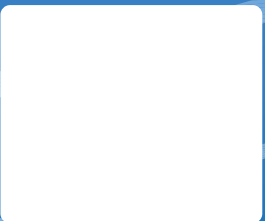
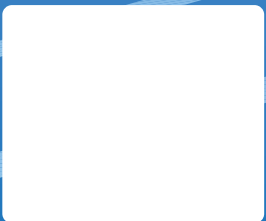
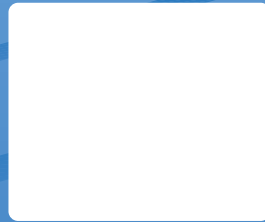
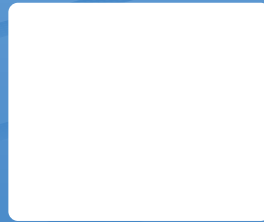
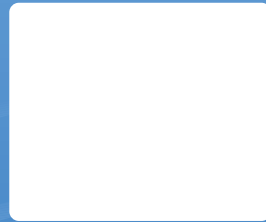
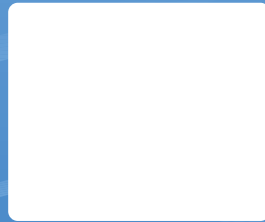
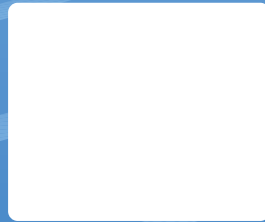
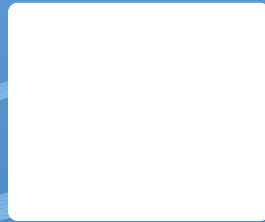
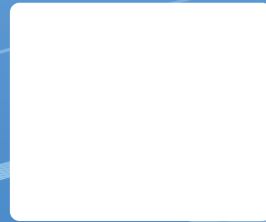
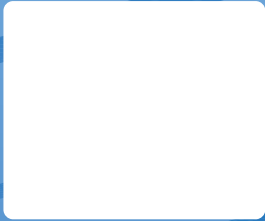
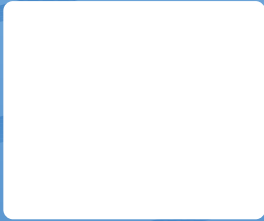
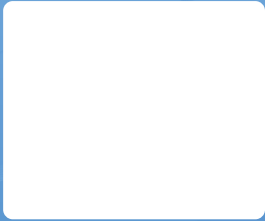
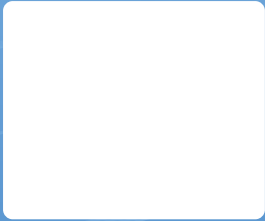
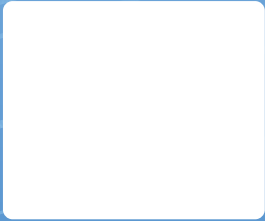
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Getting Down to Work Anytime

Creating a Welcoming Cross-Cultural Environment for your Women's Committee Events

- › If offering food at your meetings, provide real options for people who are vegetarian, have health conditions such as diabetes or avoid certain foods for religious reasons.
- › Ensure food at your events is clearly labelled so people can make informed choices about what they are eating.
- › If in doubt, do not assume. Ask questions in a respectful and open manner and know that most people welcome an environment where they can talk about their backgrounds.
- › Take the time to learn how to pronounce and spell your members' names accurately.
- › When people do not get involved in union activities, don't assume it is because they are not interested. Ask questions about what might interest them or how they could see themselves getting more involved.
- › Avoid swearing and the use of aggressive language. People who are new to our union or to their jobs may not be accustomed to this language and may feel intimidated about getting involved.
- › When others are speaking, allow them time to express their opinions and try to respectfully answer their questions.
- › Make efforts to discourage cliques at your meetings. Build activities into meetings that provide opportunities for everyone to get to know each other and ensure there are roles for everyone to get involved.
- › When planning a large gathering, send out a questionnaire in advance to members asking about accommodation of mobility needs, food needs, child care, etc.
- › Don't make negative comments or jokes about people's clothing, food, accent, way of speaking, etc.
- › Hold events in places where washrooms are gender neutral and accessible to all bodies, whether walking or in a wheelchair.

Adapted from OPSEU Cross Cultural Communication course



August

In 1988 the Ontario Human Rights Commission ruled that equal rights in the workplace included women having access to a bathroom. It awarded Stelco employee Bonita Clark damages for harassment. The ruling led to the creation of USW's anti-harassment statement.

August 9

In 1979, the Steelworkers began a successful strike against Radio Shack, a predominantly female workplace, resulting in better legislation guaranteeing union security.

August 13

In 1946, over 6,000 striking textile workers (predominantly women) clashed with police on picket lines at the Dominion Textile plants in Montreal and Valleyfield. The strike lasted for 100 days, but the strikers were victorious, winning certification of their union, their first collective agreement and an eight-hour working day.

August 15

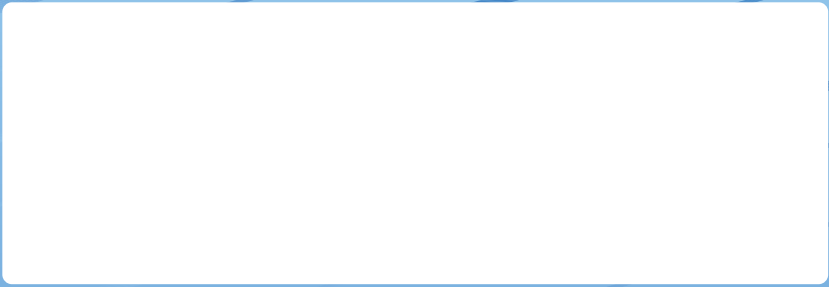
In 1984, the first—and so far only—televised debate on women's issues between the leaders of the three major federal parties was organized by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

August 17

In 1941, the first Canadian Bank Strike in Montreal was organized by Eileen Tallman Sufrin of the Steelworkers.

"Surely if we can produce in such abundance in order to destroy our enemies, we can produce in equal abundance in order to provide food, clothing and shelter for our children."

Tommy Douglas



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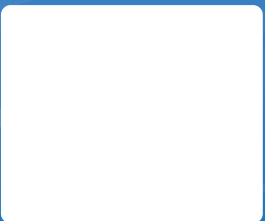
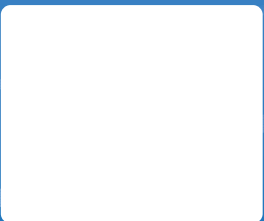
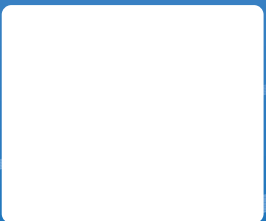
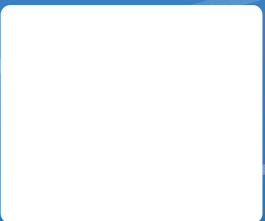
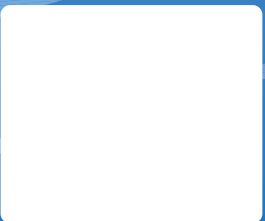
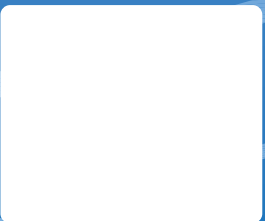
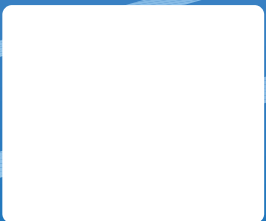
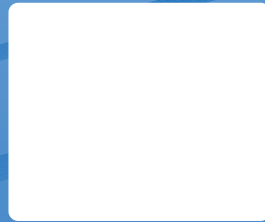
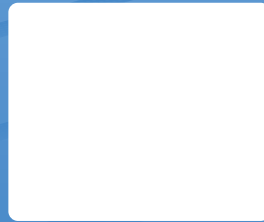
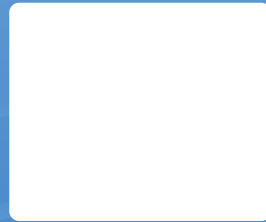
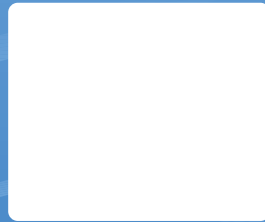
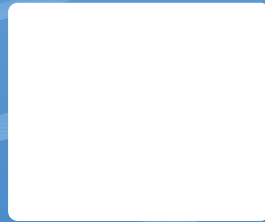
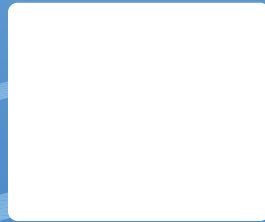
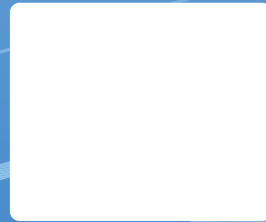
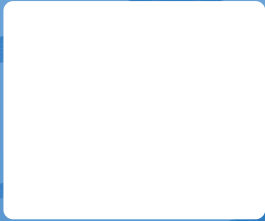
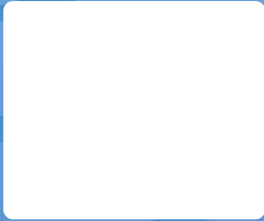
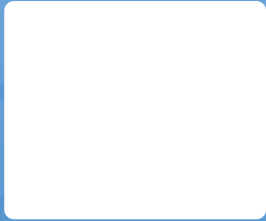
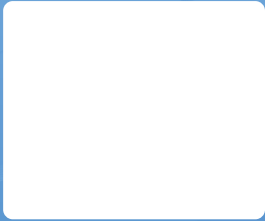
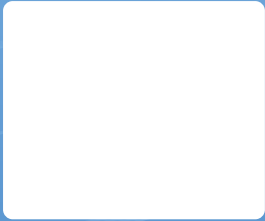
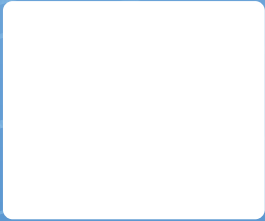
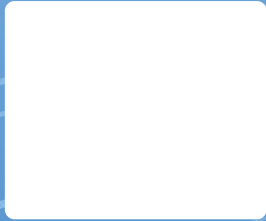
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September

Labour Day is celebrated in Canada and the United States on the first Monday in September.

September 7

In 1931, coal miners in Bienfait, Sask., walked out protesting intolerable working conditions, including frequent roof cave-ins and high levels of carbon dioxide due to inadequate ventilation. Strikers were also demanding that the employer recognize their union. Three weeks later, police attacked a peaceful march of strikers and their families, killing two strikers.

September 8

International Literacy Day

September 14

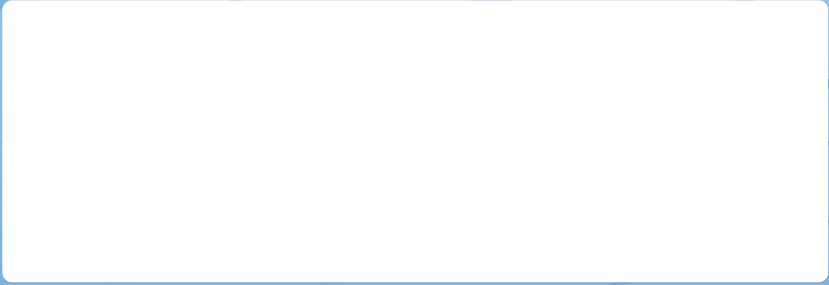
In 1975, Grace Hartman was the first woman elected as national president of CUPE. She later became the first woman elected to the leadership of the Canadian Labour Congress, becoming General Vice-President in 1976.

September 27

In 1933, the last use of Canadian soldiers for strike duty occurred in Stratford, Ont.

"Nothing happens by chance, everything is pushed from behind."

Emily Murphy



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Getting Down to Work in September

Labour Day

Labour Day is celebrated on the first Monday in September.

The first Labour Day in Canada was celebrated in 1894. However, south of the border, the holiday has been celebrated since 1882 when the cigar-makers' union in New York refused to work the day, paraded in the streets and held a picnic for workers.

What Can You Do?

- ▶ Bring your family and friends with you to march in your community's Labour Day parade or attend the Labour Day picnic organized by a labour council.
- ▶ Design Women's Committee banners for the parade.
- ▶ Distribute leaflets or union literature as you march.



October

October is Women's History Month

October 4

National Day to Honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

October 17

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

October 18

In 1929, women were declared persons by the Privy council in England. Persons Day commemorates this legal victory that ended the exclusion of women from the Senate based on sex. The challenge was led by five women from Edmonton known as the Valiant (or Famous) Five: Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Muir Edwards.

October 25

In 1993, Jean Augustine became the first Black woman elected to the Parliament of Canada.

October 31

In 1985, the Upholsterers International Union merged with the Steelworkers.

"If you don't know where you came from, you can't know where you are going. And if you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."

Ann Brown



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Getting Down to Work in October

National Day to Commemorate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: October 4

October 4 is the National Day to Commemorate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. In communities across Canada, vigils are held to remember the thousands who have been killed, often without adequate follow-up investigations by police forces. Indigenous women and girls are four-to-five times more likely to die violently than other Canadian women.

The USW has been an active supporter of an effective, culturally sensitive national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW), as an important step to ensure that Indigenous women and girls live full and safe lives.

What can you do?

- ▶ Attend a vigil or other event in your community. Bring other sisters and brothers from your local.
- ▶ Check with organizers of your community's vigil to see if they need assistance or supplies. Approach your local to see if they can contribute.
- ▶ Learn more by visiting the web sites of organizations like the Native Women's Association of Canada, the REDress Project, Walking With Our Sisters and others.
- ▶ Support local, district and national activities aimed at ending violence against women.



Getting Down to Work in October

Persons Day: October 18

Persons Day commemorates the legal victory of the Valiant Five – Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Muir Edwards – which ended the exclusion of women from the Senate based on sex. On October 18, 1929, the Privy Council in England overruled an earlier decision of the Supreme Court of Canada that women were not legally “persons” and therefore not eligible for appointment to the Senate.

What can you do?

- ▶ Attend Persons Day events in your community and organize support from other women – and men – in the local.
- ▶ Find out how many women have run for municipal/provincial/federal office where you live. Help elect more women by identifying those you think would be good candidates. Volunteer to work on their campaigns.
- ▶ Consider running for office yourself.

Are there some things you think your federal MP or provincial representative should do differently or are there some key issues you think need more attention? Make an appointment to speak with your elected politicians to ask for changes.



November

November 1

In 1995, the USW National Policy Conference established a National Women's Committee.

November 11

Remembrance Day

November 14

The Congress of Industrial Organizations, the forerunner of the Canadian Labour Congress, was formed in 1936.

November 2

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

"The personnel man asked if I could carry around a 50-pound bag of cement. I said that if I could carry a 40-pound kid around the shopping malls, I could carry around a bag of cement."

A female Stelco employee in Hamilton, 1979. From The Challenge of the Women Back Into Stelco Campaign by Meg Luxton and June Corman.

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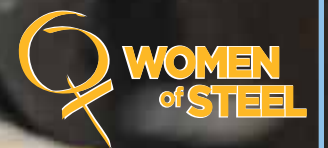
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Getting Down to Work Anytime

Politics Matters for Women's Lives

- › Consider running for school-board trustee, city councillor, member of the provincial or territorial legislature or for federal Parliament.
- › Sign up for candidate training. The New Democratic Party and labour federations are just some of the groups that can provide workshops and training for women interested in learning more about what it takes to be a candidate.
- › Back the campaigns of other women candidates who are committed to social justice.
- › Develop questions about women's equality to ask candidates in upcoming elections.
- › Get involved with the NDP in your area.
- › Encourage women to vote and be politically active in their ridings to elect progressive candidates.



December

December 1

World AIDS Day

December 3

International Day of Disabled Persons

December 5

In 1996, the Steelworkers' first National Women's Conference began in Toronto.

December 6

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

In 1989, 14 women were murdered at Montréal's École Polytechnique.

December 10

United Nations Human Rights Day

"I would never want to work anywhere there wasn't a union. Without a union, I don't think you'd stand a chance."

Mary Spratt, Steelworker pioneer and lifelong labour activist



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Getting Down to Work in December

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women: December 6

December 6, the anniversary of the massacre of 14 women at Montréal's École Polytechnique in 1989, is now recognized by an Act of Parliament as a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The murder of these women jolted Canadians into acknowledging the extent of violence against women in our society. Shock and outrage gave way to determination to make change. First we mourned. Then we organized.

What can you do?

- Encourage your local to support the White Ribbon Campaign: men working to end violence against women.
- Invite a speaker from a community agency to a union meeting to speak about violence against women and what our union can do to end violence.
- Negotiate language into your collective agreement to provide supports to any members experiencing domestic violence, such as leave of absence, accommodations and safety planning.
- Discuss within your local the creation of a system of domestic violence first responders or women's advocates and talk to your district Women of Steel coordinator about the training program.
- Write to the Prime Minister, your MP, your Premier, your MPP/MLA, your Mayor and your City Councillor. Demand programs, adequate financial resources and improved legislation.





Getting Down to Work in December

International Human Rights Day: December 10

Labour and human-rights activists confront issues of oppression and discrimination on a regular basis. The United Nations has designated December 10 as Human Rights Day.

What can you do?

- › Do an equity audit of your collective agreement and then work to improve any areas of weakness.
- › Negotiate donations to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund in your collective agreement.
- › Get involved with a community human-rights organization.
- › Learn more about the human-rights struggles going on in Canada and in other countries. Attend events and rallies to support their goals.
- › Use your local web page or workplace bulletin board(s) to publicize a social-justice issue.
- › Create a posting, display or leaflet that profiles a Humanity Fund project.

Bread and Roses

*As we come marching, marching
In the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens,
A thousand mill lofts grey,
Are touched with all the radiance
That a sudden sun discloses,
For the people here are singing:
"Bread and Roses! Bread and Roses!"
As we come marching, marching
We battle too for men,
For they are women's children,
And we'll march with them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated
From birth until life closes;
Give us bread, but give us roses!
As we come marching, marching*

*Unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing
Their ancient songs for bread.
Small art and love and beauty
Their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for -
But we fight for roses, too!
As we come marching, marching
We bring a brighter day.
The rising of the women
Means the rising of us all.
No more the drudge and idler -
Ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories:
Bread and roses! Bread and roses!*

Words: James Oppenheim

Music: Caroline Kohlsaat

Solidarity Forever

It's the women of the union who know just how to fight,

Who know of women's issues and they know of workers' rights.

They're prepared to stand for freedom, they're prepared to stand their ground.

Women make the union strong.

Chorus:

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

For the union makes us strong.

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run,

There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.

Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?

But the union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,

But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel could turn.

We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn

That the union makes us strong.




In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,



Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold.


We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,

For the union makes us strong.

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