



Michael Phillips  
Secretary-Treasurer

## SECRETARY- TREASURER'S MESSAGE: CRISIS REVEALS CHARACTER

While the last 12 months have been a time of global hardship, I think it's worth noticing that this period has had at least one positive quality: It's been good at revealing truth. It turns out that when confronted with real danger and real harm, the usual spin, bluster and posturing that apathy permits in good times are shown to be meaningless. They don't stand the test of actual suffering.

The usual celebrities mean a bit less to us, and our new heroes are the doctors, the nurses, the workers. I remember going to the grocery store in April, during the period when we had realized that masks were necessary but we didn't have any, before plexiglass, and when the cashier handed me my bags of groceries my throat was too tight with gratitude to even say "thank you" properly. For a customer-facing worker with no mask, no glass, working within a couple feet of hundreds of customers throughout their shift, so that people can get their groceries, just showing up was the kind of everyday heroism that allowed our society to continue to function.

You have each been a part of this collective sacrifice, keeping our country connected. Does the average customer know what that means? Do they know that you've been given more and more work to

# SECRETARY-TREASURER'S MESSAGE

do, with training that cuts corners at every step? Do they know that you were late to a job because the amount of time you're given for each job comes from a manager or director's imagination? Do they realize that you aren't allowed to visit your family for holidays, but you're required to visit theirs to make a repair? Yet it's not their fault not to realize this, and they have their own problems. But you do the work required because everyone depends on you: your employer, your community, your family. You were tested, and still are being tested, and you are passing the test with flying colours by showing up, and doing the job.

What has the crisis revealed about your employer? The customer may not understand the challenges you have in doing your job under these conditions, but your employer has less of an excuse. Credit where it's due: Our employers have done a good job at keeping us physically safe, maximizing work-from-home where possible, very quickly, and providing augmented PPE etc. This was definitely the most important challenge on their part from the outset.

But what about your mental health? Has your employer relaxed your metrics to account for the excess pressure and deficient tools you're working with? On our Covid-19 Check-in Survey sent out last summer, 18% of respondents felt less pressure to meet metrics, 42% felt the same pressure and 39% felt more pressure. On our Local 1944 Women of Steel Committee's recent Burnout Survey, the single most common response to any of the 16 questions on the survey was on the question "I feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed" to which "Very Often" scored 48% (with "Often" scoring 25%, "Sometimes" 17%, "Rarely" 5%, and "Not at all" 5%). But it's not just the statistics where we see this. We see it in member emails, Investigative Meeting notes, even the testimonies of Executive Board members who are doing the work. The mental health strains of work are now nothing less than a mental health crisis.

Have your employer's words praising how essential and valuable your work is allowed them to pass the test of character this past year?

# SECRETARY-TREASURER'S MESSAGE

Have your employer's mental health tips been enough to show that they are on your side and supportive of your wellbeing? Here's a mental health tip: the Employer is the Problem.

Your employer challenges you to dig deep, despite your fatigue, stress and the challenges you have in your own life, and you're expected to find the time and energy to do a little more. And I'm going to ask you to do the very same thing: With all that you are dealing with, I challenge you to dig deep and find a little bit more time and energy, to **Fight Back**.

Every action causes an equal and opposite reaction, and pressure needs to go somewhere. The question is, are you going to be isolated and frustrated, or are you going to unite with your coworkers who are experiencing the same thing as you, and help do something about it?

If you work at Telus, your Collective Agreement expires at the end of this year. Tell the Local what you actually think of your employer by completing our [RealityCheck Survey](#) to determine for all to see whether the company's flattering PulseCheck stats are accurate or the result of the company's favourite tool: Pressure. The more members fill this out, the more compelling the results.

This past year you've shown everyone that you can be depended on, but **now is the time for us to show we can depend on each other**. Come to your Unit meeting, participate in your Union's campaigns and **#RiseUp for justice at work**.

In Solidarity,

— Michael Phillips, Secretary-Treasurer

# EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

## FIRST EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF 2021

USW Local 1944's Executive Board members met on January 27–28, 2021. Attending via Zoom videoconference were Acting President Donna Hokirot, Acting Vice President Pierre-Luc Dick, Secretary-Treasurer Michael Phillips, REO AB Steve Durrell, REO AB Richard Blais, REO BC Corey Mandryk, former REO BC Denise Chisholm, REO ON Michelle Ravary, Acting REO QC Robert J. Briza, Trustee Jenn Dunsmore-Turner, Trustee Ross Brown, Trustee Natasha Aodan, Staff Representative Jayson Little, and Administrator Omero Landi.

The meeting started off with the swearing-in ceremony of our newest Executive Board member, Trustee Natasha Aodan.

The year just started but is already busy and during the two-day meeting, Officers tackled many important issues: [mediation with Shaw](#) for Unit 60 members at Abbotsford, [Shop Steward trainings](#) developed specifically for Local 1944's membership, the upcoming [election of Local Union Officers and Unit Officials](#) on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, [TWPP Trustee election](#) in the Fall, among other things.

The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.



Donna Hokirot



natasha.aodan

During the Executive Board meeting on January 27–28, 2021, Acting President Donna Hokirot (left) administered the swearing-in ceremony of the Local's newest Executive Board member, Trustee Natasha Aodan (right).

# EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

"As a Union, we continue to work tirelessly on behalf of our members; everything the Executive Board does for them is nothing short of inspiring. Especially at a time of such immense intensity on the planet, they continue to work together to create a better Union. They volunteer more hours, more often, and co-create in so many ways. In some very big ways through their annual projects, and other undertakings, and in some smaller ways but all of it critical, valuable, and significant.

I owe each of them a debt of gratitude for the activism that they show our members and how they help the Table Officers make better our Local Union. They have been essential to our success.

Together, we will build a better work world."

— Donna Hokiro, Acting President

**Send an email to your Local Union  
at [contact@usw1944.ca](mailto:contact@usw1944.ca)**



# STAFF MEETING

## LOCAL UNION REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED TRAINING

On January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Local Union Representatives attended training. The Local Union Representatives continue on their path of growth through education.

Local Union 1944 strives to impart ongoing training to better equip our Reps' ability to fight for our members. In addition to a full day of training, Acting President Donna Hokiro led our team on the following day during the staff meeting. She presented a binder laying out improved processes to help serve not only the membership but also the Reps.

"We are on a quest of constant improvement to work smarter with more efficiency, to alleviate pain points where they may have existed. To seek out and incorporate strategic initiatives into our daily work lives and habits. We are dedicated to finding more productive solutions wherever they may exist," Donna Hokiro said.

## HOW ARE THINGS GOING IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

**Because a right denied to one is a right  
denied to all, Local 1944 members  
need to hear from you!**

Contact your [Local Union Representative](#)

Share your story by email  
at [communications@usw1944.ca](mailto:communications@usw1944.ca)



# STAFF MEETING



From top to bottom, and from left to right: Acting President Donna Hokirot, Acting Vice President Pierre-Luc Dick, Secretary-Treasurer Michael Phillips, Staff Rep Scott Lunny, Staff Rep Jayson Little, LUR QC Hans-Woosly Balan, LUR BC Steve McWhirter, LUR AB Ron Palmer, LUR BC Tamara Marshall, Staff Rep Randy Gatzka, LUR BC Chris Stephens, LUR ON John Hockley, LUR BC Perry Pasqualetto, LUR AB Juanita West, Administrator Omero Landi, LUR AB Joe Benn

## STAY IN TOUCH!

Contact your [Local Union Representatives](#)  
or [USW Staff Representatives](#)

### BARGAINING: STANDING STRONG AND SHOWING NO FEAR!

Unit 60 members at Shaw Abbotsford, BC, are currently in mediation/conciliation to get a fair and respectful collective agreement. One would think that, as one of the telecommunications providers that has done exceptionally well during this pandemic (see the yellow text block below), this would not only be sensible but also reasonable and very easy to achieve for Shaw.

Unfortunately, corporate greed is rearing its ugly head and Shaw is rife with disrespect for the frontline members that are out in the field actually earning them their customers and wealth. Their most recent offer proposes lower wages after five years than their counterparts in Surrey and Vancouver make today! Shaw is sticking with its original **position of tabling a 0% increase next year** as well, all while refusing to align the term to allow this small group to bargain concurrently to their larger two USW partner units of Surrey and Vancouver.

While this is a small bargaining unit, this crew is a solid, strong group of Local 1944 unionists who are asking for the same remuneration as their peers for doing the same work. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, they walked the walk and showed the company that even in the very early morning

hours, they stand united in the cold and show their support





## NEWS FROM UNIT 60

for their bargaining committee by holding a Practice Picket rally outside of their compound. Countless members of the public driving past showed their support by honking and waving!

Local 1944 is proud to support our Shaw Brothers in Abbotsford, and we won't rest until these members have a fair collective agreement in their hands.

— Submitted by Steve McWhirter, Local Union Representative BC

### SHAW ANNOUNCED STRONG FINANCIAL PERFORMANCES FOR 2020

- For the quarter ending November 30, 2020, Shaw Communications Inc earnings (adjusted EBITDA) increased 3.2% year-over-year to \$607 million.
- Net income ("profit") increased from \$162 million to \$163 million compared to the same quarter last year.
- Free cash flow increased 23% to \$225 million compared to the same quarter last year.
- Shaw achieved record Wireless subscriber growth in the quarter with approximately 101,000 new Wireless customers. Wireless service revenue increased 9.7% to \$215 million over the same quarter last year.
- More than \$29 million in combined annual earnings was paid out to their top three executives.

### YOU CAN HELP!

1. Stay informed: Check the regular bargaining updates
2. Show your solidarity on social media with the hashtag #NoFear

## NEWS FROM UNIT 60



Photo credit: Brett Barden

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, members from Unit 60 Abbotsford gathered outside of their compound for a Practice Picket Rally. They were joined by District 3 Director Steve Hunt, Assistant to the Director Earl Graham, Staff Representatives Jayson Little and Scott Lunny from the District Office, as well as a couple of members of the IBEW standing in solidarity with Local 1944's members as the Local does with them.

More pictures from at  
<https://1944.fyi/Shaw-Abb-pics>

## SOME FACTS ABOUT THE COMPANY

As the bargaining committee and members at Telus prepare for the beginning of negotiations in a few months, we can reasonably expect that the company's traditional bargaining tactics are going to sound like: "We don't have the financial means to improve workers' lives." So here are some facts about Telus that we will want to keep in mind:

- Telus reported **\$15.5 billion in revenue in 2020** — up 5.5% from a year ago. [Analysts](#) expect its 2021 revenue to grow by over 8%. Such revenues were generated thanks to YOUR work.
- Telus shares went up 475% in the last two decades for a compound annual growth rate of 9.14%. This was made possible through YOUR work.
- According to a nationwide [survey](#), Telus ranks first out of 22 mobile service providers as the 'Most Respected Mobile Service Provider' in Canada. Again, that is thanks to YOUR work.
- Telus is investing in tele-health (Telus Health), digital agriculture (Telus Agriculture), security, 5G and the internet of things, and social impact ventures, setting the company to be a leader on many fronts.
- In the company's own words, "Telus and Telus International operate in 25+ countries around the world."
- Telus claims to be driven by a "deeply meaningful and enduring philosophy to give where we live" and calls itself "**the most giving company in the world.**" Let's hope that this locally-oriented and charitable philosophy will benefit you as Telus workers as well, when the time will come to sign a new collective agreement.

We believe that with these many many strengths, ventures, projects, and successes, Telus has more than enough financial means to make Local 1944 members' future friendly.

## TELUS SCOOPED UP \$38.6 MILLION IN FEDERAL PANDEMIC SUPPORT

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Telus has received \$38.6 million in support payments as part of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). According to Telus spokeswoman Erin Dermer, “The subsidy helped to avoid layoffs as retail stores were closed and home installations and repairs were cancelled.” With a staff of 30,000, that would sound fair and square, but there’s more to that.

As indicated by its name, the CEWS was designed to *help companies pay employee salaries* through the pandemic and prevent terminations — it was not meant to be used as a business expense subsidy. Not only did Telus continue to pay out over \$1.5 billion to shareholders, but it actually announced a 6.8 per cent increase in its annual dividend payouts in the last months of 2020.

Canadian taxpayers expected that businesses receiving pandemic aid were in real need, but it turns out that many beneficiaries are profitable corporations. This “all for profit” behaviour was first illustrated by Canada’s grocery chains whose revenues surged as customers stocked up on supplies, but nonetheless put an end to the \$2 “hero pay” raise for their workers within a few weeks — not because their finances depended on it, but because they could get away with it.

With bargaining around the corner, let’s keep in mind that Telus received federal support so that the economic crisis cannot be an admissible argument in the company’s rhetoric.

Sources: [The Star](#) 02/08/2021; [iPhone in Canada](#) 02/18/2021; [iPhone in Canada](#) 02/11/2021; [Stockhouse](#) 02/11/2021; [The Motley Fool](#) 02/17/2021; [Parry Sound](#) 02/09/2021

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## A MEMBER FROM UNIT 51 MODERATED A BLACK HISTORY MONTH ONLINE EVENT

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, Candace Knoll, from Unit 51 in New Westminster, BC, was the moderator of a Black History Month online event. It was a powerful, insightful and thoughtful conversation celebrating Black leadership in our local governments, unions and communities.

With city councillor, union activists and charity founder guest speakers, the panel discussion delivered the key message that everyone must become more than an ally, and become an activist. It was an opportunity to share ideas of actions to take to build a more inclusive, resilient society together.

"It was a successful event and really just the start of the 'community conversation'," said Candace Knoll. "Thank you to everyone who joined the conversation. What an amazing evening of celebration and community conversation."



Sister Knoll is the Chair of the Local's Civil and Human Rights Committee. She is also an Executive Board member of the National Congress of Black Women Foundation

## IN MEMORIAM

Leigh McCracken passed away peacefully on January 31, 2021.

He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force for 10 years before joining BC Tel. Shortly after starting at BC Tel, he became involved in the union and served as a Convention Delegate for locals in Vancouver and Surrey.

He retired to a farm in the Fraser Valley where he raised exotic birds and in his spare time, volunteered for many organizations including PICS, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the BC Society of Drift Fishers and Peacemakers.

He had a passion for fishing, and talking, and spent many happy hours on the water. May he find "tight lines and bent rods" in the hereafter.

## LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Sisters & Brothers, Thank you for the lovely retirement gift of \$1,000 and the frame-worthy send-off letter from Donna Hokiro, our Acting President. I had many excellent years working as a TWU/USW member and remain a solid supporter of the cause. Remember – if I am not there for you, I am always here for you ;) In Solidarity,

Heather Clark, retired member from Unit 7

Thank you for the retirement gift of \$1,000 from USW1944. I also wish to thank Grace Jones and Judi Filion for their assistance.

With appreciation,

Bjorn Hock, retired member from Unit 10

Dear Donna, I received the retirement gift from the Union today. It was a lovely surprise. I have been away from waged work now for just about a year. It is wonderful. In Solidarity,

Elisabet Thor-Larsen, retired member from Unit 63

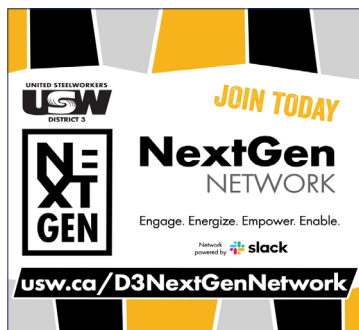
# GET INVOLVED

## JOIN THE NEXTGEN NETWORK

Are you a member from Alberta or British Columbia under 35? Join the USW District 3 NextGen Network and start connecting with other members across Western Canada!

The NextGen Network aims at inspiring and connecting all of young members from across Western Canada, so that they can share stories and ideas, and build an understanding of their important role in the labour movement. It will provide opportunities for mentoring and leadership development, along with union and community activism.

The Network will use a private Slack channel, and only members can see who is in the channel and what is posted. Members can participate from the comfort of their own home or on breaks at work.



Register to join the  
NextGen Network at  
[usw.ca/D3NextGenNetwork](https://usw.ca/D3NextGenNetwork)

You will receive a personal  
invitation to join the NextGen  
Network Slack channel.

Are you 35 or under? Become  
a member of Local 1944 Next  
Generation Committee!

Submit your [application](#)  
or contact the committee  
at [nextgen@usw1944.ca](mailto:nextgen@usw1944.ca)

