

SUPPORT YOUR TELUS BARGAINING COMMITTEE BY STAYING INFORMED

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TELUS AND THE NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: ANOTHER EXAMPLE ON HOW PRESSURE FROM THE LOCAL UNION IMPROVES YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS

As [reported](#) in a hotline on September 2nd, Telus opted not to treat September 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a full statutory holiday for Appendix A members (BC and Alberta, excluding Competitive Operator Services). Instead, the company created its own unique policy regarding the holiday, giving the day off with pay to some members (however, it wasn't disclosed if this was a significant number), while other members would be asked to work that day and receive only straight time pay and a day off later in the year, rather than receiving holiday premium pay. As for members who were already scheduled to be off that day, they wouldn't have received any statutory holiday pay, nor any other day off.

Thanks to the Union's pressure, the company decided to at least partially do what's right and "revisited lieu-day handling for team members". Telus sent an email on September 9th stating: "We recognize the importance of observing this day and are deeply committed to Reconciliation. Respectively, we have taken your feedback to heart and are adjusting our approach for team members not working, on vacation or on a PDO on September 30".

Here are Telus' new provisions:

"For team members covered by Appendix A of the TELUS-TWU collective agreement:

- If you are scheduled and report to work on September 30, 2021, you will receive the equivalent number of basic hours off in lieu
- *New* If you are not scheduled or have vacation or a PDO booked on September 30, 2021, you will also receive the equivalent number of hours off in lieu"

"This is what the Local Union works toward," said President Donna Hokiro. "While Telus is still, shamefully, not fully treating September 30th as a statutory holiday, the about-face on the issue of granting another day off to members not scheduled to work on September 30th is just the latest proof that **our collective activism changes members' lives and working conditions** even if some members don't know who did it. This is another example that there's power in our Union, and from that power comes change for the betterment of all kinds of aspects of our working conditions. We keep up the fight!"

FINAL PREPARATIONS BEFORE BARGAINING WITH TELUS

Members of the USW Local 1944 – Telus Bargaining Committee continued to meet to finalize our package before bargaining begins.

While the Committee is working hard for you, everyone **MUST** get involved! **Members at Telus don't have the luxury of apathy this time around.** Your participation and support will be the condition to our success at the bargaining table.

THE COST OF LIVING HAS INCREASED, BUT DID YOUR PAYCHECK FOLLOW?

On September 15th, Statistics Canada [reported](#) that Canadian inflation rose 4.1 per cent in August, the highest monthly year-over-year increase since 2003. Prices rose in seven categories of goods, with a most noticeable 32.5% increase in the gas prices compared to August 2020!



Members at Telus should have received a wage increase of 0.6% effective July 1st, 2021, pursuant to Article 24 Cost of Living Allowance of the **collective agreement**. Earlier this month, the Local was informed that some members covered under Appendix B (Ontario and Quebec) had not received their allowance yet. If this is still an issue, please consult with your Shop Steward or Local Union Representative and they will investigate whether or not a grievance should be filed on your behalf.

For more details on the calculation of the Cost of Living Allowance, please refer to your [collective agreement](#) or to the [hotline](#) that was released on June 16th.

THE HISTORY THAT MADE US

The content below comes from an [article](#) that was published by the BC Labour Heritage Centre on September 22nd.

Source: *On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement*. Rod Mickleburgh, 2018. BC Labour Heritage Centre Society. Harbour Publishing, Vancouver.

We need to know where we come from in order to be able to make progress. As we approach bargaining with our biggest employer, we couldn't pass on this timely piece written by Bailey Garden, BC Labour Heritage Centre Project Manager.

We ought to feel inspired by our predecessors' fights. Members of our Local, then known as the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU), were fearless and had a vision for a better future that kept them going through lockout, strike, and all types of low-blows from their anti-union employer, then named BC Telephone Company.

Years go by, companies' and Local Union's names change, new employees come on the job while others retire, management tactics claim to reinvent the wheel, but all in all, what was true in the early 1980's is still very relevant in 2021.

THE TWU'S FIGHT AGAINST BC TEL

Bailey Garden describes the 1980-81 BC Tel strike as "an inspiring example of workers using new tactics to cope with an aggressively anti-union employer".

STEP 1: REFUSE WORK

The TWU began the round of bargaining with BC Tel in 1980. On September 22nd that year, the Union decided to strategically target money-making areas such as switchboard repairs, wiring and installation specialists: that is how "530 craft employees began a work refusal of all but essential repairs [...] while keeping the majority of members working, contributing \$3 per week to provide these craft workers with 70% of their regular pay."

STEP 2: HOLD MOBILE PICKETS

"As repair and installation orders began to pile up, BC Tel sent supervisors to do the work; TWU responded with mobile pickets,

following the supervisors wherever they went. Once TWU picketers showed up at a construction site, members of the Building Trades unions would walk off the job in solidarity."

STEP 3: TURN YOUR ENEMY'S STRENGTH AGAINST THEM

BC Tel tried to counter attack those mobile pickets by "punishing workers for supporting the strike, temporarily sending home 1,000 employees for wearing buttons that said 'Crown Corporation Now!'" That's when it was decided that these TWU members would refuse to leave.

STEP 4: POWER THROUGH DESPAIR

"The office occupation began in Nanaimo, Feb. 3, 1981: after 21 maintenance workers were suspended for 'going slow', employees began to gather in the main lunchroom and organically organize a takeover of the building. Shop stewards wrote up shift schedules so that workers would control the switchboards 24/7; the evening shift arrived with sleeping bags and provisions. A banner was raised proclaiming BC Tel was 'UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT'. Suspended switchman Alf McGuire told the media: 'When ordinary people get desperate enough to take over a building, things are getting pretty desperate'."

STEP 5: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR WORKPLACE

"On February 5th, Burnaby shop steward Lila Wing was told to leave and change her anti-company T-shirt before returning to work. She called the TWU for advice and was given the green light to take over the building. Similar instructions were given to members at 14 company exchanges throughout BC. Soon, switchboard operators were answering information calls with 'BC Tel, under workers' control'. 'Solidarity Forever' blared through the line when callers were placed on hold."

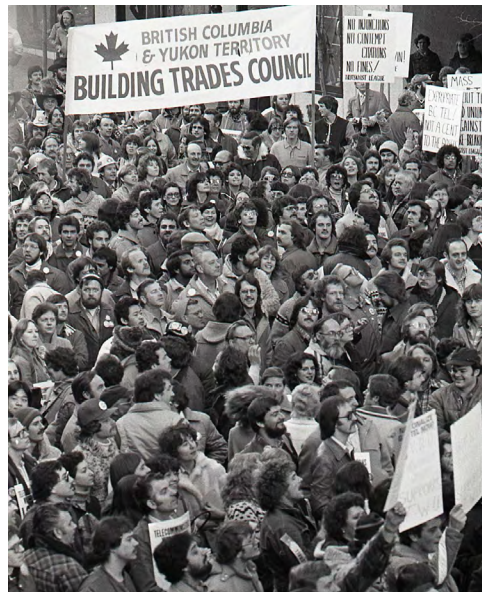
STEP 6: GET THE LABOUR MOVEMENT INVOLVED

The BC Federation of Labour sided with TWU members: "Tonight I am telling you, we are going back, back to the old, bare-knuckled ways of fighting labour disputes," President Jim Kinnaird declared during a public speech. All TWU members were ordered "to begin a full-scale strike" while the BC Fed would organize "a series of regional general strikes" to start an "'industrial relations war' on the employers of BC".

Continued next page >>>



Rally outside BC Tel's offices, Feb. 10, 1981. Fisherman Publishing Society Photographs



Unionists outside BC Tel Company's William Farrell Building in Vancouver, Feb. 10, 1981. Pacific Tribune photo



TWU members occupying BC Tel's William Farrell Building, Feb. 6, 1981. Pacific Tribune photo

THE HISTORY THAT MADE US

STEP 7: MARCH OUT WITH YOUR ALLIES

The occupation of BC Tel's buildings lasted 5 days. "After 5 days of worker control, hundreds of members marched out into a jubilant crowd of construction workers and other supporters, a union bagpiper leading the way. Although the first workers' occupation of its kind in BC was over, morale among the strikers was at an all-time high."

STEP 8: REACH A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

It was a combination of "private pressure from worried employers and public pressure in support of the strikers" that pushed the company back to the bargaining table. The TWU and BC Tel finally reached a tentative agreement on March 2nd. Bargaining had started only 5 months prior, proving that massive solidarity can lead to speedy successes!

STEP 9: NEVER TAKE IT AS A WIN UNTIL IT'S A WIN FOR ALL

However, there was a fly in the ointment, as BC Tel "refused to take back 24 workers who had been fired during the strike". This was unacceptable for the TWU. The BC Fed was informed, and that's how "the one-day regional general strikes planned by were back on".

STEP 10: SEEK FOR WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

On March 6th, TWU members in Nanaimo posted a sign "at the entrance to the city reading: NANAIMO CLOSED. It truly was – nearly every union workplace was shut tight for 24 hours. Ferries, sawmills, supermarkets, liquor stores, buses, construction sites, government offices, the post office, and the docks all came to a stop in a stunning show of solidarity. Even the unaffiliated PPWC put aside their differences with the BC Federation of Labour to walk out of the large Harmac pulp mill, declaring they were with the TWU 'one hundred percent'. The next strike was planned for Kamloops."

STEP 11: DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PEER-TO-PEER PRESSURE

The turn of events was terrifying for "employers around the province [...] they privately pushed BC Tel to settle the dispute once and for all." Workers can count on employers after all, but not necessarily their own.

STEP 12: CELEBRATE THE RATIFICATION OF YOUR NEW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The TWU was finally able to see the ratification of a new collective agreement. "Every single worker returned to their previous job in triumph, buoyed by the support they had experienced from the labour movement at large."

Following that lengthy strike, the telephone company began to take steps to improve the labour climate.



Occupation of BC Tel's William Farrell Building in Vancouver. February 6, 1981. Pacific Tribune photo

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IN MEMORIAM



USW Local Representative Joe Benn passed away on September 9, 2021.

Read the President's Message at <https://1944.fyi/t5y>

"Rest In Peace, Joe. You were an amazing man. I'm so very glad I had the opportunity to know you and be your friend." — *Tammy Smith, Unit 51*

"Thank you for all you did and the legacy you left behind. Rest easy and prayers and condolences to you all." — *Carol Harke, Unit 207*

"I am deeply saddened to hear of Joe's passing. He was a huge help over the last number of years, as I dealt with my own personal and work challenges." — *Curtis Bidulock, Unit 208*

"Joe was an amazing advocate and will be sorely missed. Rest in Power, Brother." — *Siobhan Vipond, Executive Vice President at the Canadian Labour Congress*

"Joe Benn has been a part of a lot of my work events, holding a very dear spot! I find it very heartbreaking for the rest of his union family, friends, and family to lose such an incredible person; he is going to be tremendously missed by many!

And of all times that Joe could have left us on this earth it was September after the Labour Day weekend that was chosen. 'Labour' is a word used in many ways in a typical work day for Joe, as he represented so many of us in his travels.

Joe, your time was cut too soon, I thank you for all the years of all the support, and everything in between! Donna had your back and you Joe had Donna's back. Such incredible forces held in our Union with so many amazing folks that you leave behind. Rest, our Union Brother. Thank you dearly for all the encouragement, labour protection and power that you held for us all." — *Connie Mlynarchuk, Unit 207*

"Joe, your life is an embodiment of what it means to serve others and stands as an inspiration to me every day. I remain so phenomenally thankful to have been mentored by you." — *Alexander Livingston, Local Union Representative Quebec*

"Joe was a tireless advocate for his union brothers and sisters. He was an amazing guy and I was lucky enough to have him as my local rep. Rest in power Joe, and thank you." — *Alana Hemmingway, Unit 207*

"It is with deep sadness that we share the news about the sudden passing of USW Local 1944 Representative Joe Benn. Dedicated to justice and a staunch advocate for workers and union values, Joe was a long-time member of the Alberta Federation of Labour's Political Action Committee. A committed and caring unionist and activist, he touched the lives of many and will be greatly missed." — *Alberta Federation of Labour*

MEMBERS GET INVOLVED

SHOP STEWARD LEVEL 1 COURSE

"I was interested in taking this course to get an idea of what the Union does. It was very informative and very useful. It allows me to be more confident in my job and rights.

The group sessions were great and allowed us to get an idea of what goes on during meetings. The entire course was very informative as I've only looked at the collective agreement in regards to vacation time and now I know how to navigate the book better."

— Submitted by Merryl Rodriguez, Unit 51

USW VOTE ONLINE CAMPAIGN SCHOOL

Six delegates from Local 1944 attended the 2021 Steelworkers Vote online campaign school on September 8th: Brian Lee (30), Michael Throssell (50), Roh Prasad (203), Cheryl Carter (501), Kelly Barron (501), and Mary Wojdyga (203). This school was an opportunity to learn about politics and new campaign skills, build a network of engaged Steelworkers and volunteer for the NDP.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2021 FEDERAL ELECTION MADE THE DIFFERENCE!

Thanks to members across the country who got involved in the 2021 Federal election, the NDP won 25 seats. As New Democrats keep up the fight for workers, each of these seats count. **To get involved in political action in your surrounding community, reach out to your [Political Action Committee!](#)**

IN OUR UNITS

UNIT 60 HELD ITS ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT, IN SURREY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Unit 60 held its Annual Golf Tournament on Sunday, September 19th, at the Surrey Golf Course in British Columbia. Union members and non-members alike spent the day enjoying cart and a round of golf, buffet dinner, and draw for prizes.

"It was so nice to see everyone at the traditional and annual Unit 60 Golf event for a fun round of golf!" said Jayson Little, Staff Representative and former member of Unit 60. "Everyone stepped up with the donations. Thanks to Bill Furlong for another successful event!"

Send pictures from your Units to communications@usw1944.ca

#weareunit60



USW SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS

2021 WINNERS OF USW POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to members and their families for their selection as [USW Post-Secondary Scholarships](#) recipients, in the National Locals category. They were both awarded \$1,500.

Christian White, son of Christopher White, will be pursuing an Associate of Science diploma at Selkirk College. Brother White is a Service Technician out of Unit 4 in Castlegar, British Columbia.

Seyi Orenuga is a Client Care Representative IV, out of Unit 204 in Calgary, Alberta.

2022 winners of USW Scholarships could be you, your children or grand children next year! More details [here](#).

COMING SOON!



STAY TUNED FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE USW LOCAL 1944 SCHOLARSHIPS 2021 RECIPIENTS!

The annual USW Local 1944 Scholarships offers members' children 3 educational scholarships of \$750, and 4 scholarships of \$1,000 for any post-secondary public institution. Results will be announced soon.