

The Transmitter



TWU-STT FLAG FLYING HIGH IN SUPPORT OF TEAMSTERS IKEA WORKERS IN RICHMOND, BC

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Message From the President



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to take this opportunity to say how honoured I am to have been elected as your new President. I look forward to serving this Union, your Union, in my new capacity. After more than 30 years as a TWU member and activist I look forward to leading the TWU through the many

issues and challenges that lie ahead.

The TWU and our members are facing several pressing issues; ongoing pressure being put on the labour movement through outsourcing, offshoring and a decreasing membership. How do we best plan for the future, and how do we protect the jobs and working lives of our mem-

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bers and their families? For many years, the TWU has been in need of positive change. The decline in membership that the Union has suffered has made it more and more difficult to ensure we are in a position of strength when it comes to bargaining and taking action on behalf of our members and their families. We have a responsibility to ensure that we have both the resources and the reach to take on the increasingly difficult challenges facing working people in this global economy, including the contracting-out and offshoring of our work. If we want to continue the proud tradition of providing quality service to our members, we need the capacity, the influence and the strength that comes with belonging to a larger, more diverse union. To that end it is the right time to start this democratic process.

The TWU convention delegates have endorsed the ongoing negotiations with the leadership of the United Steelworkers Union (USW). The committee involved in these negotiations from both sides only want the very best outcome for our respective members and to ensure a more vibrant labour movement. This is not like collective bargaining where two adversaries are sitting across the table from one another, with opposing agendas. We are friends whose values are the same – the betterment of workers lives is our prime objective. We believe that together we can do more for working men and women than we can working separately. Stay tuned to the TWU website and signup to get e.News bulletins for the latest information on the progress of these negotiations. Ultimately you, the members, will get to determine if we join forces with the USW. We want to make sure you receive all the information so you can make an informed decision.

On the telecommunications front, most TWU members are aware that Verizon is looking at entering the Canadian mobility market. The TWU is opposed to this giant American corporation entering the Canadian telecom landscape for a number of reasons. Under the current rules for new companies, as determined by the federal Conservative government in Ottawa, Verizon will hold an extremely unfair advantage compared to the incumbents when bidding in the upcoming spectrum auction. Once they get that spectrum they will not have to build their own network as the current rules will allow Verizon the ability

to piggyback onto the existing network infrastructure, built and paid for by Telus and other incumbents. This will not create Canadian jobs or help the economy. Verizon has 100 million wireless subscribers, 13

times the size of Telus’ customer base and can easily overpower the Canadian market. They certainly are not a small start-up that requires subsidies from the Canadian taxpayer. The TWU is very concerned by this potential entrance by Verizon into the Canadian market. We encourage you to contact your Member of Parliament to voice your displeasure. Tell your MP that large foreign competitors should not get special treatment at the expense of Canadian jobs and that this will have a negative impact on people in rural Canada by limiting wireless coverage, and that we know from experience that service levels to small communities are effected when unfair competition is allowed.

I encourage everyone to keep abreast of Union news by visiting www.twu-stt.ca and attending local meetings in your area. Please contact your local Shop Steward or Union representative should you have any questions.

In Solidarity,

Lee Riggs,
TWU National President

Retired TWU National President George Doubt

After 40 years working as a Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) member, National TWU President, Brother George Doubt, announced that he was retiring. Reminiscing about his past with the Union and sharing his hopes for the future, Brother Doubt sat down for a final interview with the Transmitter before he officially retired on June 14, 2013.

Born in Trail, B.C., and raised in Kamloops, B.C., Brother Doubt recalls how his mother, a kindergarten teacher, was very active in the Kamloops Teachers Association. Both his parents were union members (his father was a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers) who proudly instilled democratic values in their four children. After being laid off from the plywood mill, calling it “the best thing that ever happened to me”, Brother Doubt got wind of a job posting at B.C. Tel for a linesman position. He applied and, to his delight, was hired in Kamloops on April 9, 1973, where he began the challenging “90-day wonder” (the name the intensive linesman training was called). A couple of years later, he was asked by local Union activists to become a Shop Steward. “The on-the-job training as a steward forced me to learn by the seat of my pants, but I truly enjoyed my interactions and helping people solve their problems,” Brother Doubt recalled.

Brother Doubt built an impressive résumé working for many years as a successful advocate for union members from a number of divisions and from a diverse employer background. He was first elected as a Business Agent for the B.C. Interior, becoming a member of the Executive Council, in 1997 and was re-elected to that position several times. Over the years, he serviced a total of 12 TWU locals and served on numerous committees, including the most recent TWU Bargaining Committee during the last round of negotiations with Telus. Countless hours were spent as a Trustee of the Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan (TWPP) and member of the Concert Properties Board of Directors and Executive Committee since 2007. Brother Doubt served as a member of the Executive Council of the B.C. Federation of Labour since 2007 and was elected as a Vice President of the Canadian Labour Congress the following year during the 2008 CLC Convention. His breadth of knowledge and experience with labour-related issues will be sorely missed and undoubtedly called upon by his sisters and brothers in the Union.

After six years as the TWU National President, his advice to the new President is simple, “Don’t get wrapped up in the negativity. Once you get into a position where you can make decisions, you’re inevitably going to make someone unhappy. Get used to that because it’s not an excuse not to make decisions.”

Brother Doubt acknowledged that there are a lot of people that he has looked up to over the years and is grateful for their help and words of ad-



vice. He recounted the story of a TWU sister who called the Union office from time to time, leaving words of encouragement on his work voice mail. He said, “It was very inspiring and

“I am proud to have been part of the union movement in general because it played and continues to play a pivotal role in the creation and maintenance of a fair society where workers are treated with respect and dignity.”

refreshing to hear those positive messages and I am grateful to many people who have helped me during my time with the TWU.” He continued, “I am proud to have been part of the union movement in general because it played and continues to play a pivotal role in the creation and maintenance of a fair society where workers are treated with respect and dignity.”

When asked about his plans for retirement and the changes that lie ahead, Brother Doubt shared that he has been through a lot of changes in his life and is ready for this one too. He also shared his delight at the thought of spending more quality time with his lovely wife Lesley, family and grandchildren. He said, “Every activist has to make personal sacrifices and I am deeply appreciative of the love from my family who have always supported my Union work.”

The TWU sincerely thanks Brother Doubt for his years of unwavering commitment to the trade union movement and for the countless members that he has helped throughout the years. Enjoy your retirement.

The best is yet to come!

THE MERGER SELECTION PROCESS

How did we get here?



Members have asked, “Why are we voting again regarding merger with the United Steelworkers (USW)?”

In November 2012, the National Executive Council (NEC) proposed entering into merger discussions with the United Steelworkers (USW). Al-

“Why are we voting again regarding merger with the United Steelworkers (USW)?”

though there was no requirement under the TWU-STT Constitution to do so, a mandate was sought from the membership to open those discussions. The NEC set out criteria for the referendum vote, including timelines and threshold. The threshold for the vote to pass was set at 66 2/3%.

During the period leading up to the vote count there were presentations and debates at local meetings about the pros and cons of the issue. Many members expressed the view that there had been no discussions with the NEC prior to the November motion coming to the NEC for approval and that the issue should have first been debated at Convention. As well, members expressed concern that the USW had been chosen without comparing them with other unions to ensure the USW was our best option. The members ultimately voted 65.1% in favour of going ahead with merger discussions.

Given the high majority of members voting in favour of merger discussions with another union and taking into account the feedback on the issue during the referendum, the NEC held a strategy session to determine what, if anything, the next steps would be for the TWU. After dis-

cussion and debate at the strategy session, the NEC held a meeting on March 21, 2013 and debated and passed the following motion:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the TWU-STT President establish a Merger Selection Committee to be made up of two members of the Constitution Committee, the Chair of the Finance Committee and Chair of Convention, and up to three members of the National Executive Council; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Merger Selection Committee develop a questionnaire to be submitted to no fewer than three unions with specific questions dealing with but not limited to dues, governance, organizing, membership education and bargaining strategies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Merger Selection Committee will review the responses from each union and will provide the NEC with one choice to engage in merger discussions, along with why that union was selected; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Executive Council bring a recom-

mentation to the May 2013 TWU-STT Convention to start merger talks with the selected union, with the involvement of the Trustees of the TWBP and TWPP; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that, should Convention decide to proceed with merger talks, that the targeted date to present a tentative merger agreement with the selected union to the TWU-STT membership for a referendum vote under Article XXI of the TWU-STT Constitution be no later than October 30, 2013.

On March 25, the following members were appointed to the Merger Selection Committee by President Doubt with the approval of the National Executive Council: Vice President Betty Carrasco, Business Agent Hans-Woosly Balan, Business Agent Dave DiMaria, Chairperson of the Constitution Committee, Bruce Kennedy, and Constitution Committee member Steve Lewis. As mandated by the motion the Chairperson of Convention Dave Michie and Chairperson of the Finance Committee Brenda Forward agreed to serve on the committee.

The committee met and created a 68-question questionnaire that would serve as the basis to determine which unions would make a short list of three unions who would be invited to make a presentation and answer additional questions. It should be mentioned that each committee member felt honoured and privileged to be a part of this process, and engaged in the task with an open mind and with no preconceived positions or biases.

The committee chose to send the questionnaire to eight unions;

- The National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW)
- The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP)
- The Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE)
- The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
- Teamsters Canada (TC)
- The United Food & Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
- The United Steelworkers (USW)

While the Committee waited to receive responses, we spent the intervening period studying each Unions Constitution, and researching other available information such as websites and other material.

Seven of the eight unions chose to complete the questionnaire and the CAW and CEP sent in a joint submission as they were in the process of merger into a new entity with the interim name of New Union Project.

The committee had a difficult time choosing three unions to short list as we were impressed by all of the submissions. Ultimately we chose to narrow the list to four. We invited the UFCW, CUPE, USW and the New Union Project to the TWU's office in Burnaby, B.C. All four unions sent multiple representatives to meet with the committee.

Each union was provided four hours to make a presentation. None needed that long; however the hours were filled by the extensive question and answer period that followed each presentation. Every presentation was well done and informative making the decision-making process challenging. In the end,

the committee members unanimously agreed that the USW would be the best fit to serve the needs of our membership.

As mandated, the committee made its recommendation to the NEC along with the reasons for the choice. The committee's reasons amounted to 20 points that we felt, on the whole, that placed the Steelworkers on top. Briefly, we were impressed by their membership and leadership education and development, the resources and assistance that will help TWU members with bargaining collective agreements, access to a strike and defence fund of over \$250 million, the organizing resources that will be available as well as support programs for both young workers and retirees. For a more detailed description, see the Merger Selection Committee report at www.twu-stt.ca/sites/default/files/MergerSelectionReportEn.pdf

The written recommendation and reasons were presented to, and endorsed by, the National Executive Council at a special meeting on May 5. On May 7, after a vigorous debate of approximately four hours, a motion was passed by Convention delegates to start merger agreement discussions with the USW. Convention is made up of representatives from all 50 locals across the country within the TWU.

After a tentative merger agreement is reached with the USW, the agreement document will be available to the entire TWU membership for a referendum vote by the end of October. That vote will require 66 2/3% majority of the ballots cast to take effect.

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MAY 9, 2013: LETTER FROM UNITED STEELWORKERS

Delegates Attending the 2013 Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU-STT) Convention

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

On behalf of all members of our union across Canada, we want to tell you that our union is honoured by the vote of delegates to support the start of merger talks between our two proud unions.

We are optimistic about the future and we are excited about what we can build together. A merger between our unions will communicate a positive vision for the future of the labour movement: outward-looking, global and focused on concrete action to improve the lives of members and their families.

Together we can build an effective merger that is focused on a positive future for bargaining, education, organizing, legislative/political action and membership services. When that merger is brought to the TWU-STT membership for ratification, we have every confidence that

“We are optimistic about the future and we are excited about what we can build together.”

it will attract thousands and thousands of TWU-STT members to cast their votes. That strong level of membership engagement will provide a springboard for further mobilization around bargaining in 2015 and beyond. In our view, this is not a merger for the sake of just getting bigger, this is a merger for the sake of getting better.

Our track record is proven in mergers that have brought our union in entirely new sectors. Those new sectors in our union have then grown and made real gains for members, even during tough economic conditions. And those mergers have also transformed our union into something better each time.



TWU President (retired) George Doubt, USW International President Leo Gerard, TWU Vice-President Betty Carrasco, USW National Director for Canada Ken Neumann.

Blending the TWU-STT’s inherent telecom sector experience and membership activism with the USW’s extensive labour movement capacity, unique global reach and significant resources will be a powerful combination.

Together, we can achieve the membership engagement, deliver the education and training, and strategically implement the bargaining, organizing and legislative plans that will make our merged Union the leader in representing workers in the telecommunication sector in Canada and in growing that membership even further. Through our extensive international network of allies and resources, our merged Union can become a global leader in the sector.

We hope that a merger agreement between our unions can include strong, mutual commitments in bargaining, education, organizing and legislative & political action. An effective merger agreement should also set out a plan for the best possible alignment of our mutual resources to benefit the combined membership.

The Steelworkers and the TWU-STT have enjoyed a strategic alliance since 2010, and we have worked very closely together over the last five months. In short, we have come to know each other quite well.

Now, as partners in the development of a merger agreement, we can deepen our common understandings and look to the future with confidence.

Let’s move forward together.

In Solidarity,

LEO W. GERARD,
International President

KEN NEUMANN,
National Director for Canada



TWU Elects New President

Delegates at the 2013 TWU Convention in Calgary, Alberta elected a new National President, Lee Riggs, a native of Kelowna, B.C. Lee replaces Brother George Doubt, who retired as of June 14, 2013 after serving as National President for the past six years.

Lee, who had been serving the TWU as Business Agent since 2006 said, “I am humbled and so proud to have been elected to serve the TWU membership. The telecommunications industry is growing in Canada and we, as Canadians, have a responsibility to ensure that workers are well represented, whether we are dealing with individual rights, health and safety issues or keeping good jobs in Canada.”

Lee was hired in 1981 at the age of 19 to work for BC Tel (later to become Telus), working in Operator Services before moving on to Clerical and finally into Installation and Repair as a ladder truck operator. Lee has been a labour activist his entire career and has held many positions within the TWU. He has been involved with Workers Compensation Board advocacy, health and safety, Collective Agreement negotiations for a number of TWU certifications, including Telus, and labour relations related matters. Lee is also a trustee of the Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan, serves on the Board of Directors of Concert Properties and is a member of ACM Advisors Investment Committee, a mortgage Investment Company, and as a Director on the board of Castle One Investments.

“I’ve hit the ground running,” Lee said of his new position. “The Union has a lot on its plate as the reigns have been handed over, not

the least of which are the merger talks with the Steelworkers,” he said referring to the mandate given to the TWU by Convention to enter negotiations for a merger agreement with the USW.

He also views the fast-changing telecom

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landscape as a significant challenge that faces the TWU membership.

“There’s a lot at stake,” he said of the news that U.S. giant Verizon is looking north for expansion. “Our members’ job security will be under additional stress if that happens. The resources that the United Steelworkers can bring to bear will be of great value. Their research and strategic campaigns departments, as well as their lobbyist office in Ottawa will be put to the test as we move towards another round of bargaining with Telus in 2015.”



2013 National Executive Council: Back two rows from left: Ron Palmer, Joe Benn, Nathan Beausoleil, Isabelle Miller, Jennifer Bucholtz, Ivana Niblett, Perry Pasqualetto, Colin Brehaut, Liz Fletcher, Paolo Rehel, Harmony Jackson, Hans-Woosly Balan, John Hockley, Michael Thompson. Front row: Juanita West, Betty Carrasco, Tamara Marshall, Lee Riggs, Tricia Watt, Dave DiMaria, Robin Arndt.

New National Executive Council Officers Elected at 2013 TWU Convention

IVANA NIBLETT – VICE-PRESIDENT, ALBERTA:



Ivana has been a full-time officer of the TWU since 2006 when she was first elected as a Business Agent. She held that position for seven years until she was elected to serve as Vice-President at this May's Convention.

Among other endeavours, Ivana has been heavily involved in union education having served as the TWU's Education officer, Alberta Federation of Labour Education Committee chairperson, Canadian Labour Congress Education Committee member, as well as sitting on the Board of Directors of the Aspen Foundation (Labour Education for K-12). As Vice-President, Ivana's major responsibility will be to oversee the arbitration process for Alberta, Ontario and Quebec.

NATHAN BEAUSOLEIL – BUSINESS AGENT, CALGARY:

Nathan is a newly elected Business Agent. Prior to being elected, Nathan worked in Calgary for Telus in Channel Live Order Support with Wireline. Over the past few years,

Nathan has been busy as a TWU activist holding various elected positions in his local, including President, Vice-President, Councillor / Delegate and worked as a Respectful Workplace Facilitator. His current assignments include servicing locals 203, 205 and 209, Youth Committees for both the TWU and Alberta Federation of Labour. Nathan has a particular interest in union member engagement.



JENNIFER BUCHOLTZ – BUSINESS AGENT, BURNABY:



Jennifer was a Telus employee for 19 years and had been working for Telus Mobility before her election as Business Agent. She was a member of the 2010 / 2011 TWU Bargaining Committee and was a Telecommunication Workers Benefit Plan trustee, a position she con-

tinues to hold. Jennifer is a long-time TWU activist and held the position of Secretary-Treasurer for her local for nine years. Her current duties include servicing locals 2, 3, and 51 as well as assisting with Shaw local 60. She is also on the Canadian Labour Congress Education Committee.

HARMONY JACKSON – BUSINESS AGENT, CALGARY:

Harmony's union activism started early in her career at Telus, becoming a Shop Steward and Councillor/Delegate the same year she was hired. By the time of her election as a Business Agent, she had been



local President for five years and had been elected as an Alternate Business Agent in 2008. She served on many committees such as Education, Solidarity, Membership Outreach and the local Health and Safety Committee. Harmony's current assignments include servicing locals 201, 202, 204 and assisting with local 213. She is also on the Alberta Federation of Labour Women's Committee.

RON PALMER – BUSINESS AGENT, EDMONTON:

Ron has been active on many fronts prior to his election as Business Agent. He's been a local President and Vice-President as well as a Councillor/Delegate for more than 7 years. Ron was heavily involved with the many Employment Insurance Commission hearings and appeals process that came about from the 2005 labour dispute with Telus. Prior to his employment with Telus, he held elected positions in the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Ron currently services locals 206, 208 and assists with local 214. He is also a Health and Safety officer for Alberta and sits on the Alberta Federation of Labour Health and Safety Committee.



Discussion about union security and the Rand formula campaigns for change module

CAW Young Workers Forum

May 4, 2013 (Updated May 8, 2013)

Angelo DiCaro, National Representative at the Canadian Autoworkers (CAW), asked Brynne Sinclair-Waters, Researcher at the Ontario Federation of Labour, a few questions to give delegates at the CAW Young Workers Forum an idea of what the upcoming national campaign to protect the Rand Formula and Union Security is all about.

GRIEVANCE WIN: UNPAID MEDICAL EXAMINATION

The Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) is pleased to announce that an individual grievance regarding an unpaid medical examination has been won.

Telus contravened the collective agreement in October 2011 when the company denied an employee time off with pay per Article A18.06 to obtain a Practitioner's Assessment Form (PAF) from a specialist so that Telus Health Services could assess a medical accommodation.

On February 26, 2013, Telus withdrew its opposition to this grievance and stated the following:

- *Telus will compensate the Grievor for the monies claimed with interest for the time that was grieved.*

By withdrawing from the grievance as Telus did, the arbitration was resolved in the Union's favour on a with prejudice basis and is binding on Telus in all future unpaid medical examination cases to assess a medical accommodation.

In light of this, employees are encouraged to continue filing grievances if they are denied time off with pay per Article A18.06 to obtain a Practitioner's Assessment Form (PAF) so that Telus Health Services can assess a medical accommodation. Please contact your Shop Steward or Union Representative should you have any further questions. Read the full decision letter.

In Solidarity,

The Telecommunications Workers Union

Link: <http://bit.ly/11UTTMH>



ANGELO DICARO: Conservative, right-wing politicians across the country have proposed measures that would try to rip the heart out of the union movement. Can you tell us a bit more about this?

BRYNNE SINCLAIR-WATERS: Yes, that's right. Tim Hudak's Progressive Conservatives in Ontario and Stephen Harper's Conservative at the federal level have indicated that they are considering

implementing laws that would threaten union security and repeal the Rand Formula. Before I get to talking about what that means, I want to say that this issue is about what kind of society we want to live in. Do we want to live in a society that is fair and equal or increasingly unequal? One where we have the right to collective action or where individual choice is prioritized over democratic and collective decision-making? This is what the attack on unions in this country is all about.

That said, let's dive into the details a bit. So, what is union security? Union security is a set of rules that ensures that unions remain financially viable and can continue to represent workers. They do this by either requiring that (a) workers in the bargaining unit become union members or (b) workers pay union dues.

The Rand Formula is at the heart of union security in Canada. The Rand Formula originates from a Supreme Court decision made by Justice Ivan Rand in 1946 that ended the CAW Ford Strike of 1945 in Windsor. Basically, the Rand Formula requires all workers in a unionized workplace to pay union dues. Unions have a legal responsibility to negotiate on behalf of everyone in the bargaining unit (also known as the "duty of fair representation"). So, since everyone in the bargaining unit benefits from the collective agreement, the Rand Formula is based on the principle that it is fair and reasonable to require that everyone pay dues.

The Rand Formula and union security are important for many reasons. First, as I just explained, it promotes fairness by ensuring that everyone who benefits from the collective agreement pays dues. This means that no one can become a "free-rider" and benefit without paying. Second, it promotes labour relations stability by avoiding strikes over the issue of mandatory dues payment. Third, it protects workers' right to union representation and collective bargaining by ensuring that if workers in a workplace democratically decide that they want to be unionized that their union will have the financial resources necessary to represent them adequately. Fourth, it ensures that unions have the resources they need to remain a progressive force in society and unions continue to promote social justice. This function is arguably more important today than ever before because our society is becoming more unequal and power and wealth is increasingly concentrated among a handful of corporations and a wealthy elite.

"Limiting union's ability to spend union dues on political action is really about silencing the voice of working people."

ANGELO DICARO: Some of the politicians advocating for these types of measures argue that unions should not be funding political causes and that they should focus on issues that pertain directly to collective bargaining. What do you have to say about that?

BRYNNE SINCLAIR-WATERS: Well, we know that unions' ability to negotiate collective agreements is inextricably linked to the broader political context. They cannot be separated.

Limiting unions' ability to spend union dues on political action is really about silencing the voice of working people and silencing opposition to conservative policies in Canada. Again, this is about what kind of society we want to live in. One where working people have a voice

and one where political and economic power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few corporations and a wealthy elite?

ANGELO DICARO: Do you have a statistic that would "wow" the audience?

BRYNNE SINCLAIR-WATERS: I'm not sure if I have a "wow" statistic, but I have a "wow" fact. Wait, I think I have both. My "wow" fact first: Here in Canada politicians are claiming that unions are outdated and are calling these proposed laws modernizing. The reality is that these laws originate from the segregationist and racist American South of the 30s and 40s. We know that in the United States, where these types of laws have been adopted it has led to lower wages and fewer benefits for workers and weaker unions. These are far from modernizing laws. These are tired, old policies that have had a devastating impact across the United States for decades.

And, my "wow" stat: In American states where these types of laws have been passed workers are 60 percent less likely to belong to a union.

ANGELO DICARO: Thank you, Brynne.

The 2013 convention was held from May 6 to 10 in Calgary, Alberta. It was attended by 112 delegates representing 50 Locals from across Canada, the National Executive Council, staff, guests from various unions and visitors.

Highlights of the 2013 TWU Policy Convention



THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL reported on some of the activities that were undertaken over the previous year. Topics included Employment Equity, which in itself covers a diverse range of topics including; flexibility of shift work, Aboriginal outreach, respectful workplace, diversity and return to work programs.

Other topics covered were reports from the Plant, Clerical and Operator Services steering committees. Sadly, 2012 marked the end of more than 100 years of history for Retail Operator Services. This division was closed down as a result of the most recent Telus collective agreement. The Operator Services Steering committee discussed and dealt with the many transitional issues affecting Retail Operators.

Grievances and arbitrations stats were reported for 2012, with the following numbers of grievances reaching 3rd step and requiring intervention by the Union's offices across Canada; Quebec – 95 grievances with 28 going to arbitration, Ontario – 70 grievances with 15 approved for arbitration, Alberta had 91 grievances filed with 25 approved to go to arbitration and British Columbia had 123 grievances with 52 approved arbitrations. As of December 31, 2012 the TWU had 173 active grievances.

The merger selection process was reported to delegates and was widely debated. The selection process described how eight unions were approached and vetted as possible merger partners. Ultimately the United Steelworkers (USW) was chosen from the high quality group of possible choices. The Merger Selection Committee's entire report is available on the TWU's website at www.twu-stt.ca.

On the question of merger, the convention delegates spent about four hours debating a resolution brought by the National Executive Council on merging with the USW. The resolution passed by a wide margin, setting in motion the negotiations currently underway.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE presented a balanced budget for the Union's operation for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The \$8 million budget covers the multitude of expenditures for operating the TWU on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the membership, including grievance and arbitration handling, education, local union expenses, health and safety, human rights, officer and staff wages, office space, etc.

There were a number of recommendations made by the Finance Committee. The main one affecting the operation of the TWU is a dues reallocation. The recommendation is to change the amount of current dues being allocated to the administration account and how much is being earmarked for the Benevolent Society. Among other things, the Benevolent Society administers the strike fund. If this reallocation is passed by the membership during a vote this fall the dues paid by members will not change, but the money used for the administration of the Union will increase allowing the TWU to provide better services and programs to the members.

THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE dealt with over 100 resolutions sent in by locals across the country suggesting changes and additions to the TWU Constitution and poli-



cies. Some were housekeeping changes and many of the resolutions weren't passed by Convention. Several constitutional amendments did pass and will be brought out for a membership vote at local meetings in September. One of the suggested amendments, that would allow for electronic balloting for referendum votes, will make membership-wide voting much easier and more accessible.

THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE reported on the progress of membership training. Much needed activist training took place in all provinces (QC, ON, AB and BC). All training was positively received and more training facilitators were added to the roster. The Education budget was funded again this year and the committee will be scheduling more courses. Check the TWU website for updates to the schedule to see when courses will be available for your area. Courses will also be announced at local meetings.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE played a series of thought-provoking videos on what the term Human Rights means as well as videos on the evolution of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The committee is also working on an initiative called Project Respect that would see the TWU with a separate process / policy addressing issues of a respectful work place nature. The goal of the policy is to address issues that fall outside of the prohibitive grounds. The policy is still in development stages and the committee has agreed to seek a legal opinion on the wording of such a process or policy.

THE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE gave a detailed report on political issues facing federally regulated employees, such as those that work at Telus and Shaw. From legislation intended to make the finances of unions more “transparent” to the general public through Bill C-377 to back-to-work legislation to removing eligibility for workers to get access to certain Employment Insurance provisions, the attacks on working people have increased dramatically now that the Conservatives have been able to achieve their long-sought majority in the House of Commons.



Following in the footsteps of increased reporting requirements for unions, Conservative MPs have been publicly speaking out about the need for additional legislation that could severely constrain Union finances. The idea behind this legislation has been compared to right-to-work legislation adopted by about 24 U.S. states that would severely alter the Rand formula.

The Rand formula goes back to 1946 when Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand introduced the formula as part of an arbitration decision to end a United Auto Workers strike. Under the formula, workers do not have to join a union, but everyone must pay dues for the union's services and benefits because even non-members enjoy the benefits that the union has won. The formula has been embedded in Canada's labour movement for more than 65 years and has even withstood constitutional challenges.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE updated Convention delegates on issues that have affected members in Shaw and Telus

workplaces. More than a dozen topics were covered, ranging from A2-A3 Power to Right to Participate in Hazardous Occurrence Investigation to Workplace Violence Prevention. It was stressed that members must not become complacent when it comes to their health or their safety in the workplace. It's a shame, but members are continuing to be hurt on the job and members are continuing to put their health at risk when there is simply no need for it.

For the benefit of BC members, the **TELECOMMUNICATION WORKERS PENSION PLAN** reported on the health of the TWPP. On a total plan basis (which includes both benefits earned to date plus future benefits), the Plan's position has decreased from a surplus of \$189 million at January 1, 2011 (105% funded) to a surplus of \$25 million at January 1, 2012 (101% funded).

The Plan actuary confirmed that the Plan is solvent as at January 1, 2012. The contributions for 2012 were less than the cost of accruing benefits; however the surplus assets of \$669 million are more than sufficient to cover this shortfall.

As for the TWPP's investment initiatives, there has been no change to the overall asset liability matching principle adopted by the Trustees. After a review of the asset/liability study using the January 1, 2012 actuarial valuation results, the Trustees have decided, based on a recommendation from the Plan's advisors, that the duration of the fixed income portfolio be lengthened by one year. This change took into consideration the funding excess for current Plan benefits, the objective to continue to deliver benefits in accordance with the Target Plan and recognition that the Plan's demographics are maturing and active membership reducing.

The Trustees continue to look at alternative investments as part of an overall investment strategy designed to generate added return to the Plan over the yield attainable on the underlying bond portfolio.

The good news is the plan continues to be fully funded and the Trustees continue to approve retirements for those that retire prior to age 65.

2013 TWU-STT Election Results



- **PRESIDENT**
(1) – 3 years
Lee Riggs
- **VICE-PRESIDENT – ALBERTA**
(1) – 2 year remainder of term
Ivana Niblett
- **BUSINESS AGENT – CALGARY**
(1) – 3 years
Nathan Beausoleil

- **BUSINESS AGENT – CALGARY**
(1) – 2 year remainder of term
Harmony Jackson
- **BUSINESS AGENT – BURNABY**
(2) – 3 years
Jennifer Bucholtz
Tamara Marshall
- **BUSINESS AGENT – MONTREAL**
(1) – 3 years
Hans Woosly-Balan – acclaimed
- **BUSINESS AGENT – EDMONTON**
(1) – 1 year remainder of term
Ron Palmer
- **BUSINESS AGENT – KELOWNA**
(1) – 1 year remainder of term
Colin Brehaut

- **ALTERNATE BUSINESS AGENT QUEBEC (3) – 3 years**
Maxime Deveau – acclaimed
Pierre-Richard Joseph – acclaimed
Nicolas Lavoie – acclaimed
- **ALTERNATE BUSINESS AGENT – QUEBEC**
(1) – 1 year remainder of term
Olivier Picard – acclaimed
- **ALTERNATE BUSINESS AGENT ONTARIO (3) – 3 years**
Michael Bertumen – acclaimed
Brenda Forward – acclaimed
Leighann Neal – acclaimed
- **ALTERNATE BUSINESS AGENT ALBERTA (4) – 3 years**
Bonnie Devine
Karen Hannah-Masse
Paul Hutchinson
Greg Kadey
- **ALTERNATE BUSINESS AGENT BC (4) – 3 years**
Czar Loquia
Michael Lucas
Karen Phillips
Chris Stephens
- **ALTERNATE BUSINESS AGENT BC (1) – 1 year remainder of term**
Roy Driver – acclaimed

- **CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE**
(3) – 2 years
Denise Chisholm
Bruce Kennedy
Michael Lucas
Kelly Thompson – 1st Alternate
Nicolas Lavoie – 2nd Alternate

- **FINANCE COMMITTEE**
(3) – 2 years
Steve McWhirter
Michael Phillips
Lori Travis

Grant Beattie – 1st Alternate
Olivier Picard – 2nd Alternate

- **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**
(3) – 2 years
Karen Phillips
Chris Stephens
Brian Turner
Rita Kellow-Taylor – 1st Alternate
Maxime Deveau – 2nd Alternate

- **PENSION TRUSTEE**
(1) – 2 year remainder of term
Colin Brehaut



"I am doing this Head Shave for my Dad. He has had two battles with prostate cancer over the years and at this time is in remission. I know that prostate cancer is one of the highest killers for men, and with new research and treatments, the chances of surviving and living a long life have greatly improved since the first time my Dad was diagnosed."

TWU Member Shaves Head for Charity

Congratulations to Dave Michie, 2013 TWU Convention Chair from local 214 for reaching his \$2,000 fundraising goal. Brother Michie is raising money for the Alberta Cancer Foundation. The funds will be used to help attract and retain top researchers and clinicians and provide them with the resources they need to develop better cancer prevention, detection and treatment. As promised, Brother

Michie reached his \$2,000 goal during the May 2013 TWU Convention in Calgary, Alberta, where, with the help of his TWU Sisters and Brothers, his head was shaved during the social hosted by Concert Properties. If you would like to donate, please go to Brother Michie's personal page on the Foundation website at www.albertacancer.ca/michie. To date, Brother Michie has raised over \$2,600.





Pierre-Richard Joseph, Isabelle Miller and Hans-Woosly Balan.

CBTU International Convention Highlights

The following article is based on a report that was submitted to the TWU National Executive Council by Isabelle Miller, BA – Quebec and Maritimes.

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) 42nd International Convention took place from Wednesday, May 22 to Sunday, May 27, 2013 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

Approximately 700 voting delegates and retirees were in attendance, representing over 56 chapters from 10 regions. The Canadian Chapter, as part of Region 1 had over 35 delegates with Business Agents Isabelle Miller and Hans-Woosly Balan and local 602 President Pierre-Richard Joseph all hailing from the TWU.

The convention telecast live on the Internet to a worldwide audience, and several videos of the convention are available for viewing at <https://instance.clickstreamtv.net/cst/12665268>.

Chapter nominees were selected for International Committees, and Sister Miller was selected as the Canadian representative to both the International Resolutions Committee and Constitution Committee.

Of the 22 final resolutions presented to the Convention, five originated from Canada, covering topics such as violence against women, Aboriginal women, Canada Post banking, Bill C-377, youth unemployment, youth of colour, and gun violence.

Brother Balan resumed his role as a fundraising organizer for the Chapter's Promotional Items Table with the assistance of Brother Joseph throughout the convention. With the help of other Canadian delegates, they successfully raised over \$1600 for the Chapter.

The Convention was called to order on May 23rd, with greetings and

remarks from representatives of the hosting city, including Mike Williams, President of the Florida AFL-CIO.

Sister Miller provided the introduction for the International Executive Council. New York AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Terry Melvin made his first report as CBTU International President, setting the tone for

“The coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) 42nd International Convention took place in Lake Buena Vista, Florida”

a very charged convention program. The delegates were treated to several town hall meetings and workshops throughout the convention, which often led to convention hours of 9 to 11 hour days. The first was on the topic of “Wealth in Our Community or Its Absence”. The session focused on the disparity of wealth between people of colour and Caucasians, as well as an explanation of the institutional practices and public policies which foster this ever-widening gap including statistical evidence and two detailed Powerpoint presentations.

A second town hall topic was “Immigration – Citizens without Rights”. Guest panellists included Maria Elena Durazo, executive secretary-treasurer of LA County ALF, who enlightened delegates on the impact of immigration legislation reform and labels such as “illegal alien” on the individual who leaves their country to make a better life for themselves.

Other topics for plenary sessions, town halls and workshops included: voting rights and reform, the impact of globalization of corporations and economies on the labour movement, “Improving the Health, Wealth, and Well-Being for Men of Color”, Right to Work, and the gut-wrenching account of “A Lynching in Hudson NY” which took place in recent years, allegedly at the hands of police officers in the area.

May 24th began with Regional Caucus meetings at 7:30 a.m. where resolutions, events, and conferences of the region were discussed before making their way to the floor. The new Region 1, Director Sharon Lovelady-Hall, led our caucus meeting and thanked sister Miller and her husband Liam Joseph for creating the convention logo. Friday and Saturday, while convention was in session between workshop and town hall sessions, the delegation reviewed the resolutions, the retiree report, and a C.A.R.A.T. team report and presentation on the appalling conditions and health and safety atrocities faced by poultry farm workers.

Sister Miller attended the Women’s Luncheon with keynote speakers Yvette Register, entrepreneur and breast cancer survivor, and Yvette Turner, Ph.D., author of “The Grievance: One Woman’s Ordeal with Sexual Harassment, Humiliation, Hypocrisy, and Hurt”. Both women spoke passionately about the ordeals they had both been through and how they came out stronger and empowered in the end.

On May 25th the crowd was addressed by Larry Rousseau, Ontario Regional EVP of PSAC on topic of migrant workers and immigration from the Canadian Perspective. Rousseau’s presentation and speech was riveting, and he also surprised the crowd by taking the opportunity to formally announce his candidacy for public office running as an NDP candidate in the district of Bourassa – Montreal in Quebec.

Sunday morning was the worship service. In the afternoon were Women and Men’s Committee meetings. In the evening was the awards banquet with keynote speaker CBTU President Emeritus Dr. William “Bill” Lucy, ending off a fantastically productive convention.



NEW COMMITTEE TO RAISE AWARENESS ON DIVERSITY ISSUES

The National Executive Council has created a new committee that will promote appreciation of the cultural diversity that exists within the TWU membership.

The TWU Diversity Committee will work to promote an overall celebration, understanding, appreciation, awareness and respect of cultural diversity. The committee will be responsible for gathering and disseminating information about cultural issues facing our members, and develop strategies to enable the union to take a proactive stance in advancing the interests of the membership and the labour movement.

The committee will also take a lead in raising awareness of these issues through action plans and communications to provide support and to promote solidarity throughout the trade union network. The committee will be responsible for highlighting the contributions made to the labour movement by labour coalitions and various cultural groups, as well as highlight how the labour movement has impacted these cultural groups. This committee will help facilitate local involvement, and encourage membership participation and activism on a continual basis.

At the time of writing, Business Agent Tricia Watt is the first person to be appointed to the committee, but more members are expected to join the committee after a committee posting is added to the TWU’s website. If you’re interested in serving on this, or any other committee, check for vacancies on our website at: <http://www.twu-stt.ca/en/committee-postings>



The TWU AFL delegates were Ken Nielson – Local 201, Robb Woodring – Local 202, Paul Hutchinson – Local 203, Greg Kadey – Local 204, Shane Matchullis – Local 205, Tony Lebel – Local 208, Arjay Plain – Local 209, Ken McPherson – Local 210, Nathan Beausoleil and Kim Woodroffe – Local 213, Ed Strauss – Local 214, Business Agents Joe Benn, Betty Lockhurst, Ivana Niblett, Juanita West, Secretary-Treasurer Michael Thompson and President George Doubt.

Alberta Federation of Labour Convention

Submitted by Business Agent Juanita West

The 48th AFL Policy Convention was held April 25 to April 28, 2013 in Edmonton Alberta. The 370 delegates in attendance represented 29 affiliated unions. The theme this year was “Unions Stand on Guard for Thee”. Unions in Alberta need to stand side by side and guard and protect the rights of workers. The policies and resolutions passed at con-

vention tackled a diverse range of subjects which will help guide the AFL in defending workers and their families.

On April 27 TWU delegates along with a couple of hundred rambunctious Alberta union members invaded and occupied the hearing room at the Labour Board’s downtown headquarters in Edmonton, chanting their support for the guards who participated in a Wildcat Strike who were standing up for worker H&S rights and the right to refuse unsafe working conditions. Nurses (UNA), Paramedics and Health Care (HSAA) and various UFCW workers also refused to cross the picket line. TWU delegates then went to the picket line to show support.



FIFTH ANNUAL TWU/TOAD ROCK MOTORCYCLE RALLY



The Fifth Annual TWU/Toad Rock Motorcycle Rally, which was originally scheduled for June but postponed due to severe weather, will take place in September. The rally is open to all current and retired TWU members. Camping and cabins are available for those who would like to take part, including non-riders. Be sure to check out Toad Rock’s website at www.toadrockcampground.com. For more information or to register, please call Keith Streng at 250-554-0668 or email kstreng123@hotmail.com.



Letters of Appreciation

Retirement: Carmen Cairns

Hello Perry,

I must let you know if you haven't already heard and please share this with the rest of Executive Council, I have already let Colin and the Poli-Action Committee know; I am retiring August 1st, after 37 years 3 months and 11 days.

I was inducted (by Shannon Csano shop steward – local 17 operator services) to the TWU brand of 'We are all equal in the work force' (management or bargaining unit – we are equal to each other) from my first day of paid on the job training. She not only taught me the work but also my rights as a member of the union. She left our department shortly after I started. Her confidence and guidance instilled pride and a 'We workers are equal to all levels of management' attitude that was needed and served me well for all my years at BC Tel – Telus!

My first grievance was almost exactly 37 years ago. I was put on a 30–60–90 for not taking a shift on a Sunday afternoon (July 30th 1976). I was a temp at the time and successfully handled my own grievance. I have seen this attitude flourish among our members and you should all be proud! I have enjoyed support from this union and most recently the Political Action Committee for the past several years.

I was first released to work on the 1996 BC provincial election (Neil Morrison was very proud and called me personally to say the BCNDP Provincial Office called directly to ask for me – he said that was the first time any member had been requested) then 1997 federal

by-elections ... many more federal elections and more provincial elections. I have proudly used vacation both provincially and federally, as our Constitution required, over the years to work on these campaigns. My constituency (Maple Ridge – Mission) and BCNDP PO were impressed with our union's and my strong conviction and commitment to the campaigns.

The TWU-STT should be proud of our work ethic and commitment to the working people of Canada. I hope this union continues to lead in 'Taking Action to Fight for the Working People'. The BC Federation of Labour campaign to increase the minimum wage in BC was very successful and demonstrated that unions care about all working people! We were praised and thanked for 'preserving jobs and getting a living wage' everywhere we leafleted!

This union's experience and fortitude is limitless. Whenever I mention my union, TWU-STT, the other unions know we have conviction, vigilance, experience and intelligent methods to bring to any battle we are presented with. The fight doesn't get any bigger than fighting a multi-national like Telus so it is no wonder that we are so good at fighting back. The Unemployment Clock, our own brand of Keep Jobs in Canada, and our willingness to lobby for workers rights and safety at all levels, is who and what our union is! Telus, the BC Liberals and Stephen Harper continue to keep us busy, trying to keep our hands tied and voices quiet – but we will always find a way to get our message out!

I wish to thank this union for the opportunity to proudly serve our members! I will support this union

(or whatever one we end up in) in all your efforts and happily offer my help (anytime – as I am retired). I also hope I can count on your support in future election(s) as I am not retiring from politics!

In Solidarity and with much gratitude,
Carmen Cairns – Formerly from Local 32

PS I think there will be a party September 7, in Abbotsford at the Elks. It has to be confirmed yet.

Retirement: Amanda Grant

Dear Colin and the Union Executive,

I would like to thank you for all the support I received during my 17 years with Telus. Also, thank you for the gift I received on my retirement. It was much appreciated.

Amanda Grant,
Formerly from Local 52

Retirement: Susan Prociuk

I just want to thank the Union for my retirement gift of \$1,000.00. Thank you too, for all the work the union has done, over my time spent working at Telus. I was grateful to be a member of the union.

Thanks Again.

Sincerely,
Susan Prociuk,
Formerly from Local 10

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Letters of Appreciation CONTINUED

Retirement: Margaret Bosco

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the TWU for the Honorary Lifetime Membership and I very much appreciate the \$900 generous retirement gift after 18 years with B.C. Tel and Telus.

Thanks also to all the dedicated men and women who work tirelessly for the Union members.

A special thanks to Grace Jones of member services for her assistance, in making the whole process very seamless.

Sincerely,
Margaret Bosco, Formerly from Local 51

Thank-you: Tere Leahy

I just wanted to tell you on April the 13th will be my 24th anniversary being a proud member of this Union. All the reps, pension office and more have helped me out all the time during these 24 yrs. I just wanted to say thank you.

Sincerely,
Tere Leahy, Local 7

Thank-you: Deanna Atwood

Dear TWU,
Thank you for the \$1,000. It is much appreciated.

Deanna Atwood
Formerly from Local 9

Looking for Former Nelson BC TWU Members

We are looking for contact information for former Nelson employees to arrange a reunion. If you or someone you know worked in the Nelson/Castlegar/Trail area, please forward the contact information to one of the following people:

- Pat Springman at pat.springman@telus.net or tel. 250-352-3339
- Cathy Broster Robinson at vette93@shaw.ca or tel. 250-825-3404
- Cathy Pereverseff at cathyprvrzff@gmail.com or tel. 250-693-5527

THE TRANSMITTER

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