

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

Yukon Employees' Union  
2285-2nd Ave.  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Y1A 1C9



# Yukon Employees' Union

## January 2018

# NEWS



## The City of Whitehorse Misses the Bus Conciliation Bargaining Begins for Locals Y023 & Y022

Whitehorse Transit's Bargaining Team filed for conciliation after three disappointing days of negotiations. The City of Whitehorse demanded serious economic concessions from its Transit employees and tabled a wage offer so substandard that it can only be described as insulting.

We came to the table in October 2017 hoping to resolve problems and make realistic improvements to our wages and working conditions. Although we made some progress, the concessions the Employer demands are so huge and the wage offer so offensive that by the end of the three-day session, we felt we had no option but to declare impasse.

As with our sister Local, Y023, the City of Whitehorse is seeking to remove severance pay for voluntary departures (resignation and retirement), with the result that the severance pay provision in Article 22 of our Collective Agreement would be limited to layoffs only.

We reminded the Employer that severance payments and long service bonuses are especially important to us as **we don't have an Employer pension plan**. Without a pension plan, taking more money out of our pockets makes retirement even more precarious. The Employer offered no rationale for this concession.

The City is also seeking to restrict the Long-Service Bonus in Article 21 of our Collective Agreement to those employees who already receive it. Any employee with less than five full years of service would never receive the bonus, equivalent to 2% of annual salary yearly.

At the bargaining table, the City's team noted that the primary impact of this demand would be on new employees who are not yet working in the Transit department. Why, the Employer asked, would we care?

The answer is obvious. We don't bargain just for ourselves, we bargain for future employees. We don't want the next

generation to be worse off than we are and we're not interested in creating first-class and second-class union members. That's not how we operate.

Finally, we are seeking a new Collective Agreement with a reasonable term and wage increases that keep pace with inflation.

The City of Whitehorse made an "offer of settlement" that includes a **six-year agreement** with a 1% lump sum payout on ratification and again on September 1, 2018. The Employer is further proposing increases of 1.25%, 1.25%, 1.5% and 1.5% in each of the four subsequent years of the agreement, with wage increases applied to Step 4 of the wage grid only.

Employees with less than four years of service would see no general economic increase applied to their wages at all for the life of the Collective Agreement – no increase in pay for at least six years.

We made it clear to the Employer that we have a duty of fair representation to ALL of our members and we will not be partners to their divide-and-conquer strategies.

By filing for conciliation, we are keeping our bargaining in lock-step with the rest of the City of Whitehorse employees in Local Y023, who will also be in conciliation the week of February 19, 2018. The City declared impasse at the Y023 table without even tabling a wage offer.

Please watch for future communications from us as we continue our fight. We will keep you posted on new developments as we move toward our conciliation dates. Local Y023 President Teresa Acheson has an article in this newsletter too; please read it and show City Workers your support.

John Mahoney, President  
YEU Local Y022, Whitehorse Transit

# Challenge Disability Resource Group & Career Industries

*Helping make meaningful change in the lives of adults with disabilities in our community*

The unassuming dark blue building at the corner of Strickland and Front Street offers few clues to the bustle of activity behind its doors. This is the home of Challenge Disability Resource Group and Career Industries, a thriving organization that's been helping people with disabilities become active and independent since 1976. If you think you know who they are and what they do, you might have to re-evaluate that belief.

With a staff of 96 people (you read that correctly), the non-profit offers a depth of programming that will likely surprise you. Challenge and Career Industries are comprised of twelve separate branches, each with a unique mandate. Together, they serve as resource centre, educator, job coach and cheerleader, providing Yukoners with valuable skills, employment, and a community of support and hope.



Employ Ability Skills Training is a 15 week program offered three times each year. Each intake gives trainees a broad range of skills to help them in a work environment. Students choose their area of interest and Challenge helps get them ready to join the workforce. Job Developers work with employers to pair each client with opportunities for mean-

ingful work, and Job Coaches offer support in learning new jobs.

Challenge Disability Resource Group operates five social enterprises. Each operates as a viable business in its own right while providing training and paid employment opportunities. Twisted Wood Works teaches carpentry skills, while Twisted Wood Works Retail sells the handiwork directly to the public from their shop on Strickland. Bridges Catering offers full service off-site catering out of its tiny commercial kitchen, and Bridges at The Ledge caters to government workers in the YG Main Administration building. The Core Box program supplies the mining sector, a successful partnership of more than three decades. The year-round commercial greenhouse located at Yukon College nurtures



the flowers needed to keep the Chamber of Commerce planter boxes overflowing with fragrant abundance each summer. Oh, and those flower boxes? They are made in the Twisted Wood Works shop.

Many Yukoners with disabilities will never access Challenge, but would benefit from employment assistance and disability support. To meet those needs, Challenge operates The Workforce Information and Networking Hub, known as "The Hub", created in partnership with the Advanced Education Branch of the YG Department of Education. Through their services, workers with disabilities can get help with an accommodation solution, to find a job or to access the education they need to compete in the job market.



The society also operates two residential homes, each staffed by highly trained professionals. The Takhini Haven facility creates a safe, permanent home for developmentally disabled adults. The Mental Health Treatment Program offers short term in-residence support and assistance for adults with mental health challenges, working toward full social integration and a return to independent living. Both facilities are operated through funding provided by Yukon Government's Department of Health & Social Services.

Challenge has clearly outgrown the squat blue building by the river. Executive Director and CEO Jillian Hardie proudly shared the group's vision for the next chapter - a new building large enough to accommodate their many programs.

With a design ready to go, the board and staff await YG's approval of a \$7 million funding request, about 40% of the total budget. Once approved, the project is ready to go ahead. After more than 30 years in their current location, Challenge is ready for some room to grow.



# NEWS

## From the President's Desk Steve Geick



Happy New Year to you all! Now that the holiday season is over it's back to business as usual. That being said the next time you drop into the building you will notice some changes around YEU. You will notice some physical changes to the building by way of a new office as we will be expanding our staff once again to meet the education needs of the members.

After a successful five years in the role, YEU Executive director Laura Hureau is leaving us to pursue a new venture outside of the territory. I would like to thank Laura for her commitment and contributions. She has assisted greatly in making YEU an organization to be reckoned with. Laura's replacement will be announced in the upcoming weeks.

This new year is shaping up to be one of the busiest and most challenging years that we have faced as an organization. We will be going into conciliation bargaining shortly with the City of Whitehorse, Whitehorse Transit and Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services. In all cases, these employers have demanded huge concessions from their workers which we will simply not entertain. The City Bargaining article in this newsletter provides more information - we will protect the rights our members have worked to earn. We are all committed to getting back to the bargaining table and with the help of an outside third party, we hope we can soon reach an acceptable deal.

Yukon Hospital Corporation is currently negotiating, while Air North and Northern Industrial Safety Network will begin bargaining very soon. Our first round of bargaining with Air North a few years ago did not go smoothly - we're hoping things go well this time.

The collective agreement between the union and our largest employer expires December 31, 2018. That means that we will begin negotiations with our largest employer, the Government of Yukon, this year. That process will start with a Call for Bargaining Input this spring. If you work for YG, you should start talking with your colleagues now about the changes you'd like to see in the next contract. The negotiator and bargaining team take their direction from the membership, so make sure you speak up.

YEU will be rolling out some exciting new initiatives focused on youth, health and safety, and education this year. We're excited to partner with a couple of youth focused local organizations, bringing the message of union values to the next generation of workers.

Our new executive and YEU staff will be knee deep in strategic planning sessions in the next few months. The strat planning process helps us map out how we achieve the mandate from convention over the next three years. It is really important that you connect with your Local, and let your representatives know what you want and need from your union.

If you have never MET your Local rep or don't know which Local you belong to, give us a call we'll point you in the right direction. The YEU executive takes direction from the entire membership and your Locals take direction from you. Members provide direction when it comes to bargaining, managing your Local's finances, education and everything else YEU does.

Accountability is our buzzword around here for the next three years. If you want to know what was said and what was decided at Convention in October, please go read the minutes, linked on our website's YEU Convention page.

We have a tough year of bargaining ahead. I wouldn't be surprised to see at least one of these negotiations head to job action. We are a union that doesn't budge on member rights, and we don't back down or bow to employer pressure. As a union member, you play a role in the strength of the message at the table. No matter which Local is under attack, if we all stick together and show support, we can have a powerful impact. That's called Solidarity... it makes a huge difference.

Speaking of solidarity, watch for PSAC's Northern Fight for \$15 Campaign. We know how much it costs to live in the North even as union members with decent pay and benefits. We can help low income workers by using our collective strength and power. Yukon's minimum wage is currently \$11.32 - it's tough to imagine trying to make ends meet on that salary, especially without sick leave or the dental and extended medical benefits most unionized workers enjoy. Think about it.

The arguments that a higher minimum wage will destroy the economy don't hold water, and the panic has always proven unfounded. Don't be fooled. Use your dollars and your voice to promote fair wages. Shop at places that support their workers fairly. Not sure? Ask questions. Join the Fight for \$15 - sign a petition, send a letter, ask about wages at your local grocer or coffee shop. Talk to the Chamber of Commerce, your MLA. Comments, thoughts? Drop me a line.

Steve Geick, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Geick". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

# Mayor Curtis, Show Your Respect at the Table!

## Local Y023 Enters Conciliation Bargaining

The City of Whitehorse, Local Y023 Bargaining Team opened negotiations for a new Collective Agreement with the City of Whitehorse on September 19th, 2017. After just three days at the table, the Employer pulled the plug and filed for conciliation. In correspondence with the union, the City said, ***“the Employer believes we are at an impasse...”*** because the union did not want to entertain inferior working conditions and refused to bargain concessions to the contract.

We were at the table to negotiate improved wages and working conditions for our members. During our three days of bargaining, the Employer engaged in no serious discussion on most of the union’s proposals. When we even tried to enter dialogue on the employer’s housekeeping items, they immediately removed those items from the table, abruptly ending discussion. As a first time bargaining team member, I was shocked at how little “bargaining” actually happened and at the employer’s unwillingness to engage in dialogue.

At the end of 2016, Mayor Dan Curtis emailed his thanks to city of Whitehorse employees, stating ***“how lucky we are to have such a dedicated and committed group of compassionate professionals working in and for the City of Whitehorse... Mayor & Council both recognize and appreciate your hard work and some of the challenges you are faced with while provided exemplary skills and services for our Community....We know that much of your hard work is thankless and even misunderstood at times, but we know we are blessed to live in such a special place with some pretty amazing stewards of our City.”***

Yes, Mr. Mayor, you are lucky to have amazing stewards who work hard and face challenges in service to our com-

munity. Now we are asking the employer to put action behind those words, and show support for the dedicated and committed professionals working for the City of Whitehorse. We come to the bargaining table as equals, expecting to be heard, respected, and acknowledged for the work we do. We expect better from our employer.

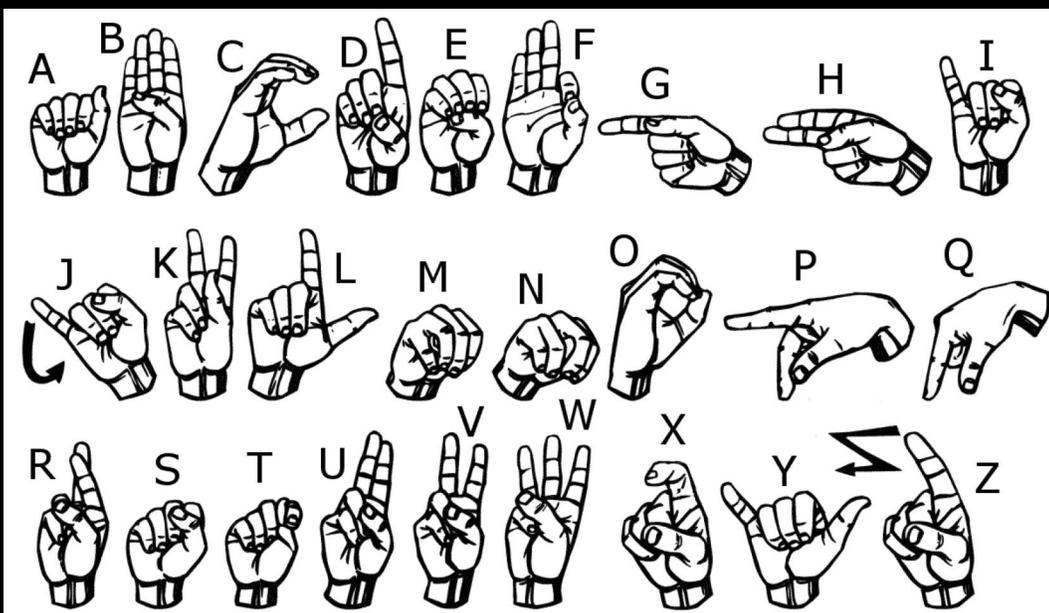
This is an important time. City of Whitehorse employees are standing strong together, and we’re not backing down. We have identified what matters most to us and, like our transit brothers & sisters, the fundamental items are employee status, compensation, health care, and retirement planning.

Local Y022 and Y023 bargaining teams begin conciliation bargaining February 19-22. How can you help us reach a fair deal?

- City workers, spread the word that you want the Mayors words put into action in support for City of Whitehorse employees.
- Citizens of Whitehorse, thank a city worker, and let your elected council members know that you’re watching.
- City Councilors, let your management team know that you expect a collective agreement that provides equitable and fair compensation for the amazing stewards of this city.

Mayor Curtis, thank you for the lovely email, but show us that respect where it counts – at the bargaining table.

In solidarity,  
Teresa Acheson, President  
YEU Local Y023, City of Whitehorse



# An Introduction

## Paul Johnston, Vice President

I was born in Ontario and enjoyed a childhood of outdoor activities and sports, but playing hockey was my favourite past time. As a child I would watch the Montreal Canadians play on television on Saturday evenings with my father. He was French Canadian and watched the games in French. I only knew about ten French words but I loved hockey and loved watching the game with my father.

Dad wanted his children to grow up in the country, so he would commute 60-90 minutes depending on weather conditions to the GM plant in Oshawa. I knew my father was a unionized worker - he made a decent wage and provided for his family. We were not rich but there was always food on the table and wood in the stove.

I realize today that my father was fortunate; his union made sure he was paid a fair wage, had job security and health benefits for his family. I also knew my father was part of a large brotherhood and sisterhood that offered incredible support to their members. My father died at 51 and I will never forget the outpouring of support my mother received from our union family.

I have spent my career in the Human Services sector. I went to university as a mature student and obtained my Bachelor of Social Work Degree. From 2004 through 2017 I practised as a child protection social worker. In 2014, I moved to Dawson City with my partner and took on the Regional Social Worker position serving Dawson, Mayo and Pelly. I was responsible for child and adult protection, youth probation, social assistance and community development.

I have been an advocate and activist formally and informally for marginalized individuals. Special to me and close to my heart are traumatized individuals, women's rights, father's rights, LGBTQ2SII rights, victims of domestic violence, and individuals with mental health challenges and addictions.



In 2015 I took on a position with Family and Children's Services in Whitehorse. I attended the Y017 AGM and became a Director for my Local. I soon became interested in the role of Shop Steward. I completed the training and started representing members right away, work I really enjoyed.

I was honoured to be elected as the YEU Vice President at the Convention in October. I have met so many wonderful members and citizens in the Yukon. I'm honoured to be in this role and look forward to working with you.

My goals for this term are to help improve workplace conditions, advocate for fair wage and benefits, and continue the work to ensure employment security. We will keep up the pressure on workplace violence and workplace safety.

I look forward to meeting you at your worksites. Come to the union hall to say hello - I am here to listen and help along with the committed staff at the Yukon Employees' Union office.

In solidarity,  
Paul Johnston  
Vice President  
Yukon Employee's Union

YEU is an accessible building. We have automatic door openers at the rear entrance and an elevator.

If you have a meeting in our building, just enter through the door off the parking lot.

A row of five accessibility icons. The first four are blue squares with white icons and text: 'PARKING', 'ELEVATOR', 'ENTRANCE', and 'ACCESS AT REAR'. The fifth is a black square with a white icon and the word 'ACCESSIBLE' in white text.



# Yukon Employees' Union MEMBER DISCOUNTS Benefits of Membership

## Fuel Yukon & Heat Yukon

100% Yukon owned & operated, Heat Yukon & Fuel Yukon offer discounted home heating fuel and auto fuel at their new card-lock stations at discounted prices for YEU & PSAC members. Call 867-633-3322, visit [www.heatyukon.com](http://www.heatyukon.com) or email [info@heatyukon.com](mailto:info@heatyukon.com)



## G-P Distributing Inc.

Save 5% on your food purchases (cases only). Visit [g-pdistributing.com](http://g-pdistributing.com), download their product guide & call 667-4500 to place your order for pick-up. **Discount Code GP2017YEU**



## AVIS Car Rentals

Need a rental car? Identify yourself as a PSAC member through Avis' Worldwide Discount Number (AWD) C835975. This number is your key to special programs & privileges offered to PSAC. Visit [222.avis.ca](http://222.avis.ca) or call 1-800-272-5871



## THRIFTY Car Rentals

Thrifty offers YEU/PSAC members discounted car rental rates using our NEW Corporate Discount number. Use **CD#3021454** to access the discount. Visit [www.thrifty.com](http://www.thrifty.com)



## BMO PSAC Mastercard

The BMO Public Service Alliance of Canada AIR MILES MasterCard offers more ways to collect AIR MILES reward miles, no annual fee and 17.5% interest rate (subject to change). Call 1-800-263-2263 or visit [bmo.com/mastercard](http://bmo.com/mastercard) for current rates.



## VIA Rail Canada

As a PSAC member you receive a 10% discount for all VIA Rail train tickets and routes for yourself and up to three family members travelling with you. Please visit the PSAC website & register for your account to access the Via Rail Discount. [www.pscunion.ca/travel-rail-canada](http://www.pscunion.ca/travel-rail-canada)



## AGR Home/Auto Ins.

AGR Insurance Brokers Inc. and its affiliates have partnered with PSAC since 1986. Through this partnership we are able to offer a discounted home and auto insurance program specifically designed for you. For further information and to obtain a quote please call 1-877-880-5029 or visit [psac-groupinsurance.com](http://psac-groupinsurance.com)



## Pacific Gateway Hotel

Online bookings: [www.pacificgatewayhotel.com](http://www.pacificgatewayhotel.com). Please enter code **YEU** under Corporate/Promotion code. Make sure to say Yukon Employees' Union or Public Service Alliance of Canada when making reservations to receive a special rate. Email [res@pacificgatewayhotel.com](mailto:res@pacificgatewayhotel.com)



## Life Insurance

PSAC members are eligible for \$5,000 of free life and accidental death/dismemberment insurance. Enhanced insurance coverage is also available at a cost. Both are available to members in good standing and to their immediate families. Coverage is not automatic. Contact YEU for an application.



For more information on these or other benefits of membership contact YEU at 867-667-2331 or toll-free at 1-888-YEU-2331. Learn more at [www.yeu.ca](http://www.yeu.ca)

Shop stewards wear many different hats, and they get very good at determining which hat is best for each unique situation. The expertise they rely on to navigate the role's challenges comes largely through the monthly Shop Steward Round Table sessions held at the YEU Hall.

The February 2018 SSRT - led by YEU's David Anderson, will focus on the nuances and complexities of member representation. We thought it would be good to take a moment to acknowledge the challenging work our volunteer shop stewards perform.

Primarily, shop stewards represent a member's concerns to management. When acting in this role, a steward engages a manager in a very different way than they would as an employee. Of course shop stewards are also employees, and so when they are not acting in their steward role they don't relate to management the same way. Stewards—and all union representatives—are protected against employer intimidation and interference under the Public Service Labour Relations Act (PSLRA). Without these protections, the union could not speak up for the interests of its members in the workplace.

At times, a steward is simply a friend listening to a co-worker's concerns. It feels good to be heard and understood even if you are not planning to raise a complaint or file a formal grievance. Stewards learn to differentiate between a co-worker looking for representation and one simply looking for an empathetic ear.

Stewards are often in situations that pose some real challenges. Strife in a workplace involves more than one individual – stewards often face situations where two members are in conflict, each wanting to file a grievance or complaint against the other. That's tricky, particularly if it takes place in the steward's own workplace.

What does a steward do when there is conflict between a colleague requesting representation and a supervisor with whom the representative has a friendly relationship? This happens a lot in the Yukon... we're all connected in so many ways outside of work hours. What happens if the steward fears retaliation for them-

selves from a manager or supervisor?

These delicate situations require a lot of thought and diplomacy, and our stewards look to the expertise and assistance of YEU staff when they need guidance or another point of view. It's important for members to recognize the intricacies and challenges taken on by these important volunteer representatives. Take a moment to thank your shop steward ... it's often a thankless job.

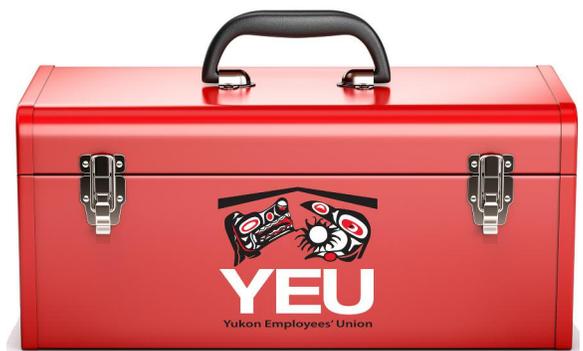
Besides representing and supporting co-workers, stewards assist with organizing workers and maintaining open channels of communication. This can involve maintaining a bulletin board or speaking to newly hired workers about the benefits of the union and encouraging them to get involved. Some of these activities can be done on work time and in the workplace, but others need to be done on the steward's own time outside of the workplace.

Finally, shop stewards are members of a bigger team with a clear division of labour; they learn when to refer a case to a YEU Advisor, or when an issue needs to be dealt with at the bargaining table instead of through the grievance process.

While there is paid time available for training, Shop Stewards figure a lot of this out while maintaining their own professional and personal obligations. At YEU, we think they do it very well, and they deserve a lot of appreciation.

If you're not sure who represents you, send an email to [contact@yeu.ca](mailto:contact@yeu.ca) or call 667-2331.

Thank you to the entire YEU Shop Steward Network!



**FRANCOPHONE SHOP STEWARDS NEEDED! Have you thought about volunteering as a Shop Steward? Contact Intake Officer Beckie Huston at 667-2331 or email [bhuston@yeu.ca](mailto:bhuston@yeu.ca) Shop Steward training & support are always provided!**



**YEU Local Y022  
Whitehorse Transit  
City of Whitehorse**

# Annual General Meeting

**Sunday February 11, 1pm  
YEU Local Meeting Room, YEU Hall**

## Election of Local Officers:

Vice President  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Chief Shop Steward

**Bargaining Update:** VERY important that ALL Members of Local Y022 attend this meeting. We are going to Conciliation Feb. 19th, and we must all know what's happening and what's at stake.

# Stronger-Together

Yukon Employees' Union  
2285 2nd Ave. Whitehorse YT



# FIGHT FOR 15



## MEETINGS & EVENTS

**Shop Steward Round Table:** 3rd Wed, 9am - noon, YEU

**January 17** - Review & Planning Session

**February 21** - Representating Members

**YEU Monthly Exec Meeting:** 2nd Thurs., 5:15 - 7pm, YEU

**Y010 Monthly Meeting:** 2nd Tues., 5:30-7:30 p.m., YEU Hall

**Y017 Monthly Meeting:** 4th Thursday, 7:15 p.m., YEU Hall

## YEU STAFF CONTACTS

**Christie Harper**, Labour Relations Advisor; charper@yeu.ca

**Susan Koser**, Labour Relations Advisor; skoser@yeu.ca

**Dan Robinson**, Labour Relations Advisor; drobinson@yeu.ca

**David Anderson**, Labour Relations Advisor; danderson@yeu.ca

**Beckie Huston**, Intake Officer; bhuston@yeu.ca

**Tammy Olsen**, Financial Officer; tolsen@yeu.ca

**Roseanne Elias**, Membership Svcs Assistant; relias@yeu.ca

**Deborah Turner-Davis**, Communications; dturner-davis@yeu.ca

**Laura Hureau**, Executive Director; lhureau@yeu.ca

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.