

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

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

CANADA		POSTES
POST		CANADA
Postage paid		Port payé
Publications Mail		Poste-publications
40014844		

Breaking new trail for workers' rights & social justice.
December 2014

Yukon Employees' Union **NEWS**



What a YEAR we shared at YEU!



Please have a safe & happy holiday season!

Human Rights Speaker Series a thought provoking success

Last year, YEU tried something new. We abandoned our annual Open House in favour of a series of noon hour discussions about issues of Human Rights. It was so successful we decided to do it again this year. Four lunch hours, four issues.



Our first topic was dating violence against young women. A bitter irony is that on the day of this presentation, the RCMP officer who had committed to join us was unable to attend. He was investigating the murder of a 17 year

old woman found dead the night before. Sadly, attendance at this talk was the lowest all week, despite the obvious urgency and relevance of the topic. For those who were unable to attend but would like information to share with the young people in your lives we urge you to contact Hillary Aitken at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre or Angela Code at BYTE. They offer important workshops on consent and healthy relationships.

The conversation on Housing & Homelessness was powerful thanks to a Whitehorse woman honest enough to share her own story. She told of a journey that began with an abusive relationship and ended with her incarceration, homelessness and the loss of her children to the child welfare system. No social issue stands alone. In this case, violence was the trigger for a spiral into a system from which there is no easy escape. Thanks to Kate Mechan and Charlotte Hrenchuk of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for the work you do.



Food! We talked about food...local, sustainable and organic. We discussed experimental crops and chickens and geese and pig feed and hay. Did you know that

our mining territory has about 150 placer mines? Did you ALSO know that our FARMING territory has about 150 farms?! We didn't know that! Our access to locally grown produce and meat is improving each year, thanks to local farmers markets & supermarkets. We are excited to imagine the next decade as more and more of us demand to know where our food comes from! Thanks to Yukon Farmer of the Year Mary Girouard of Rivendell Farms, Simone Rudge of Aurora Mountain Farms and Matt Ball.



The always busy PSAC Pride Committee invited Chase Blodgett to speak as part of this exciting week. A Yukon trans* man, he walked us through the murky waters of policies and legislation with no trans* aware language. His talk was informative and funny. Chase invited us to really think about our need to categorize and define everyone and everything in our society using gender binary. Thanks Chase, and thanks to the PSAC Pride Committee.

Lastly, we had a fantastic discussion with four inspiring women. We invited Beverly Brazier, Minister of Whitehorse United Church, MLA Kate White, Patti Balsillie and Marilyn Jensen to talk about leadership. These four women shared their diverse backgrounds and experiences with a packed house. Thank you all for a wonderful conversation! All four presentations were filmed, and the videos will be available online at our website and our blog. Visit www.yeu.ca or www.theunionbillboard.com to watch!



Looking forward to YEU's 50th Anniversary, 2015



**YEU President
Steve Geick**

This has been a busy year. We have welcomed workers into the YEU Hall from four new bargaining units. These, our newest members, have made the sometimes difficult decision to pursue unionization as a means to an equitable workplace. 2014 saw us announce the certification of Help & Hope for Families in Watson Lake, Takhini Transport bus drivers, the municipal workers of Haines Junction and the support staff of Teegatha'Oh Zheh.

In each case, unionizing was a decision made by the employees and they approached us for help moving forward. We are grateful that they look to us for assistance in crafting contract language to improve their working lives.

YEU had our Triennial Convention in October; we welcomed new faces to our Executive and bid a grateful farewell to several outgoing elected officials. Loralee Kesler served three terms as our elected VP, and we wish her all the very best as she begins her next adventures. Brother Blair Andre (Brother Bear) has stepped away from our Executive, as have Sister Girlie Austin and Brother Mark Bowers. We are grateful for their long service as activist Directors on the YEU Executive.

We also bid farewell, in a way, to our long time activist Jack Bourassa in June when he was elected Regional Executive Vice-President of the North for PSAC. He has relocated with his family to Yellowknife but his work is pan-northern and he will continue to be a fixture in the Yukon through his term as REVP.

YEU has seen several staffing changes over the last year, as we say adieu to long time staffers and welcome new faces and energy. If you haven't popped in to meet everyone yet, please do... we're a friendly bunch and the coffee is always on.

Looking ahead, we're excited to launch into 2015. This year will mark the 50th Anniversary of this small northern union. What began as a small regional group of upstarts challenging the status quo has evolved into a much larger group of upstarts challenging the status quo.... Some things don't really change I guess!

Our community involvement continues, and I'm very proud of the work done by our activists, Locals and even staff over the last year. We have participated in events that bring attention to some serious issues nationally and locally. We have helped raise awareness, funds and food for the Whitehorse Food Bank and honoured Human Rights Day with a series of meaningful talks. Our activists work on committees that are out there doing real work all year long, often without any acknowledgement or reward. We thank them, and invite all of you to join a committee or come out next time we join a community challenge.

This year is shaping up to be a busy one internally for YEU as well. We have a lot of work planned; there are issues we plan to address in the delivery of training for our Shop Stewards, in the support offered to our Locals and more. As always, we appeal to you... the members, to guide our work. You'll see an invitation to join a training discussion in January for Stewards; if you're a Steward, PLEASE find time to attend. If you wonder why your workplace doesn't have a Steward, call us.

And hey... if you came out to one of our events in the last year, thanks! Our plan is to carry on. In fact we've proudly made donations once again this year to a number of local groups. We also plan to keep that up.

This is, now as it was 50 years ago, YOUR union. YEU is a small but mighty union, and we are bucking the trends. While other unions shrink, we continue to grow in strength and in numbers.

So here's to you this holiday. We wish you a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and Solidarity Forever!



**Happy holidays to you and your family from all the staff at Yukon Employees' Union!
Cheers from Tammy, Beckie, Sharleen, Christie, Josh, Deborah & Laura.
See you in the New Year!**

Shop Steward Training Resumes

You raised your hand, you were elected.... now what? At YEU, our Shop Stewards & Local Executive members are very important. In fact, without a strong and well educated volunteer base we would have a hard time keeping up with our large and diverse membership.

Our staff and Executive are working hard to ensure we offer the right training modules to our volunteers and workplace advocates. In order for you to feel confident that you are representing the membership and union well, you need a strong basis in facts, a thorough understanding of your Collective Agreement and the mentorship of experienced union staff.

With those needs in mind, we are planning a half day brainstorm session for all our Stewards and elected workplace advocates. No matter whether you are the sole employee rep in a workplace of 6 or a seasoned Steward with 300 employees in your department - we need you. All stewards from all employers and workplaces are encouraged to attend this Shop Steward Round Table session.

SAVE the DATE!

Thursday January 22, 2014

9:00 am 'til Noon **OR** 2:00 pm 'til 5:00 pm.

Both Round Table sessions are the same, so plan to attend only one. You will be required to bring in your approved leave form in order to attend. Please call Josh at 667-2331 to pre-register for either the morning or afternoon session.

We want to hear what you have to say; bring us your concerns and your Steward questions. Let us know what stands between you and full engagement as an employee rep. Our goal is to build up our Steward network, ensuring you get the training and support you need!

Christie Harper YEU Union Advisor



We are delighted to introduce our newest Union Advisor. We hope you'll help us welcome Christie Harper to the YEU team. Christie has been representing injured workers in their claims and appeals to the Ontario workers' compensation board since 2005. Her primary work there was presenting at formal appeal hearings, negotiating and overseeing accommodated return to work plans on behalf of the injured worker.

She has assisted injured workers in their applications and represented them at appeal hearings for Canada Pension Disability benefits. She holds an undergraduate and Master's degree from McMaster University with a focus on the labour movement, occupational health and safety and the legal aspects of workplace injuries.

Christie has very recently moved to the Yukon with her husband. Coming from Ontario, she is looking forward to our far more temperate winters and friendly people. Christie is an avid runner; the staff at YEU have already named Christie head of our office "get back in shape" committee.

If you see Christie in our office or on the running track, say hello and welcome her to the Yukon and YEU!

Meetings & Events

Y010 Monthly Meeting: 2nd Tues., 5:30-7:30 p.m., Westmark

Y017 Monthly Meeting: 4th Wed., 7:30 p.m., YEU Hall

Y023 Monthly Meeting: 1st Mon., Noon, City Municipal Svcs Bldg

Staff

Christie Harper, Union Advisor; charper@yeu.ca

Sharleen Patterson, Union Advisor; spatterson@yeu.ca

Beckie Huston, Intake Advisor; bhuston@yeu.ca

Tammy Olsen, Financial Officer; tolsen@yeu.ca

Y026 Monthly Meeting: 3rd Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Dawson City

YEU Monthly Exec Meeting: 2nd Thurs., 6:30-9:00 pm, YEU Hall

Deborah Turner-Davis, Media Relations & Strategic Communications Officer; dturner-davis@yeu.ca

Josh Cuppage, Executive Assistant; contact@yeu.ca

Laura Hureau, Executive Director; lhureau@yeu.ca

Yukon Employees' Union Office, 2285 2nd Avenue Whitehorse YT Y1A 1C9

PH: 867-667-2331 FX: 867-667-6521 Toll Free: 1-888-YEU-2331 Email us at contact@yeu.ca

Visit www.yeu.ca, follow us on Facebook & Twitter or visit our blog; www.theunionbillboard.com

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 1:00 pm.