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Yukon Employees' Union
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Whitehorse, Yukon
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Yukon Employees' Union

NEWS

May 2014
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Convention delegate? But I don't even...

There has been a lot of talk about convention delegate selection lately. Do you wonder what that means? Who can be a delegate? We asked Lorelee Kesler, YEU's Vice President (and a long term union activist) about the convention delegate experience.

"The first time I was nominated I was really nervous; as a first time delegate I worried I wouldn't understand the process & wouldn't represent my co-workers well. After convention, I felt really proud of the work that we did. I've now attended 5 YEU conventions, 2 PSAC North, 4 PSAC National conventions and 2 at CLC National.

If you're member in good standing you can be elected at a meeting of your local. You will receive a delegate information package about a month before convention to help you prepare for the sessions. Although it's a confidential document you can ask your local or the YEU office for clarification. You will easily learn the rest as we go along.

There are many times that new delegates have stood on the convention floor and, with fresh eyes have made very solid suggestions for the betterment of all. I'm sometimes asked if you have to be an "activist"? What is an activist? Our activists come in all shapes and sizes – if you feel a

kinship to what the union stands for, then you're an activist.

Before convention we hold a training session to help new delegates understand parliamentary procedure and rules of order. My first couple of conventions I was confused about some of the "convention speak" - once you understand it, things get easier. YEU has accepted a clear language resolution which makes a big difference!

I love conventions; we decide the direction the executive committee will take in the next term, and they are accountable to the membership at the next convention.

If someone out there is curious but unsure and their local hasn't had delegate selection yet – I encourage them to call me with their questions.

Delegates give direction to the component for the next term; it really is a grassroots, democratic organization. This is your union, your leadership needs your direction for the term. It's important for locals to fill their quota so there is a fair representation of your local at the convention. Consider this, in a local of 2000 members, do you really want only 10 delegates there representing your interests when you could have 40 delegates speaking out?"

Facebook- that status update is forever!

What happens on Facebook never stays on Facebook, and the internet is forever. If you beak off on Facebook or Twitter (or any public place) about your boss, your co-workers, your employer or your workplace policies you may have broken your contract with your employer. If you are fired (and you probably will be), your union can't do much for you. There are lots of places to turn when you have a genuine problem in the workplace. Keep your work issues OFF your social media pages & out of the press. Call your Union if you need help at work; 667-2331



President's Report



YEU President
Steve Geick

There were some important shakeups in Canada's mighty House of Labour this month. For the first

time, a sitting president of the Canadian Labour Congress was voted out by the membership. After 15 years at the helm, CLC President Ken Georgetti has been replaced.

Hassan Yussuf has been endorsed by CLC's members to guide the Labour movement through difficult waters. First elected as Executive Vice-President in 1999, Hassan has served as Secretary-Treasurer since 2002. He rose through the union ranks from the factory floor of Canada's automotive manufacturing industry.

The issues he must address as Canada's voice of labour are significant. Dwindling union density, strong anti-union pressure from the right and a government intent on destroying organized labour in Canada are on his agenda. He is well poised to lead, with experience and a solid Executive team. We look forward to the changes his leadership will bring.

In the Yukon, we are bucking the trend a bit. Our membership is growing with three new groups of workers choosing to join the union. The same trend is occurring with other Yukon unions; growth vs. contraction. Strong unions help build strong families and strong communities; we're proud to be part of that strength.

There's no question that unions promote fairness. Visit fairness-works.ca if you need a reminder about the true impact on a community of a stable, unionized workforce.

We have work to do; we have to find ways to reach our members; to encourage greater participation and dialogue. We are working hard to make sure Yukoners continue to benefit from the hard work they perform.



Bargaining Updates

* **Members at Yukon College** ratified their three year CA late in 2013. An Education Fund has been established to financially support members wishing to further their education. A joint classification committee has been established to review job descriptions for all levels of college staff.

* Negotiations at **the City of Dawson** are well underway. The next bargaining meetings are scheduled for mid-June 2014.

* Flight Attendants have been in negotiations with **Air North** for almost a year. The next set of bargaining dates are scheduled for the end of May. Some of the key issues for this group include scheduling and hours of work.

* **Yukon Hospital Corporation** bargaining input call has recently gone out for workers in Yukon's hospitals. Members have been invited to submit their bargaining proposals and will be electing a bargaining team in early June. Their Collective Agreement expires August of this year.

* Negotiations with the **Yukon Energy Corporation** began last year. While considerable progress has been made on a number of issues there are still some key items outstanding. The Union applied for mediation in early spring which did not resolve the differences between parties. The Union and Yukon Energy Corp. have agreed to proceed to arbitration.

* **Many Rivers** Counselling & Support Services voted May 15th on whether to accept a tentative agreement reached in early May.

YG's Quarterly goes online

YG's Staff Development branch is no longer distributing printed copies of the Staff Development Quarterly. A condensed PDF version will still be available to view or print on the Public Service Commission website. New issues will be posted four times per year, in April, July, October and January.

YEU employees can visit the new YG Learning & Development site to find information about upcoming courses, including how to register, on the Learning & Development site. Visit www.psc.gov.yk.ca/staffdev/quarterly.html

YEU welcomes the Help & Hope Society for Families

The workers at Help & Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake have voted to ratify their first ever Collective Agreement. The ratification took place May 1, 2014. The newly unionized members were unanimous in their support of the agreement, negotiated with the assistance of PSAC staff negotiator John Wilson.

YEU President Steve Geick says “we are very happy to have the staff at Help & Hope for Families Society join our union. Union membership provides a framework that can help small organizations like theirs navigate HR questions successfully, and can help build stronger workplaces”.



YEU VP Loralee Kesler & UNW President Todd Parsons at the CLC Convention in Montreal.



Lisa Vollans, Sue Christianson, Derek Yap & Steve Geick of the YEU Executive with Nycole Turmel, past PSAC National President at Yukon Trade Show. Union selfie!

“We are the reason for *hope*. Movements turn individual problems into collective problems. They provide comradeship and support. And they show people not only that *there is hope* but that *they themselves are the reason for hope.*”



Roberta Wurtak, Local Y017 Shop Steward accepts her \$150 grocery gift card; draw prize from the Yukon Trade Show! Congratulations Roberta!

Visit www.theunionbillboard.com for articles you won't find on our webpage, links to newsletter articles you can share and more. If you have a point of view you'd like to share, we welcome your submissions.

Meetings & Events

Local Y017 AGM: Wed. May 28, 7pm; Lucy Jackson Room, YEU Hall

Y010 Special General Meeting: Tues June 17, 5:30 - 6:30 YEU Hall

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

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

Y023 Monthly Meeting: 1st Mon., Noon, City Municipal Services Building (blue one) on 2nd Avenue

Y025 Monthly Meeting: 3rd Wed., 6:00 p.m., YEU Hall

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

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Office Hours: —Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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Tee for four?



Yukon Employees' Union has been a proud supporter of the Peter Gzoski Invitational Golf Tournament for many years. Each year we sponsor a hole, and

send four happy-go-lucky golfers out to take a walk for the team.

Are you a “working on your short game” golfer? Maybe a “really trying to lower your handicap” golfer? Even if you’re a “hack-at-the-ball and cuss” golfer with a big smile and a free Saturday we hope you’ll consider signing on for a great time.

The PGI for Literacy takes place Saturday June 28th at the Mountainview Golf Course in Whitehorse. If you think you have what it takes (and in our case it doesn’t take much!) please call us at 667-2331.



Sasha Sywulsky

YEU is fortunate to have a few dynamic and committed young activists in our ranks. These young workers have decided early in their careers that getting involved with their union provides many rewarding opportunities.

Sasha Sywulsky is such an activist. Currently the President of her Local, Sasha has already amassed an impressive resume

of advocacy, training, bargaining and travel on behalf of her colleagues at the Canada Games Centre.

Sasha’s union career began with her decision in 2005 to become a Shop Steward. Her philosophy has always been to encourage those within the Union to foster positive relationships with Employers rather than to perpetuate a stereotypical “us vs. them” relationship.

A commitment to equality and human rights significantly influenced her decision to become and remain active in the Union. Her core values support equality amongst members and her work as both a Steward and Local Executive member speaks to those values. Sasha says “I continuously support fair treatment in the workplace, and challenge behaviours such as bullying, favoritism and discrimination.”



Congratulations to the new Committees & Executive of WGH, Local Y025. Elected at their well attended AGM May 14th this team brings new energy and enthusiasm to a changing workplace.

Hospital Corporation workers have entered their bargaining input phase and will be heading to the bargaining table soon. Yukon Hospital Corporation members of YEU who want to receive bargaining updates should contact YEU at 667-2331 & subscribe.

Member of the month

As Sasha says “Unions set the bar higher for employment standards across the country, which contributes to a higher quality of life for all Canadians”.

To help our volunteers perform their work with confidence, YEU often sends members to training offered by the Canadian Labour Congress. Winter School is a week long in-residence training session held annually at Harrison Hot Springs BC. Sasha has twice been selected to attend this training, and has returned with renewed energy and even more tools in her union toolbox.

As an elected delegate from Local Y023, City of Whitehorse, Sasha represented YEU and her members at the PSAC North Convention in Iqaluit in 2011. She was also selected to attend the PSAC National Women’s Convention in Toronto.

Sasha hopes we can all foster collaboration and trust between employers and Unions to work together for the benefit of employees. Though the role of Unions is ultimately to support and represent workers, she stresses the importance of working collaboratively to create new & positive relationships. Thank you Sasha, for all your hard work and dedication.

“Unions set the bar higher for employment standards across the country, which contributes to a higher quality of life for all Canadians”