

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

Yukon Employees' Union
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Yukon Employees' Union

NEWS

November 2011

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

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- Profiles of the new YEU Executive
- Local Y010 donates to community; elects new executive
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- Mounties fight to unionize
- Tories unveil troubling pension plan
- New President's message

2011 Triennial Convention brings new leaders, new ideas

YEU delegates vote for change

Delegates to the 2011 YEU Triennial Convention translated calls from members for a change in direction into an activist, community centred and decidedly more youthful leadership.

One-third of the delegates to this, the largest YEU convention ever, represented members from rural communities. The number of younger delegates also exceeded past conventions. That representation led directly to the election of a new executive on which three of thirteen members qualified as youth delegates. YEU has worked for years to encourage the development of a new generation of union leaders. The new look of our Executive is a direct result.

PSAC National President John Gordon came north to address our delegates for the last time before his retirement next year. His address was vintage Gordon—a passionate and fiery recounting of recent government attacks on public sector workers, and a stern warning about the challenges ahead. He has no illusions about the looming battle for worker's rights, and urged our members to prepare themselves to defend our rights and benefits.



Steve Geick was elected YEU President at the 2011 Triennial Convention

Julie Docherty, PSAC North's Regional Executive Vice-President underlined John Gordon's appeal to union members to prepare for confrontation. Her presentation was no less passionate and informative.

Steve Geick's election as YEU President reflected our members' desire for change and preparedness. His commitment to openness and community cooperation

touched a chord with delegates.

Lorelee Kesler was re-elected to a third term as 1st Vice-President, and Dawson City's Tony Thomas was installed as 2nd Vice-President. All members of the new YEU Executive are profiled on the two page insert.



Across Canada

Mounties fight in court for right to unionize

Three years ago, rank-and-file members of the Mounted Police in BC and Ontario fought and won their case for unionization in the Ontario Superior Court. Justice MacDonald ruled that RCMP regulations prevent members from bargaining collectively and violate association guarantees under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The mountie organizations won that battle, but not the war. The federal government has since appealed, and the matter is now before the Ontario Court of Appeal.

The right of RCMP officers to organize unions has been prevented since 1918, when the federal government passed an order-in-council calling for instant dismissal of any officer who associated with a union. The government's aggressive response came partly in recognition of labour unrest within the force.

As early as 1883, C Troup of the Northwest Mounted Police at the Macleod barracks in Alberta revolted over a long list of grievances. The troupe refused to carry out their duties until their issues were resolved. This early strike action within the force was resolved in their favour. However, a

later action in Lethbridge failed when the mounties' strike leaders were simply dismissed. Other actions followed over the years, until the 1918 order-in-council.

Ron Creasser, spokesperson for the newly-formed Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada, defended the mounties' current action, "Every other police agency in Canada has what we're seeking". Issues for the force include heavy workload, unpaid overtime and the lack of ability to voice concerns without fear of reprisal.

In spite of the 1974 *Staff Relations Representative Program*, the RCMP chain-of-command remains unresponsive to any form of actual bargaining. In Creasser's view, this results in "collective begging" rather than collective bargaining, since the final decision rests entirely with the employer.

The government's position is of concern to all union members. The legal representative for the Attorney General has suggested that the traditional union model may not be the solution to today's workplace issues. If such a viewpoint wins the day, collective bargaining for all public service workers will be in grave danger.

Cold reality beneath Tory pension system iceberg

The Tories have tabled legislation to help Canadians without conventional pension programs "realize their retirement dreams", through what they describe as a low-cost, accessible pension option. By pooling pension resources, they say Canadians can buy pension coverage "in bulk".

The idea sounded reasonable at first, so much so that Catherine Swift, CEO of the right wing Canadian Federation of Independent Business came out publically against it. Swift watchers know from experience that if she opposes something, it must be good. Alas, she reversed her position within days of the Tories announcement, presumably after a serious smack-down by PM Harper.

Tory pension sound bites are wafting through the media like the scent of wildflowers. So, why does it all smell so bad?

Start with total lack of pension security. According to the government, returns of pension investments will be entirely generated by the market. And we all know how well the market is doing. There will be no top-ups from government, nor any guarantee the pension will still be available when the time comes to collect. It is a "defined contribution" plan, not a "defined benefit" plan.

The Canadian Labour Congress points out that Pooled Registered Pension Plans (PRPPs) like this are far inferior to an expanded Canada Pension Plan when it comes to providing retirement security for Canadians. Unlike CPP:

- they will be unable to provide a secure, predictable benefit in retirement, indexed against inflation;
- they won't require employers to contribute a penny;
- they will be much more expensive than CPPs;
- they will lack CPP's survivor and disability benefits;
- they will probably never match the CPP's universal portability, in which the pension follows the worker no matter where he or she is employed.

Below the surface of the Tory plan floats the reality of right wing 'think-tank' attacks on the surviving pension plans—an appetizing deficit reduction target. The pension plans of public sector workers are in their crosshairs.

Pooled Registered Pension Plans could well be the hole into which the Tories hope to shove all public sector pension plans.

President's Message



YEU President
Steve Geick

For those of you I've yet to meet, my name is Steve Geick. I will be serving as your President for the next 3 years.

I've been involved in organized labour since 1974—for the last 13 years as a YEU member active in many capacities including the last 6 years as 2nd Vice-President. Prior to the Triennial Convention in October, I was

employed by the Yukon Government as a Primary Health Care Nurse in rural communities. In the summer of 2010, I accepted a temporary assignment with Community Nursing in Whitehorse.

First of all, I offer my heartfelt thanks to the staff of YEU and PSAC for the work and commitment that made the 2011 convention successful. Without their loyalty and dedication our organization would not be what it is today.

I am humbled to have been elected to the position of president. On a personal note, even as I campaigned for office I did not forget that we should always listen to our mothers. Mine told me to be careful what I wished for.

I made a commitment at convention to uphold the core values of equality, openness and respect upon which this organization was founded, and to follow the direction of the delegates who placed their faith in me. These delegates, whom you the members chose at your Local meetings, also elected one of the most dynamic Executives YEU has seen.

We have representation from youth, rural communities, equity groups, non-Yukon Government Locals, and a few of us who retain organizational history—a polite euphemism for "older members".

Women in Trades & Technology Fair

The 2011 Yukon Women in Trades & Technology (WITT) Fair took place at Yukon College on Friday, November 18.

WITT is a non-profit society formed to increase the number of women choosing careers in the trades and technology field. It works to educate Yukoners about the viability of trades and technology opportunities for women, seek opportunities for women and employers who could find success together, and supports trades-women.

Each year the one day conference welcomes 120 grade 8 girls from Whitehorse and rural communities to gain hands-

Over the next few years our union will need to call upon the combined strength, talent and commitment of this executive, our staff and most importantly on you the members to maintain and improve what we have fought so hard to achieve.

We are faced both territorially and federally with governments hostile to unions. Demands for cuts to public services threaten our jobs, but also the services we provide to the public. One of my goals is to strengthen organized labour in the Yukon, so all workers in the territory can stand united. I will be looking to you, the members, for support in the troubling times ahead.

There is apparently no learning 'curve' in this position—it points straight up! At present I am lucky to have Brother Butterworth helping me with the transition into my new role. There are a number of issues outstanding, so his assistance and knowledge is invaluable. When Laurie drives off in January to follow the sun, he will be sorely missed. That said, I welcome the challenges that will present themselves in this new era for YEU.

Over the coming months we will be preparing to take our elected delegation to the PSAC National Convention in Ottawa. As well, we will begin preparations for negotiations with employers at several of our larger bargaining units. I look forward to meeting and working with as many of you as possible over the coming months to help resolve issues and forge the bonds the next few years will demand.



on experience with different trades in a fun, supportive environment.

This year, organizers offered workshops in 7 fields including automotive, electrical, carpentry, plumbing, multimedia, blue print reading and culinary arts.



YEU VP Loralee Kesler and President Steve Geick presented iPod Touches to two participants in the 2011 Yukon Women in Trades & Technology Fair.

Local news

Local Y010 donations of time and money help many

Yukon Government Local Y010 has donated \$1000 each to the Kids Recreation Fund and the Association of Community Living.



Mark Bowers, Local Y010 President presents a cheque for \$1000 to Vicki Wilson of the Association for Community Living.

Local Y010 has long been active in the community, providing both funds and people-power to Yukon events such as the Labour Day Feed the People Barbecue.

In September, Y010 also donated \$800 to the Whitehorse Food Bank.



Local Y010 Vice-President Tammi Sikorski (left) presents a cheque for \$1000 to the Kids Recreation Fund.

Local Y010 Annual General Meeting

Yukon government Local Y010 held their AGM on November 22. The new executive includes: Mark Bowers—President, Tammy Sikorski—Vice-President, Mike Nugent—Chief Shop Steward, Yoshiko Atkins—Director, Douglas Drake—Director, David Johnson—Director, Denise Berken—Director, and Doug Bishop—Director.

Other AGM highlights include bylaw changes:

- Y010 is no longer broken into districts, hence no 2nd VP;
- honoraria for Executive members reinstated;
- change from 12 to 8 meetings per year; and
- clarification of Executive members representation ability.

A report on the 2011 Feed the People Barbecue was delivered, the donations reported earlier in this item were approved, and approximately 50% of this year's budget was targeted to community involvement.

Congratulations to Local Y010 on a wonderful year.

Meetings & Events

2011 Human Rights Day Open House—Friday, December 9, 2:00-7:00 p.m., YEU Hall, Whitehorse

Y029 Annual General Meeting—Wednesday, December 14, 7:00 p.m., Watson Lake

Y025 Special General Meeting—Wednesday, January 18, 6:30-9:00 p.m., Lucy Jackson Training Room

YEU Monthly Executive Meeting—2nd Thurs., 6:30-9:00 p.m., YEU Hall

Y010 Monthly Meeting—2nd Wed., 5:00-7:00 p.m., YEU Hall

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

Y023 Monthly Meeting—1st Thurs., Noon

Y025 Monthly Meeting—3rd Wed., 7:30 p.m., YEU Hall

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

PSAC Regional Access Committee—3rd Thurs., 5:15 p.m., YEU Hall

PSAC Aboriginal Peoples Committee—1st Tues., 5:15 p.m.

PSAC Racially Visible Committee—1st Wed., 5:00 p.m.

PSAC Regional Women's Committee—2nd Tues., 5:15 p.m.

PSAC Health & Safety Committee—1st Thurs., 6:00 p.m.

Dawson Regional Women's Committee—1st Wed., 5:15 p.m., Legion Hall

PSAC Regional Youth Committee—4th Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Lucy Jackson Training Room, YEU Hall

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Denise L. Norman, Executive Director—contact for YEU Executive & Local Executive Members; dnorman@yeu.ca

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

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2011-2013 YEU Executive



Steve Geick, President – Chair Administration/Personnel Committee Steve has been active in Local Y017 for 11 years, serving 6 years as Shop Steward and 5 as a Director. He served 6 years as a Shop Steward with the Ontario Nurses Association. His union involvement began at age 16 as a Teamster, working as a truck driver. He remained a Teamster for 20 years, serving 8 years as Shop Steward. He participated on the Yukon Area Council for three years, and worked as a member of the YTG bargaining input committee and bargaining team. Contact Steve: Cell 335-2631; email: sgeick@yeu.ca



Loralee Kesler, 1st Vice-President – Chair Public Relations/Bursaries Committee, Chair Communications Committee, Chair Bylaw & Resolutions Committee Loralee has been active in YEU for 14 years. She began by helping establish Local Y017, and served as its Director and President for 3 terms. She was elected Director to the YEU Executive at the 2002 Convention. In 2005 she became 1st Vice President, and was re-elected last month. Contact Loralee: 334-2041; email: lkesler@yeu.ca



Tony Thomas, 2nd Vice-President – Chair Community Representation Committee, Member Negotiations Committee Tony is a 29 year resident of the Yukon. He has been a union member and activist for many years, and currently serves as President of Dawson Local Y026. He has served on committees at the PSAC and YEU levels, participated on bargaining committees for the last two collective agreements with the Yukon Government, and co-chaired the PSAC Yukon Racially Visible Committee.



Girlie Austin, Treasurer – Chair Finance Committee, Member Equal Opportunities/Womens Committee Girlie is a Bachelor of Business Administration graduate with a major in Accounting. In her native Philippines she worked as a bookkeeper and held various accounting positions before immigrating to Canada 20 years ago. In the Yukon she has worked as a hotel night auditor and at a local bank for 7 years serving as Head Teller, Sales and Service Administrator and Financial Services Representative. She has been the Treasurer of the PSAC-Racially Visible Committee for 2½ years, and a member of YEU for more than 4 years. Currently she works as a Nursing Home Attendant at Copper Ridge Place. She is married, and has a daughter attending university. She promises accountability to all, with full, impartial disclosure that is free from bias.



Becky Nash, Secretary – Member Education Committee, Member Equal Opportunities/Womens Committee Becky is a Medical Laboratory Technologist employed at the Whitehorse General Hospital since February 1995, and is a member of Local Y025. She has been active in YEU for many years, starting as a Shop Steward and strike captain in 1997. Becky has also been active in every round of collective bargaining with WGH. She held the position of Chief Shop Steward for WGH Local Y030 under the National Health and Welfare Component, and lobbied for the inclusion of the WGH Local into the Yukon Employees' Union Component. Once WGH Local Y025 was born, Becky served as Secretary. Becky has been on the WGH Pension Committee since January 1999, first as an alternate, and now as the PSAC Representative on the committee. email: bexnjen@klondiker.com



Lindsay Heynen, Youth Director – Chair Youth Committee, Member Communications Committee Lindsay Heynen is a second generation Yukoner who has been working for YTG since she was 17. Lindsay is the current chair of the Yukon Regional Young Workers Committee through the PSAC, as well as the Chief Shop Steward for Y017 - Human Services. "Young Workers are the future of the Labor Movement and without their engagement we will fail, and this is why I have become involved with the Union." email: lindsay.heynen@gmail.com

2011-2013 YEU Executive



Lisa Vollans – Chair Equal Opportunities/Womens Committee, Member Administration/Personnel Committee, Member Bylaw & Resolutions Committee, Member Youth Committee

Lisa has been a YEU member for 6 years—4 as an Auxiliary On-Call. She grew up near Windsor, Ontario with her father, a member of the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, learning early about workers' rights and the importance of solidarity. One of Lisa's goals is to provide a voice for auxiliary employees who, for personal or employment reasons, may not be able to express their views. She serves as Shop Steward for Local Y017. Lisa is also a Director on the PSAC Pride Committee. email: lisa.vollans@gmail.com



Jack Bourassa, Director – Chair Education Committee, Member Bylaw & Resolutions Committee

Jack Bourassa arrived in the Yukon in 1989 from Kitchener, Ontario. His credentials as a Union activist date back more than 30 years to his employment in the textile industry. He became a member of the Northern Carpenters & Allied Workers/United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in 1990 while working as a carpenter in the construction trades in Whitehorse. He later retrained as a computer technician, and now works for the Department of Education maintaining the computer systems in Yukon schools and at Education's administration building.



Blair André, Director – Chair Building Association Committee, Member Public Relations & Bursary Committee, Member Community Representation Committee

Blair was first elected to the YEU executive at a January 2010 bi-election. He has lived in Mayo for many years, and currently works for the Department of Property Management. He has served as Shop Steward with Local Y010 in Mayo and volunteers his time and energy to various community organizations. Blair provides another regional voice on the Executive. email: wcandre@gmail.com



Tyler Murray, Director – Member Membership Services Committee, Member Youth Committee

A born and raised Yukoner, Tyler has been a YEU member for almost 5 years. He works at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, where he has served as Local Y016 Vice-President and President. He is a member of his workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the WCC Social Committee. First elected at the 2011 Convention, Tyler intends to use his voice and experience to ensure that Youth have clear and equitable representation in union affairs.



Mark Bowers, Director – Chair Negotiations Committee, Member Education Committee, Member Membership Services Committee

Mark has been a Yukon government employee for 22 years. He currently works for the Department of Community Services-Motor Vehicles. For 20 of those years he has been active in our union, serving as Shop Steward, Local executive member and President, YEU Director, Union Advisor, PSAC organizer and Union Counsellor. Mark also sat on two negotiating teams. email: mbowers@northwestel.net



Justin Lemphers, Director – Member Negotiations Committee, Member Equal Opportunities/Womens Committee

Justin works for the Yukon Government Energy, Mines and Resources, Mineral Resources branch at the Mining Recorder's office in Dawson City. He has been involved with YEU and PSAC for the past two years and been an Alliance member for eight years. Justin believes labour in Canada is entering into a period when solidarity, more than ever, will be critical to all workers. email: justin.lemphers@gmail.com



Derek Yap, Director – Chair Membership Services Committee, Member Building Association Committee

Derek is employed at Yukon College as Vice President, Faculty. He was elected to the YEU Executive at the October 2011 Triennial Convention. email: derek.k.yap@gmail.com