



**SOAR Chapter 3-14
NEWSLETTER**

NOVEMBER 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

This is our last issue of 2017. Two new members have articles that are very interesting. New PAC Chair, Monty Bartlett has an article on Union involvement in the political system. Monty will also be working closely with District 3 staff in the development of a new course in lobbying. Anyone interested in taking this course should make Monty aware. Our Chapter plans to be involved in lobbying the Provincial Government on Senior's issues.

Marlene Gow has an article on Union Education and it is well worth the read. There is also an article from Sonja Alton entitled "A Deafening Silence" which is very timely.

If you have a subject you would like to see covered or better still, if you would like to submit an article, contact any member of the Executive.

Our Chapter will begin work on compiling the USW history in District 3. We are starting by collecting and sorting Art Kube's collection of papers on the USW and the Labour movement in B.C.

We hope to see everyone at the annual Christmas luncheon on December 13th at the USW Hall in Langley. Remember no tolls on the bridges anymore!

SOAR CHAPTER 3-14 – POLITICAL ACTION

After 16 years of unfriendly government we now have the NDP in power. We now have a government that can give us a voice in the running of the province, a voice in making B.C. a better, safer, healthier place for families, working people and seniors.

These changes won't happen overnight and they won't happen at all unless we make sure our needs are communicated to Premier Horgan and the Cabinet.

All governments face challenges and the NDP one more than most. Talking with them is crucial. The best way to do this is to come together, active and retired Steelworkers to make our voices heard and publicly support our government.

I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas lunch.

In Solidarity,

Monty Bartlett

MESSAGE FROM DOUG MACPHERSON, SOAR NATIONAL OFFICE

Steelworker members and retirees are no strangers to having their pension and benefits cut or lost in bankruptcy proceedings. We have a long history of fighting the injustices of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) on behalf of our members. No one, it seems, is immune from the threat of this happening. Now SEARS Canada employees are the public face of this issue. There have been many others.

Finally we have a commitment from one of our own members, Scott Duvall, Member of Parliament for Hamilton Mount and a SOAR member, who has committed, with the support of this party, the NDP, to try to change the law through a private members bill, which he will table in parliament in the fall session.

To change the law will take tremendous effort on all of our parts, but with all party support, it is possible. We need to use every tool in our tool box. Lobbying MP's of all political stripes. Writing letters to them, email, social media to bring public awareness to this needed change.

For more information go to <https://www.ndp.ca/news/end-pension-theft>

UNION EDUCATION

By Marlene Gow

In my career before retirement I was a Staff Representative for the United Steelworkers. During my twenty-two years on staff I spent most of my time in the role of Education Coordinator for District 6 (Ontario and Atlantic Provinces). I feel blessed to have been able to do a job I loved. Not everyone is so lucky.

In that role I had many responsibilities which included assisting in designing and writing courses, working with staff and regional councils to ensure delivery of courses for members in their area, ensuring materials and instructors were lined up and present at schools, training and working with instructors and also doing work with the national education department in National events where education courses were offered.

The list of courses offered to our members is very diverse with courses in collective bargaining, grievance handling, health & safety, compensation, human rights, equality issues, leadership, arbitration and communication. These courses are intended to build confidence and knowledge so members are competent in representing themselves and their coworkers when dealing with issues impacting their work and therefore their family life. It also ensures, regardless of your interest in union work, there is education available to help you take on any role you wish.

The peer to peer approach of education in the USW makes the education extremely accessible to members and ensures facilitators are able to relate to the experience of students. In most courses it is local union members at the front of the room. It therefore offers members a chance to see a place they may want to participate in the union at some point. There is a course members take to become a facilitator within their district. Being a facilitator was my favourite activity as a member and staff as it provided me an opportunity to give back some of the education and experience I was fortunate enough to have. It is so satisfying to see the confidence and competence students build during the course. Facilitators also provide feedback to locals and the District about anyone who seems to have a special gift in dealing with certain issues which can benefit not only their local union, but possibly a larger group of Steelworkers across the District.

Steelworker facilitators go the extra mile they give up time from their work and family life in order to share their knowledge with their brothers and sisters. Facilitators have to travel in order to ensure education is delivered in a place members are easily able to attend.

Union Education by Marlene Gow – continued

There are courses of different lengths to again make it accessible to members as not everyone can easily get time off from work. There are also week-long courses where members stay as a group so it can be a more intense education opportunity.

The Union is always developing new courses to address emerging and changing issues inside and outside the Union. One of those courses which may be of particular interest to future and current SOAR members. It is imperative people plan retirement and this course can help do that. Of course we know we need to plan financially, but there are so many other issues you must think about as you approach and enter retirement. It helps members think about how retirement will impact on their relationships with family and friends, think about their health going forward, what kind of activities or hobbies they will participate in and many other concerns facing older workers. Having a "retirement plan" will enable people to retire with less stress and have a fulfilled retirement.

This chapter is exploring the idea of offering some or all modules of that course to our membership. Stay tuned for further information.

A DEAFENING SILENCE

By Sonja Alton

I was raised to love books, and I have always loved words: I knew that whatever profession I undertook, it would involve the use of words.

My Mother was a published writer and brought the classics, the best English language books and translated foreign language books into our home. I read many of them and even remember reading Fyodor Dostoyevsky's War and Peace when I was only twelve years old.

I was introduced to William Shakespeare's plays at an early age by a book called Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare and I still have a copy of that book and a book of Shakespeare's sonnets, given to me as a child. His sonnets are beautiful; nevertheless, some will argue that the language of his plays is bawdy. That may be true, but Shakespeare's bawdy is not specifically directed at women and is so clever that it doesn't seem insulting.

Words and words used in the proper context, therefore, are important to me, and so you can imagine how stunned I was the first time a man called me a "bitch", and he didn't mean to imply it in the context of a female dog. Later my oldest daughter told me a rather amusing story about an angry male driver she encountered who used the "bitch" word to insult her: she was in her car at Quebec Street and Terminal Avenue waiting to make a left hand turn, but apparently the driver behind her felt she wasn't turning fast enough; suddenly, this angry driver was pounding on her car window, yelling "bitch" at her. Initially she was shaken up, but as she was driving along Terminal, she saw the same man driving alongside her. She rolled down her window and yelled at him, "That would be Ms. Bitch to you, Sir."

Of course, as well as being classified as road rage, this kind of behavior is sexism and bitch is only one of the many names misogynist men use to insult women: when I googled the word woman, I found 29 insulting words that can be used to identify a female. As we know, women have been targets for this misogynistic rhetoric for centuries and have managed to brush it off to some extent, but demeaning women in this way is insidious and eventually results in very harmful effects for not only individual women but the entire female population.

A Deafening Silence by Sonja Alton - continued

I think, sometimes, that men make comments not realising how insulting they can be: I don't know how many times I have been asked if I'm a housewife or if I work. Believe me, being a housewife and looking after a husband and four children is work and much harder work for me than working outside the home. Also, comments like, "Now you're being hysterical," wouldn't be made to a man by another man, nor would, "Oh, it must be that time of the month." The other day I heard someone define this mentality as old school thinking so let's get rid of it. And please, don't think it's funny to give a woman a t-shirt with something printed on the front like, "She who must be obeyed." *She* won't think it's funny and the shirt will only languish in a dresser drawer until she finally does what she should have done in the first place, rip it up and use it to wipe up something unmentionable from the floor.

Seriously though, recently, there was a huge uproar over a former male federal cabinet minister calling Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna "Climate Barbie." Today, these comments are not unusual when made to political figures. Sadly, a while ago, I watched a segment of CBC's National where dozens of Members of Parliament and high profile women made public the vitriolic cyber violence and general violence they have been subjected to: text messages; twitter comments; on line threats; stalking; harassment. Isn't it about time that people grew up and started treating each other with respect? Yet when women complain about verbal and other types of harassment, frequently the only response is a deafening silence from men. Perhaps it's about time we in Canada do what is being done in some parts of the United Kingdom where 'wolf whistles' at women are considered an offense and heavily fined.

I guess that would be considered putting one's money where one's mouth is.

From SOAR Chapter 3-14 to all of our members:



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2018

MARCH

March 7 SOAR General Meeting – 11:00 a.m. – Location - USW 1944 Hall, 5261 Lane Street, Burnaby
Near Royal Oak Station, Free Parking

JUNE

June 13 SOAR General Meeting – 11:00 a.m. – Location - USW 1944 Hall, 5261 Lane Street, Burnaby
Near Royal Oak Station, Free Parking

June 27 BC FORUM AGM – 10:00a.m. - Location - UFCW Hall, 350 Columbia St., New West

SEPTEMBER

September 3 Labour Day Events – Time & Locations TBA

September 12 SOAR General Meeting – 11:00 a.m. – Location - USW 1944 Hall, 5261 Lane Street, Burnaby
Near Royal Oak Station, Free Parking

DECEMBER

December 12 SOAR Annual Christmas Luncheon 10:30 a.m. USW Local 2009 Hall
202-9292 -200th Street, Langley, B.C.
Please park in rear of Hall.

NEXT SOAR MEETING & Annual Xmas Luncheon: Wednesday, December 13th, 2017, SOAR GENERAL MEETING, 10:30 a.m. at Steel Hall, #202 – 9292 – 200th Street, Langley, B.C. Please let us know if you will be attending by filling in the form provided and returning in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by December 1st, 2017. Thank you.



Also, don't forget to renew your dues membership for 2017. Membership form and self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed.