

# The Transmitter



# 2014 Convention

## Niagara Falls, Ontario



## Message From the President



Dear fellow Telecommunications Workers Union members,

Thanks for reading the summer edition of our Transmitter.

It has certainly been a busy time since our last edition of the Transmitter. In April, delegates headed to Niagara Falls, Ontario for our annual convention. This year's convention featured guest speakers Sid Ryan (President of the Ontario

Federation of Labour, Ken Neumann (National Director for Canada of the United Steelworkers) and Wayne Gates (MPP for Niagara Falls). The convention also included presentations from USW's Brad James and Mike Zielinski, an information session from the Telecommunications Workers Benefit Plan, Health and Benefit Trustee's Report and the Long Term Disability and Pension Trustee's Report. Throughout the convention, delegates engaged in debate on a variety of important resolutions and participated in elections for various National Executive Council positions and committees.

***I hear excitement from our membership and I feel a sense of hope and optimism. We must remember that we need to be united and we need to stand in solidarity with each other.***

During convention, delegates joined together for our 70th anniversary celebration luncheon. Before the lunch, and video montage presentation, I addressed our delegates and spoke about the 70th anniversary of our union. I would like to thank Brothers Dave DiMaria and Nathan Beausoleil for their hard work creating this wonderful tribute to the work we have achieved together. I would also like to thank the 70th Anniversary Committee for their work to highlight this important milestone for our union.

Many of you have heard that our convention delegates voted to support the resolution brought forward by local 602 calling on the TWU National Executive Council to update the merger document and to conduct a new membership vote to merge with the United Steelworkers. Delegates voted 70% in sup-

port of the resolution. This directive from delegates shows very compelling support among members to build a better future for the TWU.

The Merger Advisory Committee, along with our Merger Negotiations Committee, will commence their review of our previous merger document and begin talks with the USW as soon as possible. We are striving to hold a special convention in early fall with the vote to follow.

What is evident is the clear majority of support for merging with the USW. Last fall, the merger vote was 97 votes short of hitting our constitution's high 66 + 2/3% threshold. While there has been strong support for the merger, some of our members continue to oppose the prospect. It is important to remember that we are all proud to be TWU members, but

there will always be a small group of members who are against a merger of any kind. Other members support a merger, but they have a desire to merge with a union other than the

USW. I respect those opinions. What I don't respect is false information and unauthorized materials being sent to our members' homes to deliberately affect the outcome of the vote.

As I have said many times, I have always been confident in the decision made by our Merger Selection Committee. I strongly support the merger of our union and the USW as I believe they are the best match for us. I look forward to presenting our membership with the updated negotiated merger agreement in the coming months. Once the merger document

has been released, a series of membership meetings will be held where all questions can be addressed.

While our membership is engaged with merger discussions, it is important that we do not lose sight of the larger picture. All of our certifications have bargaining approaching and we must begin electing new bargaining teams in the coming months. There is no question that there will be tough times ahead and we are expecting difficult rounds of negotiations. Our bargaining teams will be meeting, training and working with our membership to protect your collective agreements.

As we move towards bargaining, I would like to thank all the members who participated in the Building Power courses. I felt very encouraged and inspired by the feedback from members who participated in the course and I have heard many of the participants are eager to begin phase 2. Development on phase 2 has already started and additional details will be sent out in the weeks ahead. These Building Power courses would not have been possible without the assistance and commitment from the United Steelworkers. On behalf of the TWU, I thank them for continuing to honour their commitments by loaning us their best and their brightest in health and safety, education, organizing and strategic planning.

I am excited for the months ahead as I see engagement at a whole new level. I hear excitement from our membership and I feel a sense of hope and optimism. We must remember that we need to be united and we need to stand in solidarity with each other. We are building power and momentum to bring change for the better, but we must continue moving forward positively and be ready to fight for our rights.

It is important that the membership is well informed and we want to ensure you receive all the information so you can make informed decisions. I encourage everyone to keep abreast of Union news, bargaining updates as well as merger negotiations by visiting [www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca) and signup to receive our eNews bulletins.

In Solidarity,  
Lee Riggs  
TWU National President

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## 2014 TWU Election Results

### Vice-President British Columbia (1) - 3 Years

- Betty Carrasco

### Secretary-Treasurer (1) - 3 Years

- Colin Brehaut

### Business Agent - Prince George (1) - 3 Years

- Robin Arndt

### Business Agent - Kelowna (1) - 3 Years

- Mike Lucas

### Business Agent - Calgary (1) - 3 Years

- Juanita West

### Business Agent - Edmonton (1) - 3 Years

- Ron Palmer

### Business Agent - Montréal (1) - 3 Years

- Pierre-Richard Joseph

### Alternate Business Agent - British Columbia (1) - Remainder of Term

- Steve McWhirter

### Alternate Business Agent - Quebec (2) - 3 Years

- Olivier Picard • Martin Rivest

### Alternate Business Agent - Quebec (1) - 2 Years - Remainder of Term

- William To

### Alternate Business Agent - Ontario (2) - 3 Years

- Brian Turner • Brenda Forward

### Alternate Business Agent - Alberta (1) - 3 Years

- Shane Matchullis

### Alternate Business Agent - British Columbia (1) - 3 Years

- Denise Chisholm



From left to right: Juanita West, BA for Calgary; Colin Brehaut, Secretary-Treasurer; Betty Carrasco, Vice-President for B.C.; Chris Stephens, TWPP Pension Trustee; Steve McWhirter, Alternate BA for B.C., Vice-Chair; Ron Palmer, BA for Edmonton; Pierre-Richard Joseph, BA for Montréal; (President Riggs' back); Shane Matchullis, Alternate BA for Alberta



From left to right: Sébastien Whissell, Alternate BA for Quebec, remainder of term; Mike Lucas, BA for Kelowna; Oliver Picard, Alternate BA for Quebec, Education Committee Quebec; Denise Chisholm, Alternate BA for B.C.

**Chair (1) - 2 Years**

- Dave Michie

**Vice-Chair (1) - 2 Years**

- Steve McWhirter

**Finance Committee - Ontario (1) - 2 Years**

- Brenda Forward

**TWPP Pension Trustee (1) - Remainder of Term**

- Chris Stephens

**Finance Committee - Ontario (1) - 2 Years**

- Brenda Forward

**Finance Committee - Quebec (1) - 2 Years**

- Oliver Picard

**Finance Committee -At Large (1) - 2 Years**

- Wendy Haill
- Steve Kiernan - 1st Alternate

**Constitution Committee - Alberta (1) - 2 Years**

- Anthony Lebel

**Constitution Committee -At Large (1) -2 Years**

- Pierre-Luc Dick
- Robert Briza - 1st Alternative

**Constitution Committee- (1) - remainder of Term**

- Lance Trevison

**Constitution Committee - Ontario (1) -2 Years**

- Michael Bertumen

**Education Committee - Alberta (1) -2 years**

- Matt Aiken

**Education Committee - Quebec (1) - 2 Years**

- Martin Rivest

**Education Commiittee - At Large (1) - 2 Years**

- Andy Wong
- Nancy McCurrach - 1st Alternative
- Kevin Rerrie - 2nd Alternative

**Solidarity Committee (3) - 2 Years**

- Jayson Little
- Roy Driver
- Michael Goodmurphy

**Solidarity Committee (3) - 1 Year**

- Cynthia Clemmens
- Karen Phillips
- Greg Kadey

## Newly Elected Officials



[Colin Brehaut](#)

**Secretary-Treasurer, 3 years term**

Colin Brehaut was born and raised in Terrace, B.C. His mother and stepfather both worked for BC Tel/Telus and were active members of the TWU. While going to university and earning degrees in chemistry and economics, he started working for BC Tel as a summer student in 1989 and was hired as a full-time employee in 1994. Since that time, he's been actively involved with the TWU. In addition to being a BA headquartered in Burnaby and Kelowna, Brother Brehaut has belonged to an impressive list of committees: health and safety, tactical, finance, pay equity, Operator Services Steering, political action, BC Fed political action, public awareness, strategic info gathering, bargaining, and merger negotiations. Furthermore, he has been a delegate to various other labour organizations, is a TWPP pension trustee, and is actively involved with the BC NDP. As Secretary-Treasurer, Brother Brehaut will provide financial leadership for the TWU, make decisions with integrity, and ensure that our union is on a sound financial footing. We are happy to have him in his new role.



[Mike Lucas](#)

**Business Agent- Kelowna, 3 years term**

Mike Lucas is a native to B.C.'s interior who has been involved with the TWU since 2005. Before being newly elected into his position as a Business Agent (BA), Brother Lucas had worked for Telus for 10 years in the installation and repair department. He has been an alternate BA for B.C. since 2010 and has belonged to the following committees: constitution, education, health and safety, and youth committee. In addition to all of the good work he has done for the TWU and Telus; Brother Lucas is also a second-degree black belt jujutsu instructor. On his own time Brother Lucas enjoys the Okanagan outdoors: canoeing, camping and hiking. TWU members from locals 4, 8, 16, 22, 36, and 37 will be lucky to have Brother Lucas in their corner to represent their interests.



[Pierre-Richard Joseph](#)

**Business Agent- Montréal, 3 years term**

Pierre-Richard Joseph has been involved with the labour movement since TWU local 602 was created in 2005. As the new BA for Montréal, Brother Joseph will be responsible for locals 602, P-Z, and 604, M-Z. Previous to being elected into his current position, Brother Joseph was a longtime employee of Telus, having worked for the company since 2001. During this time he was an active TWU member; he has also acted as an alternate business agent, president and vice president of local 602, FTQ (Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec) Convention delegate, TWU Shop Steward, delegate for the CBTU International Convention, and was the Chair of the Human Rights Committee. Brother Joseph is an avid sports fan, soccer, and football being his favourite. He likes to collect cigars and rum. He is family oriented and expecting his first child in the fall. The TWU is excited to have Brother Joseph in his new position as BA.

# May 2014 Convention in Niagara Falls, Highlights:

## Brothers and Sister shave their heads for a member in need



Karen Phillips, local 7; Lee Riggs, TWU National President

The annual Convention of the Telecommunications Workers Union is a time for delegates from across Canada to come together; important issues are deliberated and opposing views are discussed. It can be a venue for heated debate, but it is all for the good of the membership.

This year, during the May 2014 Convention held in Niagara Falls, we were reminded of what unites members and why we call each other Brothers and Sisters. At the time, one of our members was unfortu-

nately suffering through extreme hardship. The Alberta Brother had been terminated earlier in the year; concurrently, serious illness had fallen upon his family.

On the Convention floor, the bearded and long-haired delegate, Richard Blais from local 214, spoke of

the hardship that had fallen upon his union Brother and pledged to shave his head if \$1,500 could be raised. To place further incentive on attendees, Convention Chairperson Dave Michie volunteered to also shave his head if the target amount was reached. Next, Brother Blais upped the ante by offering to shave his beard (which hadn't been shaved in years) if \$3000 could be raised.

Then, long-haired Karen Phillips, from local 7, courageously committed to shave her head if \$5000 was raised. Convention attendees were inspired.

Later in the week, during a social hosted by Concert Properties, all three members did indeed shave their heads (and



Dave Michie, Convention Chair



George Doubt, former TWU president, local R55; Richard Blais, local 214

beard). Everyone cheered as donation after donation was put forward. Concert Properties gave \$1000 to the cause, half from management,

***We look out for each other when times are tough; we rally together for the greater good. United we will stand.***

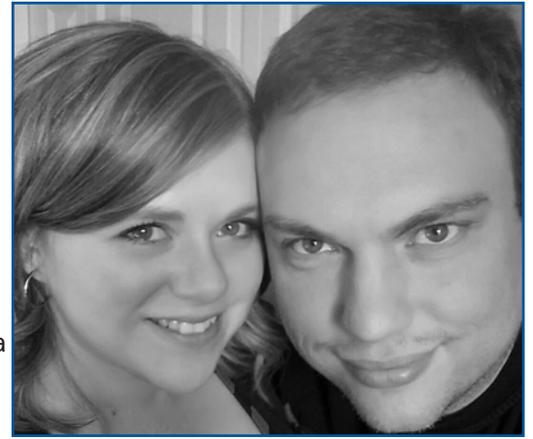
and half from the company. Local 51 generously donated \$500, as did local 213. In the end, Brother Blais, Michie and Sister Phillips raised \$7,100 with their selfless acts for the Alberta Brother in need.

The story ends positively as the Alberta Brother grieved his termination, which was settled prior to arbitration. The Brother recently returned to work.

These acts from our Brothers and Sisters should remind members of the spirit of the TWU. This is a union where we look out for each other when times are tough; we rally together for the greater good. United we will stand.

## Love at the TWU Convention

The 2014 annual TWU Convention became a venue for romance as two TWU members pledged their love for each other by getting engaged. First time delegate David Skrober, 33, and his partner Cheri Britten, 28, both from local 213, met through mutual friends over a year ago. On the evening that the couple arrived in beautiful Niagara for their first-ever TWU Convention, David popped the question to Cheri at a restaurant overlooking the exquisite falls. The couple stated that they were both excited with their engagement. Groom-to-be David said that "our local was amazing, treating us to a wonderful dinner and [Edmonton Business Agent, and photographer] Ron Palmer offered to take our engagement photos free of charge."



The generosity of fellow union brothers and sisters wasn't the only aspect of convention that impressed the newly engaged couple. David and Cheri met many TWU brothers and sisters from across Canada and enjoyed the Convention debate and the solidarity demonstrated throughout the week. They were also impressed with the passion of delegates and guest speakers.

David, who grew up in a union family, said he was most impressed by guest speaker Mike Zielinski of USW Strategic Campaigns. Following Zielinski's presentation, the couple stated they are hopeful our membership will endorse a merger between the TWU and USW.

While wedding plans for the couple are still being finalized, they plan to hold the ceremony in Cape Breton, as the bride-to-be is originally from Nova Scotia where her family continues to reside. The TWU wished the pair all the best and hope they have a long and happy marriage, as well as a long and bright future with the TWU.

**TWU SHOP STEWARD COURSES** 

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."  
-Nelson Mandela

This fall the TWU will be providing both basic shop steward and advanced shop steward courses.

Sign up to learn more about your collective agreement and gain a better understanding of the labour movement.

Stay tuned for registration information

# May 2014 Convention in Niagara Falls, Photo Gallery:



Betty Carrasco, TWU Vice-President; Colin Brehaut, TWU Secretary-Treasurer; Ivana Niblett, TWU Vice-President



Sid Ryan, President of the Ontario Federation of labour; Lee Riggs, TWU National President



Carol Nagy, TWPP; Birgit Haggstrom, local R55; David Podmore, Concert Properties; George Doubt, local R55; Allan Haggstrom, local R55



Wayne Gates, NDP MPP for Niagara Falls



Scott Lunny, USW District 3 Assistant to the Director; Lee Riggs, TWU National President; Mark Rowlinson; USW Assistant to the National Director



Ken Neumann, USW National Director

## Diversity Survey Findings



Tricia Watt,  
BA for Ontario and member of  
the Diversity Committee

In accordance with the newly formed TWU Diversity Committee's mandate, the committee's first project was to put out a survey amongst delegates and National Executive Council (NEC) who attended the 2014 TWU-STT Convention. The purpose of surveying this group of individuals was to learn more about the diversity

amongst our leadership.

With 129 eligible respondents between the delegates and NEC members, a total of 112 surveys (86.8%) were completed.

The blind survey had 14 questions that covered: gender, age, province of residence, country of birth, language(s) spoken (read and written), religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, identifiable disabilities, years of service at current employer and years of involvement with the TWU.

The following is a summary of the results of the survey:

- 61.6% of the respondents were male, 38.4% were female.
- Ages of respondents:
  - 15% between ages 55-64
  - 35.7% between ages 45-54
  - 27.7% between ages 35-44
  - 19.6% between ages 25-34
  - 1.8% between ages 18-24
- 49% of the respondents were from B.C.
- 83.9% of the respondents were born in Canada. Other respondents were born in the following countries: Czechoslovakia, England, France, Guyana, Haiti, India, Iraq, Kenya, Philippines, Portugal, United Kingdom and USA.
- The various spoken languages amongst respondents are: Arabic, Bhojpuri, Cantonese, Creole, Czech, English, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Portuguese, Somali, Swahili and Tagalog. One respondent is fluent in sign language.

- The various languages that respondents can read and write are: Cantonese, Creole, Czech, English, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Somali, Swahili, Tagalog.
- 5.36% of the respondents identified as being part of the LGBTQQ community.
- 18.75% of the respondents identified as being a person with disability.
- 53.6% of the respondents are religious, identifying as either Christian Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim. 45.3% identified as being Agnostic, Atheist or nothing in particular. The other 1.1% did not provide a response.
- When asked to list ethnic or cultural group of their ancestors and/or the ethnic or cultural group they identified with, the responses were: Aboriginal, African, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian, Austrian, Black, British, Blackfoot, Canadian, French-Canadian, Caribbean, Chinese, Czech, Cree, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, East Indian, French, First Nations, German, Guyanese, Hispanic, Hungarian, Irish, Jamaican, Metis, Newfoundlander, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Scottish, Swedish, Swiss, Scandinavian, Spanish, South African, Trinidadian, Ukrainian, West Indian, Western European.
- Years of service with current employers of respondents:
  - 15% had 0-5 years
  - 24% had 6-10 years
  - 22.3% had 26+ years
  - 2.5% for the remaining categories 11-15, 16-20 and 21-25 years
- Respondents years of involvement with the TWU:
  - 31.3% have 0-5 years
  - 25.9% have 6-10 years

- 21.4% have 11-15 years
- 4.5% have 16-20 years
- 5.3% have 21-25 years
- 10.7% have 26 years or more

The above is just a summary of answers provided but it clearly shows the areas in which our leadership exemplifies a lot of diversity as well as areas to improve upon, such as a need to engage younger members.

Our goal is to extend this survey, or a version of it, to the general membership and so we appreciate any comments or suggestions on how they survey questions could be improved for the next round. Please send your comments to email address: [diversity@twu-stt.ca](mailto:diversity@twu-stt.ca).

Committee members:

- Napoleon Abano- British Columbia
- Widmarc Innocent- Quebec
- Kevin Rerrie- Ontario
- Michelle Ravary- Ontario

- Tricia Watt- Business Agent/ HRO Ontario

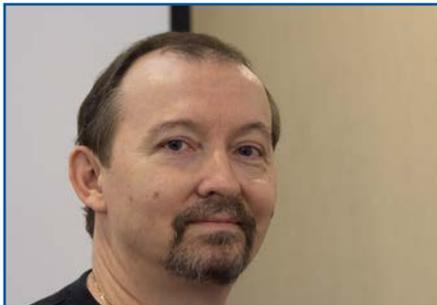
\*\*We are still looking for 1 more member from Quebec, 2 from Alberta and 1 more from BC.

\*\*Survey is available at [www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca) website.

*-Submitted by Tricia Watt, BA for Ontario and member of the Diversity Committee*



## Working together to provide safety training



**Dave DiMarie,**  
BA for Burnaby, B.C. and  
member of the National  
Health and Safety Committee

The TWU and the United Steelworkers (USW) are working together to develop health & safety committee member training material that will meet the needs of our members. Representatives from the USW Education Department and the Health, Safety and Environment Department are working with the TWU National Health and Safety Committee to revise and adapt USW material. New material is also being written to ensure the training is relevant to our workplaces.

The TWU has not had the resources available to put together up-to-date training material, or to provide in-house training for our safety committees, in many years. The assistance of the Steelworkers in this project is greatly appreciated. This is

a joint initiative under the terms of the formal strategic alliance the TWU has with the USW.

The Steelworkers have also committed to providing joint training to TWU members, supplying the course material and trainers with the TWU paying for time off and expenses of our members. However, given the current budgetary limitations within our union, initial training will be limited until sufficient health and safety education funds are made available. However, we'll have quality training material when we're able to roll out a wider training program, thanks to the time and resources from our Steelworker sisters and brothers.

Special thanks to Ron Corbeil, Gerry LeBlanc, Dayna Sykes and Adriane Paavo from USW Health, Safety and Environment Department and Education Department for their generous assistance.

***This is a joint initiative under the terms of the formal strategic alliance the TWU has with the USW.***

*-Written by Dave DiMaria, BA for Burnaby, B.C. and member of the National Health and Safety Committee*

## How we got here TWU merger account

### November 2012

The TWU National Executive Council (NEC) passed a motion to canvass the membership (per Article XXI of the TWU Constitution) to authorize the negotiation of a tentative merger agreement with the United Steelworkers (USW), which would be brought back to the membership for a referendum vote.

During information meetings regarding this issue, NEC heard three consistent themes about why some members would be voting against the authorization: the process undertaken, the lack of choice, and the unknowns (i.e. how do I know my pension plan won't be impacted). With respect to the process undertaken, some members felt that the issue should have come before convention, the highest governing body within the TWU.

As a result of the concerns raised, the TWU NEC established a Merger Selection Committee made up of the Chair of the Finance Committee, two members of the Constitution Committee, the Chair of Convention, and three NEC officers. The Merger Selection Committee's mandate was to compile a questionnaire to be submitted to a minimum of three unions. The questionnaire was to have specific questions regarding dues, governance, organizing, membership education, retirees, and bargaining strategies

The Merger Selection Committee put together a questionnaire (with 69 questions) and sent it to eight different unions (CEP, CAW, USW, Teamsters, COPE, CUPE UFCW, and IBEW).

Once the committee had compiled all the answers, they were mandated to bring forward one recommendation of a union to begin merger negotiations with, and that recommendation would be placed before convention.

Based on the responses, the Merger Selection Committee asked 4 of the unions to give presentations; the committee unanimously recommended that the TWU begin merger negotiations with the USW.

### May 6-10, 2013

the recommendation is brought before convention, which is made up of representatives of every local within the TWU, and vigorous debate ensues. After hours of debate, convention delegates voted in favour of the motion to enter into merger negotiations with the USW, with the involvement of the trustees of the Telecommunications Workers Benefit Plan and the Telecommunications Workers Pension Plan.

## Fall 2013

a nationwide merger vote of the TWU membership was conducted by electronic ballot over a two-week period. Final results were released on Nov. 15 2013, after being validated by an independent auditor. The membership voted 64.41% in favour of the merger, falling short of the high constitutional threshold of 66 + 2/3%.

## Convention April/May 2014

local 602 brings forward a resolution asking for a new vote to be conducted regarding the TWU merging with the USW.

The actual wording of the resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS the TWU-STT Merger Selection Committee, consisting of Officers and rank-and-file members from across the country, went through an intensive selection process in choosing the best union for the TWU-STT to merge with; and

WHEREAS the TWU-STT Merger Selection Committee thoroughly researched eight (8) different unions and selected the United Steelworkers (USW) as the best union to merge with; and

WHEREAS the selection of the USW was also endorsed by the National Executive Council and the vast majority of delegates at the 2013 Convention and a merger vote was taken by the membership; and

WHEREAS false information was intentionally spread to the TWU-STT membership which interfered with the merger vote between the TWU-STT and the USW; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the TWU-STT National Executive Council use their authority under Article XXI of the TWU-STT Constitution by updating the merger document and conducting a new vote to the membership to merge the TWU-STT with the United Steelworkers as soon as reasonably possible.

## GOING FORWARD:

National President Lee Riggs appoints members to a Merger Advisory Committee. The Committee's mandate is to review the USW Tentative Merger Agreement and recommend amendments to areas that need clarification. The findings from the committee will be passed to the Merger Negotiations Committee.

The Merger Negotiations Committee will meet with USW to revise the TWU-USW Tentative Merger Agreement.

Once an agreement has been reached, a special convention will be called to approve the Agreement.

Should the special convention approve the Merger Agreement, the Agreement itself will be disseminated to the membership.

The membership will have full access to a variety of communications intended to inform the membership of the details of the Agreement and address any concerns: question and answer handouts, telephone town halls, informative local and regional meetings, and regular hotlines.

A membership vote on the TWU-USW Merger Agreement will be conducted, and ballots tabulated no later than

**Nov. 28, 2014.**



Kim Stade, local 207; Rachel Notley, NDP MLA for Edmonton Strathcona; Joe Benn, BA for Alberta

On Jan. 25, 2014, Kim Stade, delegate for TWU local 207, and I attended the Edmonton Gold Bar Alberta Provincial NDP Fundraiser. The event had over 100 attendees including the complete Alberta NDP caucus, as well as federal NDP MP for Edmonton-Strathcona, Linda Duncan, and NDP candidate, Marlin Schmidt, acting as master of ceremonies. Also amongst the VIP guests were Gil McGowan, President of the Alberta Federation of Labour and Secretary Treasurer Siobhan Vipond.

At the gathering there was much discussion amongst guests about the anti-union bills 45 and 46 that the Progressive Conservative (PC) Alberta government has been pushing through legislature. Bill 45, the Public Sector Service Continuation Act, places further restrictions on public sector workers who are already denied the right to strike. The Bill would also fine workers for merely discussing 'illegal' strike actions of any kind. This is an infringement of freedom of expression. Bill 46, the Public Service Salary Restraint Act, essentially strips the Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE) of the ability to negotiate fair collective agreements. The Alberta Court of Queen's Bench actually granted an injunction to suspend the operation of Bill 46 as it was deemed unlawful.

The political climate has been shifting in Alberta. Leader of the Alberta PC government, Allison Redford, resigned after a money spending scandal. Dave Hancock is sitting as interim premier of Alberta while the party gears up for a leadership race. After 43 years in power the Alberta PC's have disappointed Albertans on a wide range of issues; creeping privatization of Alberta's healthcare, school boards have been chronically undercapitalized, and universities and colleges have had a funding freeze during a strong economy and a rising student population. The Alberta Tories have caved to pressure from oil companies who want to "rip and ship" raw bitumen from our oil sands, without refining it in Canada. As a result literally thousands of potential jobs are being lost to the United States

and China as we export our natural resources. Under the Alberta PC's rule, the labour laws of the province have become the weakest in the country.

With the disappointing governance of the Alberta's PC's, the extremist Wildrose Party of Alberta made tremendous gains and formed the official opposition in the last provincial election. The Wildrose Party claims to be the 'party of the people' but they value right-wing extremist policies that would undermine many of the values of Canadians, such as universal healthcare, education, and fair taxation. Wildrose leader, Danielle Smith, has promised to create a two-tiered healthcare system, ignoring the fact that a for-profit tier would draw crucial personnel and resources away from the public system, effectively eroding Canadian Medicare.

The Wildrose party would also introduce American-style, anti-union legislation that would undermine the Rand formula, allowing workers the ability to opt out of paying union dues while continuing to enjoy the benefits provided by union-negotiated collective agreements.

The real party of the people is the Alberta New Democrats. I will never forget how former leader Brian Mason was a constant fixture on our picket lines during the Telus lockout in 2005. The New Democrats are the voices of labour and social justice in the Alberta's highly conservative political climate. TWU members must remember to support and elect labour-friendly political candidates in upcoming municipal, provincial, and federal elections. It is vital that we push back against these backward thinking, right wing extremists.

In Solidarity,

Joe Benn

# Results of Constitutional Ballot Amendments 2014:

Four constitutional resolutions were passed at the May 2014 Convention and sent out for ratification by the membership. The ballots were counted on July 11, 2014 and needed to achieve 66 + 2/3% in support to be implemented.

<b>Ballot #</b>	<b>Breakdown</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1 Objects of the Union – Promotion of Youth</b>	The intent of this motion was to add the promotion of youth involvement within the TWU-STT and the labour movement to the list of objectives of the TWU-STT	<b>80.39</b>
<b>2 Dues Reallocation</b>	The intent of this motion was to redirect a portion (approx. \$1 million) of the existing stream of dues that are allocated to the Benevolent Society (strike fund) into the Administration Account (used for the day-to-day operations of the union).	<b>49.96</b>
<b>3 Article XIV (Pension Trustee) balloting</b>	The intent of this motion was to standardize the number of delegates voting on changes to Article XIV – Pension Trustees of the TWU Constitution by importing the same formula used in Article VII 4 – Composition of Convention.	<b>70.76</b>
<b>4 Absences of 24+months</b>	The intent of this motion was to add language to Constitution, Article V, so that members who are absent from work due to illness or disability, for more than 24 months, become associate members, until such a time that they return to work and once again begin paying union dues.	<b>65.36</b>

For greater detail on vote results, please refer to the TWU Hotline of July 14, 2014, which can be found on the [www.twu-stt.ca website](http://www.twu-stt.ca).



Former Constitution Committee, from left to right: Guy Mousseau, local 37; Denise Chisholm, local 51; Mike Lucas, BA for B.C., Kelowna; Bruce Kennedy, local 2; Steve Lewis, local 3

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

In recent months, the Alberta Labour Coalition on Pensions mounted a fierce defense of retirement security in the province.

Last autumn, Finance Minister Doug Horner rolled out a slate of proposals that would seriously undermine the retirement security of workers enrolled in public-sector pension plans like the LAPP and the PSPP. These changes would reduce the value of a pension by up to 25 per cent, and could undermine the long term viability of the plans.

The coalition held a town-hall meeting to inform plan members, produced pension brochures, organized a 2,000-person rally in Edmonton, conducted lobbying meetings with elected officials, supported worksite information pickets at more than 50 sites all over the province, and launched a new website, [truthaboutalbertapensions.ca](http://truthaboutalbertapensions.ca), where pension plan members could calculate what government changes would mean to them.

In short, it has been a busy and productive time for the Coalition. Because of the work of the Coalition - because of your involvement - government MLAs are starting to get nervous about these changes. The Telephone Town Hall, which was held on January 20, engaged more than 8,000 members of the LAPP and the PSPP. During the event, dozens of members phoned in to have their pension-related questions answered by actuarial experts, pension board members and union leaders.

On March 2, we had an extraordinary turnout for our Rally for Retirement Security, which was held in Sir Winston Churchill Square in Edmonton. Despite near-record cold weather, thousands of Albertans from all over the province were on hand. While the protesters trembled from the -30C cold, the Redford Government was trembling in its boots.

To ensure that the message was getting out to MLAs, the coalition began hosting "How To Lobby Your MLA" events, and contacting members who had said they were interested. These events helped get the facts about Alberta's pension plans into the hands of backbench MLAs.

On March 20, the coalition helped co-ordinate and support worksites looking to host informational pickets. These pickets were held to help our engaged activist members inform their colleagues about the potentially disastrous pension changes the government is planning. Thousands of Albertans participated in these rallies that were held at more than 40 locations throughout the province.

The coalition had penned and approved opinion columns in each of the major daily newspapers in Alberta arguing for Redford's resignation over the pension issues. But just before these went to print - and just eighteen hours before these information pickets began, Premier Redford resigned.

Redford's resignation opens up a window for the Coalition to directly lobby potential heirs to the throne. We suspect that Finance Min'1ster Doug Horner -the public face of these pension changes - will be one of the contenders for leadership. Over the upcoming weeks, the Coalition will engage in direct lobbying of aspirants to the Premiership, and will attempt to find out where various candidates stand on retirement security.

Hopefully, we can convince one or two of the candidates that the expansion of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) would benefit Albertans of all economic classes, and in all industries. As it stands, too many Albertans have no retirement security, and yet this is the only province whose government has not asked Ottawa to expand the highly successful CPP.

Because of our successful visits to MLAs, and because of our successful information pickets, the government has recently armed its staff with slickly-produced misinformation to rebut our arguments. The Coalition is revising the [truthaboutalbertapensions.ca](http://truthaboutalbertapensions.ca) website to respond to this misinformation, and will be publishing a fact sheet.

The fight to preserve retirement security has made great strides in recent months, and victory has never been more possible. Please continue visiting [truthaboutalbertapensions.ca](http://truthaboutalbertapensions.ca) as we update information, and add new content.

Sincerely,

Gil McGowan, Chairperson, Labour Coalition on Pensions

# Photo Gallery:



Perry Pasqualetto, BA for Burnaby, B.C.



Willow Hall, local 63; Steve McWhirter, local 51; Harmony Jackson, BA for Alberta; Isabelle Miller, BA for Québec



Building Power, Burnaby class, from left to right: Jenn Bucholtz, BA for Burnaby, B.C.; Sandra Hewko, local 207; Brad James, USW Organizing Department; Nancy McCurrach, local 51; Denis Lavoie, local 604; Ashok Tripathi, local 207; Wendy Werbitsky, local 207; Michelle Day, local 51; Julie Charbonneau, local 52; Maxime Blanchette, local 601; Ivor Labrador, local 502; Shane Moews, local 32; Guy Mousseau, local 37; Denise Chisholm, local 51; Ron Macaraeg, local 502; Gerald Jang, local 5; Troy Mutter, local 202; Michael South, local 10; Mike Zielinsky, USW Strategic Campaigns Department; Sherri Archer, local 5; Alex Eshelman, USW Strategic Campaigns Department



The Merger Advisory Committee, 2014, from left to right: Dave DiMaria, BA for Burnaby, B.C.; Brian Turner, local 502; Chris Stephens, local 31; Roy Driver, local 10; Widmarc Innocent, local 602; Steve Lewis, local 3; Brenda Forward, local 501; Steve McWhirter, local 51; Bruce Kennedy, local 2; George Doubt, local R55; Kim Woodroffe, local 213; James Large, local 60; Shane Moews, local 32; Lee Riggs, TWU National President

## 2014 CBTU Convention, Working Together – It Shall Come to Pass, Q&A



From May 21-26 TWU Business Agents Isabelle Miller, Hans-Woosly Balan, Pierre-Richard Joseph, and former secretary-treasurer Michael Thompson attended the 43rd International Convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme of this year's convention was appropriately entitled 'Working Together – It Shall Come To Pass.' At the convention, Sister Miller was awarded the Rising Star Award for her contributions to the CBTU. The following is a Q & A answered by some of the attendees, which has been condensed for formatting purposes.

### **What does the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) do as an organization and why is it important?**



#### **Isabelle Miller (IM):**

The CBTU represents the voice of workers of colour. It is an organization where labour is celebrated in a manner that identifies with the black community. As a coalition of workers representing international and national unions, the CBTU helps educate communities on union values, and the importance of promoting the labour movement. It is a forum where workers belonging to minorities can express themselves freely, in a sympathetic environment. The CBTU mentors activists of colour on how to break barriers, both in the workplace and within the labour movement itself.



#### **Pierre-Richard Joseph (PRJ):**

The CBTU has built a national movement that brings all our strengths and varied talents together in the endless effort to achieve economic, political, and social justice for every North American worker. It is impor-

tant because they actively support civil rights and civic groups working to improve living and working conditions in the black community.

### **Why should TWU members be interested in the CBTU?**

#### **Hans-Woosly Balan (HWB):**

TWU members should be interested in the CBTU, and similar labour organizations, in order to better relate to visible minorities in the workplace. To better unite and utilize the strengths of our members, we need to speak to a cross-section of our membership by addressing their specific issues and concerns.



#### **IM:**

At a time when the interest in labour activism is low, CBTU is inspiring TWU members to engage in the labour movement and community action.

#### **PRJ:**

The CBTU works within the framework of the trade union movement to maximize the strength and influence of black workers and other minorities.

### **What were your favourite presentations/guest speakers?**

#### **HWB:**

Reverend Jesse Jackson and Reverend William Barber.

**IM:**

Cecil E. Roberts, President of the United Mine Workers of America. His speech was riveting as he went through the many reasons to join a union. He was not only a powerful speaker, but provided a wealth of historical information about past labour struggles in the Southern United States.

**PRJ:**

Rev. Dr. William Barber II was inspiring when he spoke to human rights, the change that he brought to the NAACP and how he was able to help increase voters' rights in North Carolina.

***What were some of the subjects most relevant to TWU members?***

**HWB:**

Canadian activists need to learn from the labour movement in the United States (US); learn from their mistakes and accomplishments so that we can better prepare ourselves for similar struggles. A lot of the anti-union legislation introduced by the Canadian Conservative government is based on anti-union attacks that were successful in the US. American politics greatly affect Canadian politics.

**PRJ:**

The CBTU provided information on how to increase union involvement in voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout. Apathy has always been an issue in both Canadian politics, and amongst our own members when it comes to the democratic processes of the TWU. There was also information on how to mobilize unorganized workers, as well as how to strengthen effective political alliances.

***What was your favourite workshop and why?***

**HWB:**

We all enjoyed the under 40 workshop that was facilitated by Ronieka Burns from SEIU Healthcare and TWU's very own Isabelle Miller. This workshop focused on the values, history, and the hardships of the CBTU; teaching us that by learning from the past we can better prepare for the future. The workshop also gave instruction on how to engage people under the age of 40, a problem we experience within the TWU, through mentorship.

***The TWU is very proud to have a member of our very own Executive Council, Isabelle Miller, honoured with an award at the CBTU Convention; can you tell us about it?***

**IM:**

It was an absolute honour to win the Rising Star Award; the award recognizes achievements and contributions made to the CBTU by members under the age of 40. To win this young

workers award and be nominated by this international committee of workers was moving.

During my career in the labour movement I've been fortunate to achieve many firsts. In 2005 I was elected as a delegate in the creation of local 602. During my election year in 2006 I was one of the first woman of colour ever elected to the TWU Executive Council along with Tricia Watt and Mimi Williams. I was the first Business Agent ever elected in Quebec and am in my ninth year in office. I was the first TWU officer elected to the Canadian Chapter of the CBTU Executive and was nominated by former president George Doubt to attend the International CBTU Executive Council in 2012. With this award, I've been told I'm now the first Canadian to have received an international award from the CBTU.

How will it affect my role as a BA? I will continue to do what I can to mentor younger activists and be committed to bettering the lives of the working people.

***Overall, what were the messages from convention that most resonated with you?***

**HWB:**

Unity; we need to come together regardless of our differences; work together white and black toward the same goals because divided we all lose.

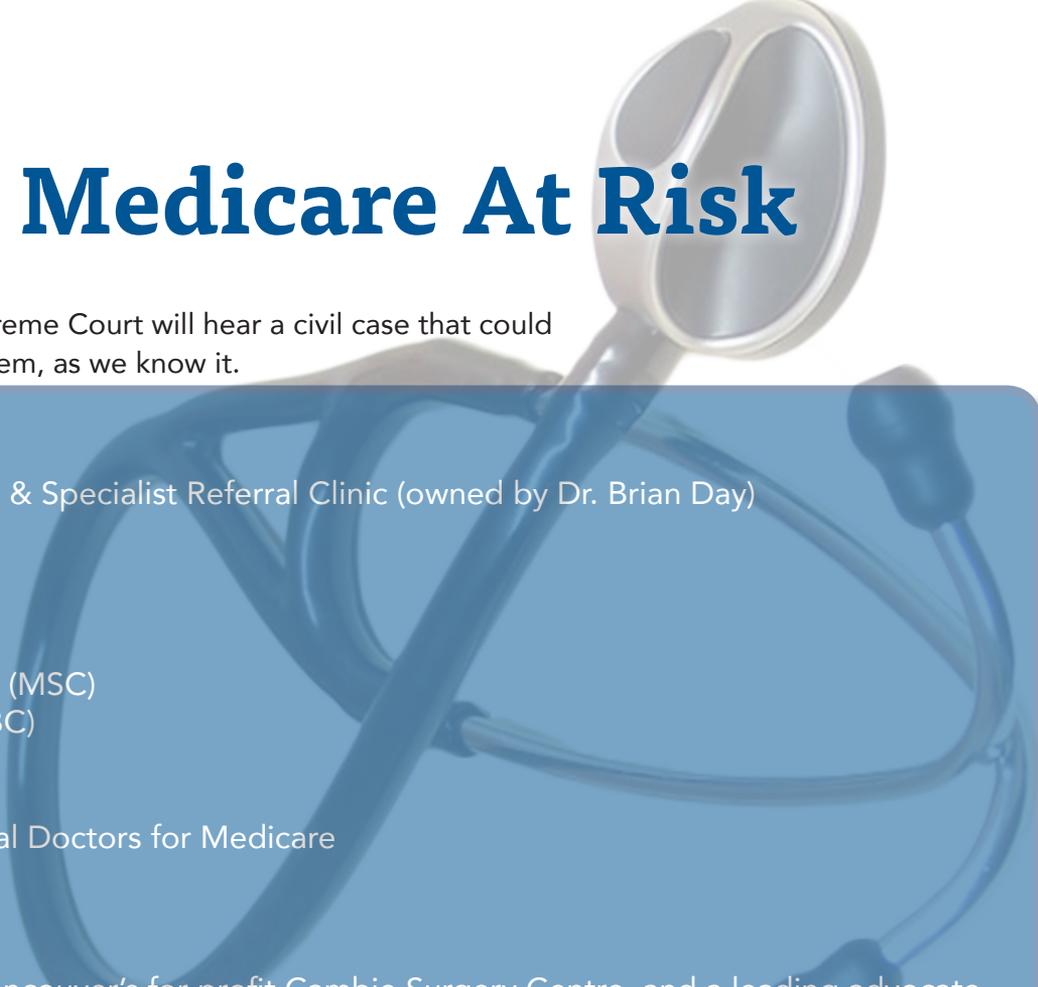
We must recognize when those in power are trying to divide us, we will only overcome obstacles as one. We all have the same goals: fair wages, benefits for us and our families and a good pension plan.

**IM:**

Members need to learn to work together if we are to accomplish great strides when facing employers, political and societal challenges.

*...Continued on page 21*

# Canadian Medicare At Risk



In September 2014, the B.C. Supreme Court will hear a civil case that could abolish our public healthcare system, as we know it.

## The case, breakdown:

### Plaintiffs:

- Cambie Surgeries Corporation & Specialist Referral Clinic (owned by Dr. Brian Day)
- Patients Group

### Defendants:

- B.C. Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Medical Services Commissions (MSC)
- Attorney General of B.C. (AGBC)

### Interveners:

- B.C. Health Coalition & Medical Doctors for Medicare
- Anesthesiologists of B.C.
- Patients Group

In 2008 Dr. Brian Day, owner of Vancouver's for-profit Cambie Surgery Centre, and a leading advocate for the privatization of Canadian Healthcare, initiated a constitutional challenge. The challenge alleges provincial health legislation of being in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it limits the for-profit delivery of medically necessary services. The B.C. Supreme Court will hear this constitutional challenge in September of this year.

Dr. Day stated that the health of Canadian patients is at risk due to long wait-times and claims that the way to reduce such wait-times would be to open the floodgates to a two-tier medical system. This would mean those with money could pay for privately operated services, a system which we have seen in the United States and only works for an elite group of wealthy citizens.

Already, Canada came dangerously close to losing our universal healthcare in 2005 when a similar case came before the courts in Quebec (Chaouli vs. Quebec). The plaintiff almost won this class action because the defendants and interveners did not provide enough evidence in support of Medicare at the provincial level.

## What this could mean for Canadians:

If Dr. Day wins this case, doctors will be able to set their price as high as the market will allow. Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals will be drained from the public healthcare system and will actually increase wait times and erode the quality of care.

Furthermore, the fallout of a two-tiered healthcare system would result in expensive private insurance

becoming a necessity. The experience of unions in the United States in trying to bargain healthcare benefits for their members has been one of trade-offs. In many instances, employers in the U.S. have been able to provide lower wage increases because unions have been forced to bargain for increased healthcare premiums from the employer. Is your wage so high that you can afford to take a lower wage so that your healthcare coverage remains at the standard it is today? The average cost to insure a family of four would be approximately \$16,000/year.

## Plan of action/what you can do:

Is it clear that we cannot allow the plaintiffs to win this case, neither at the B.C. Supreme Court nor the Supreme Court of Canada.

To resolve any flaws within our healthcare system, we need to look for reforms within the context of maintaining and improving universal healthcare. We should not be looking towards a two-tier system that undermines the potential of our universal healthcare system.

To prevent this class action from being won by the plaintiffs, which would create case law against Medicare, there needs to be a strong argument in favour of our universal healthcare system. It is for this reason that interveners like the B.C. Health Coalition & Medical Doctors for Medicare, Anesthesiologists of B.C., and a large patients group, have teamed up to help to defend our public healthcare system.

We know the decision made by the Supreme Court of Canada, in the case of Chaolli vs. Quebec, was heavily influenced by public opinion. Therefore, it is imperative that Canadians speak up in protest of a two-tier healthcare system.

To do this you can: join the 'Save Medicare Social Media Amplification Team' through the B.C. Health Coalition to help spread the word, or make a donation to the legal defense to protect Canadian public healthcare by visiting the same website:

<http://bchealthcoalition.ca>

As pointed out by National President of the TWU, Lee Riggs: "In an era where even the United States is trying to move towards public Medicare, why would we let Canadians reverse into an American two-tiered system? We must take a stand today."

...CBTU article, continued from page 19

### PRJ:

Unity makes us stronger. You need unity and strong alliances in organized labour in order to overcome the different hurdles that will come before us.

### Other highlights from the trip?

### HWB:

Having the convention in a state (Georgia) where slavery was predominate, where so many before me fought for future generations to have equal rights, made the message of the week resonate even more.

### IM:

To be able to share the week with my husband, Liam Joseph, who is also a member of the CBTU, and have him by my side as I received the Rising Star Award.

### PRJ:

Visiting the Martin Luther King Jr. Museum.

For more information on the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) check out their [website at www.cbtu.org](http://www.cbtu.org). There is video coverage from the convention available at <http://instance.clickstreamtv.net/cst/17971133>.



Nathan Beausoleil, BA for Calgary ; Matt Aiken, local 208 ; Ron Palmer, BA for Edmonton



Keith Goddard, local 23;  
Chris Stephens, local 31



Lee Riggs, TWU National Presidents; TWU National  
Vice-Presidents Ivana Niblett and Betty Carrasco



Richard Blais, local 214; Steve Lewis,  
local 3



Maxime Deveau, local 604; Denis Lavoie, local 604



John Hockley, BA for Ontario; Robin  
Arndt, BA for Northern B.C.



Ivana Niblett, TWU Vice-President; Tamara Marshall, BA for  
Burnaby, B.C.



Martin Rivest, local 602;  
Hans-Woosly Balan, BA for Québec



Michael Goodmurphy, local 35;  
Karen Phillips, local 7

## Upcoming municipal elections:

Exercising your right to vote may be one of your most important duties as a Canadian citizen, especially with our current extreme right-wing political climate. The social systems that Canadians have prided themselves on are being eroded. It is vital to encourage our friends, family and neighbours' to participate in the democratic process. These right-wing governments are hoping for voter apathy amongst the working class and youth.

The best way to help the labour movement, the working people, is to vote for labour-friendly candidates in upcoming elections at all levels (municipal, provincial and federal).

Research candidates in your riding and VOTE.

### 2014 Municipal Elections:

- Ontario – October 27
- British-Columbia – November 15



## Letters of Appreciation

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

I would like to thank you so very much for the wonderful surprise I received in my mail yesterday, a cheque for \$1,000, which is helping me so very much in this horrible economy. I am also honoured with the lifetime membership certificate also enclosed with my gift.

Again, thank you so much for all your assistance and hard work on behalf of union members.

Yours truly,

*K. Kerry Kozak*

\*\*\*

To the TWU Benevolent Society,

Thank you very much for the retirement gift cheque. I appreciate it very much!

*Colleen Mitchell*

\*\*\*

I would like to thank the union for the generous gift upon my retirement.

In Solidarity,

*Dianne James*

\*\*\*

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Burnaby Head Office  
5261 Lane Street  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4A6  
PHONE: 604-437-8601  
FAX: 604-435-7760

Kelowna  
#403-1630 Pandosy St.  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1P7  
PHONE: 250-860-5025  
FAX: 250-860-6737

Prince George  
#102-3645 18th Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2N 1A8  
PHONE: 250-960-2220  
FAX: 250-563-2379

ALBERTA  
Calgary  
#402-5940 MacLeod Trail SW  
Calgary, AB T2H 2G4  
PHONE: 403-237-6990  
FAX: 403-802-2381

Edmonton  
#1280 – 5555 Calgary Trail NW  
Edmonton, AB T6H 5P9  
PHONE: 780-444-6945  
FAX: 780-488-6911

ONTARIO  
Scarborough  
#901-10 Milner Business Court  
Scarborough, ON M1B 3C6  
PHONE: 416-506-9723  
FAX: 416-506-9722

QUÉBEC  
Westmount  
#540-4060 Ste. Catherine St. W.  
Westmount, QC H3Z 2Z3  
PHONE: 514-788-8811  
FAX: 514-788-8813

TW PENSION/BENEFITS  
#303-4603 Kingsway  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M4  
PENSION: 604-430-1317  
BENEFITS: 604-430-3300  
FAX: 604-430-5395  
WEBSITE: [www.twplans.com](http://www.twplans.com)

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the TWU for the honorary lifetime membership. I very much appreciate the generous retirement gift after 36.5 years with B.C. Tel and Telus.

Thanks also to all the dedicated men and women who work tirelessly for the union members.

*Elizabeth (Betty) Pedersen*

\*\*\*

Sue and I would like to thank the TWU-STT for its tireless efforts on our behalf for the last 35 years. We are proud of our lifetime membership.

Although our working days are done, we will remember with fondness, all the people we have worked with over those years.

Thank you for the great retirement cheque, and as a final note, it took us 35 years, but we finally found the pension office.

Thanks to Anne T. for the help.

In Solidarity,

*Sue and Ken LeBlanc*

Dear: Mr. Benn,

I would like to thank you and everyone involved in the recent resolution of the hiring grievance for the Inside Design TSA position in Edmonton. I would especially like to thank Donna, Ivana and yourself for all of the hard work and persistence required to reach this resolution.

Sincerely,

*JoAnne Dieno*

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YOUR UNION,  
YOUR NEWS**

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**[www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca)**

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TWU President: LEE RIGGS  
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Communications Specialist: ETTA HALL  
Photography Contributors: ETTA HALL, DAVE DIMARIA,  
JIM ORFINO, BRETT BARDEN

[www.twu-stt.ca](http://www.twu-stt.ca)

[editor@twu-stt.ca](mailto:editor@twu-stt.ca)

PN: 40022297

To sign up, email: [e-transmitter@twu-stt.ca](mailto:e-transmitter@twu-stt.ca)