



NEW UNION leadership

Convention 2017 wrap-up **p. 3**



Corrections protest **p. 15**



Housing forum **p.10**

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provincial

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Local 467/MoveUp



LETTER

From the President

Growth, renewal, change at convention

I'm thrilled and honoured to serve a second term as your president. Congratulations to our newly elected executive – the mix of seasoned members and young workers is going to bring us a dynamic executive committee. I can hardly wait to hear about all the innovative and creative ideas they'll bring to the table.

I'd like to give my heartfelt thanks to all candidates who put their names forward, but especially our outgoing executive committee members. Our union is stronger because of their leadership and hard work.

Throughout our convention, it was exciting to see how engaged delegates were, and to feel an energy of inclusion. Half our delegates were first-timers and many speakers from the floor were first time speakers as well. We also had the largest equity caucus in BCGEU's history. Did I mention the babies? It was wonderful to see so many parents at the mic with their little ones.

"We're listening to each other and I'm excited about where we're going as we move forward."

Our resolutions reaffirmed what we've been doing over the last three years. Members sent a message that they want to see their union communicate in a meaningful, authentic way. We will continue to engage with you face-to-face, as often as possible. With new digital tools

at our fingertips, we'll also continue to use cutting-edge technology to connect.

Perhaps what I was most proud to see at our convention was the immense respect delegates showed toward each other, even with divergent opinions. It was indicative of the way in which the BCGEU does business. We're always open to new ideas.

Although some resolutions were defeated by the delegates, your union's senior leadership understands these resolutions were developed to address an issue or concern that exists. We will work to address those concerns in a way that benefits all members. We're not going to ignore the problems that have been identified. We will do everything we can to fix them.

Now that convention is over, it's time to roll up our sleeves and get down to work. Bargaining is just around the corner. Nearly 60,000 of you in health, community social services, education and the public service will be negotiating new collective agreements in the next few years. Your union is in a strong position to support and defend you as we prepare for significant challenges at the table.

As I said in my convention keynote address, this round of bargaining will be about more than protecting the existing provisions in our collective agreements. We will demand improvements. There will be no concessions, no turning back.

We're listening to each other and I'm excited about where we're going as we move forward. Together, our executive committee, components, local executives, activists and staff will continue focusing on the issues that matter to you, working towards growth, renewal and change.



NEW LEADERSHIP — BCGEU's new executive committee, elected by delegates at convention (from left:) James Coccola , EVP; Sussanne Skidmore, EVP; Stephanie Smith, president; Paul Finch, treasurer; Kari Michaels, EVP; Doug Kinna, EVP.

Our union's democracy is stronger than ever

At the BCGEU's 50th constitutional convention delegates took on the responsibility of electing a leadership team that will take the union through to 2020. This critical decision came with the knowledge that it will be this team that leads the all-important 2019 round of public sector bargaining.

"I am honoured to be re-elected as your president, and to know that I will be able to work with all of you closely over the coming years to continue on the path that we first set out in 2014," said Stephanie Smith after being returned to office for another three-year term at the helm of the BCGEU.

Delegates affirmed the direction of the current leadership, offering Smith a standing ovation on her re-election by acclamation.

Delegates seized the opportunity during convention to ask questions to the president about the progress being made on strengthening our union. They were clearly pleased with the progress being made on improving services for members through staffing; new area offices in Prince George, Terrace, and Kamloops; and the use of

digital tools, to communicate targeted information to members, that is relevant to their interests.

Returning to the leadership team along with president Stephanie Smith is treasurer Paul Finch, who presented a very well received financial report showing that the union has been growing its defence fund at the same time as it has been increasing investment revenue, capital assets and staffing up area offices to better meet the needs of a growing union membership.

Underscoring that the BCGEU has benefited from a long process of sound fiscal management Paul Finch thanked previous treasurer, Stephanie Smith:

"It is because of her foundational work that we are in one of the healthiest financial positions we have ever been in. I look forward to continuing this important work over the next term to ensure that we continue to build on our shared success," he said.

Elections for executive vice presidents also took place at convention. Joining Sussanne Skidmore, who was re-elected at convention, are three new executive vice presidents: Doug Kinna

from 601, Kari Michaels from 704, and James Coccola from 1201.

Already sitting as a member of the provincial executive in his role as vice president of Component 6 (social, information and health) Doug Kinna brings over a decade of experienced leadership the team can count on going forward.

Both Coccola and Michaels come from the BCGEU young workers' membership, having been involved in the conferences and the BCGEU young workers' committee from its early days.

This can be heralded as a success of the initiative undertaken by the union to better recruit, engage and involve young workers in the important democratic structures of the union. It also means the shift in the composition of the leadership team has firmly taken a turn to being more representative of young workers across the province.

"Our new team is talented and passionate. They have a lot to offer and I am confident that we will deliver effective leadership for the membership," said Smith.



Speakers: challenges ahead but future bright

CONVENTION SPEAKERS: (Above, from left) B.C. Premier John Horgan; BCGEU president Stephanie Smith; NUPGE president Larry Brown. (Below) B.C. Federation of Labour president Irene Lanzinger.

What an incredible four days! Delegates to the BCGEU’s 50th constitutional Convention celebrated achievements, heard messages of solidarity, and showed determination to meet the challenges ahead.

In her keynote address to convention, president Stephanie Smith thanked members for their contributions to the union’s significant growth during the last three years and highlighted the successes of each component.

“Your vision and your ideas are the foundation of the modern, dynamic, progressive, responsive and respected union we are building together,” she said.

Smith told delegates the BCGEU would continue working on issues affecting all British Columbians. As well, she said she’s excited for a change in provincial leadership and the opportunity to work with a government that has promised to put people first.

“We look forward to continue building our relationship with the NDP government,” Smith said.

B.C. Federation of Labour president Irene Lanzinger echoed Smith’s en-

thusiasm for a change in provincial leadership, noting “we will have a government that shares our values and respects the labour movement.”

On day three of convention, NDP leader and Premier John Horgan delivered this first address to the labour movement since signing the power-sharing agreement with the BC Greens.



Horgan acknowledged the services BCGEU members provide and assured delegates “help is on the way” for working British Columbians.

“I’m so pleased and so proud that in the weeks ahead I’ll be able to lead a government that cares about what you

do, that respects what you do, and most importantly, knows that if we give you a little bit of help, you could do so much more,” Horgan said.

Horgan also thanked BCGEU members who worked hard to support the BC NDP campaign.

“It’s really been the time of my life and we were so proud to have run a campaign about people, with people and for people,” he said.

The president of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), Larry Brown, cautioned delegates that the labour movement has a lot on its plate going forward to defend collective bargaining. We need, he said, to fight corporate trade deals such as CETA, NAFTA and the TPP; address public service cutbacks and shrinking wages, and make sure governments respect laws.

Despite the challenges ahead, Brown is hopeful about the future.

“There’s power in this room, there’s power in the union movement, and when we work together, we’re unstoppable,” he said.



BCGEU bestows high honour on Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond

For the better part of the last decade, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond has been B.C.'s leading voice supporting vulnerable children.

As British Columbia's representative for children and youth from 2006 to 2016, she consistently held the B.C. Liberal government to account on their abysmal record on supporting vulnerable children and families.

The BCGEU awarded Turpel-Lafond the Spirit of Leadership award to recognize her work fighting for children, and because she has become one of the leading voices for youth issues in the province. This award is the union's highest honour. It's given to groups or individuals in B.C. who've been leading outstanding social advocacy work.

In accepting the award, Turpel-Lafond recognized her long and productive partnership with many BCGEU members, who form a large part of front-line workers dealing with vulnerable children across the province. Turpel-Lafond claimed much of her work was

only made possible because of the hard work of BCGEU members.

"It is only possible to advocate for improving the system when the people on the front lines want to improve the system," she said. "You are lucky to have a BCGEU to come together and work on these issues when we know more than ever we must continue to advocate for better standards for children."

Turpel-Lafond's approach to the important issues facing children and youth in B.C. will be sorely missed, as will her timely interventions on behalf of young people in care.

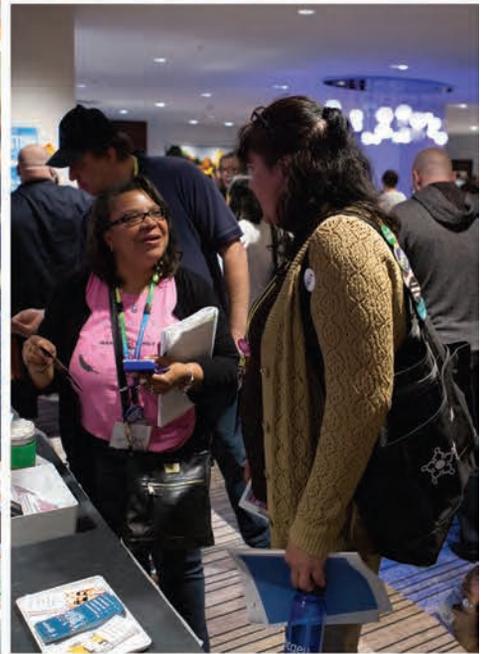
Turpel-Lafond can rest assured that BCGEU members will do our utmost to see her ideas and recommendations implemented by a new government.



2017 BCGEU LIFE MEMBERS:

Barry Vaness (Local 103); Mike Clark (Local 111); Gale Engstrom (Local 306); Thomas McMahon (Component 4); Bernadette Bigattini (Local 407); Holly Page (Local 501); Diane Droski (Local 503); Craig McKay (Local 503); Karl Wolfe (Local 505); Roseann Dusome (Local 508); Susan Bird (Local 601); Frances (Frankie) Kelley (Local 601); Jane Steward (Local 601); Susan (Sue) Powell (Local 602); Chris Dabrowski (Local 603); Matt Salli (Local 604); Jo Ann Fowler (Local 605); Stu Seifert (Local 702); Judi Filion (Local 703); William Winegarden (Local 709); Ken Soroka (Local 709); David Cumming (Component 10); Kathy Nicholls (Local 1202); Linda Sonmor (Local 1204); Lori Joaquin (Local 1206); Susan Wilkie (Local 1207); Pamela St. Thomas (Local 1209); Susan Stroud (Local 1701); Bruce Cline (Local 1705); James Swank (Component 17); Mark Gaehring (Component 17); Donald Ballard (Local 2008); Hank Glover (Local 2010); Daniel Belisle (Component 20); Larry Dea (Local 703)







Equity and human rights conference: Rise up/re-boot



BCGEU equity members, representing four equity groups, have elected the new committee for the provincial executive equity and human rights committee. Over 80 members attended the union’s equity conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver June 18-19.

Khilsilem, from the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) opened the conference and welcomed members to the shared territories of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tseil-Waututh First Nations.

Over the two days, members heard from panelists on social justice and migrant issues. They also attended workshops on mental health first aid, digital campaigns, anti-oppression and reconciliation.

A highlight of the conference was a performance by Kara Stanley and the Stanton Paradis band. It featured songs and poetry written about the workplace accident that severed band member Simon Paradis’s spinal cord.

Conference delegates also attended caucuses to elect the new equity and human rights committee representatives to serve over the next three years. The committee membership is made up of two representatives from each of the four equity groups: workers of colour, LGBTQI2S, workers with disabilities and Aboriginal workers.

Newly elected committee members:

- Workers with disabilities: Silke Allard and Connie Laroche
- Aboriginal workers: Cheryl Gilbert and Souie Gorup
- LGBTQI2S workers: Lee McArthur and Serena Bhandar
- Workers of colour: Jackie Pierre and Jason Singh

There’s a lot of work ahead to represent the diversity of our members around the province. The committee members look forward to working together towards developing policies to make the BCGEU a more inclusive union.

Convention 2017 resolutions highlights

Delegates to the 2017 convention discussed and voted on resolutions submitted by union locals, components, committees and the union's provincial executive. Here are some highlights of resolutions passed. A full list will be posted on the BCGEU member website.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

A-1: Amendment to Article 12

Only a two-thirds majority vote by the triennial constitution convention can amend the constitution or bylaws.

Composite to cover A13-A15: Amendment to Article 10.18(a) re: strike pay

(iv) Basic strike pay is \$375 per week.

(v) Members with dependents are paid another \$100 per week for each of their dependents.

FINANCE

B-47 to cover C-63: Component member to member (M2M) campaigns

Effective January 1, 2018, increase the number of headquarters paid leave of absence days for component M2M cam-

paigns from 8 to 12 days per local, per year to be allocated by the component following the approval of a component's M2M plan, as outlined in part A(1) of provincial executive policy G-29.

B-59: Diane L. Wood international solidarity and humanity fund

Increase the Diane L. Wood international solidarity and humanity fund funding by 5 cents (currently 20 cents per month) to 25 cents per month per member.

OUR UNION & OUR ISSUES

C-68 amended: clearing old grievances

Focus on clearing old grievances older than two years, including classifications and benchmarks, by allotting more full time resources for staff to solve backlog.

C-109: Equity and inclusion

Use an equity lens in all aspects of the operation of the union to ensure all members have equal access, and opportunity to allow full participation in the union.

C-137: Health and safety campaigns

Build and strengthen health and safety campaigns for all BCGEU members.

D-185: \$10 a day child care

Continue to advocate for the government of British Columbia to provide subsidized daycare to British Columbian families for \$10/child/day.

D-261: More correctional officers

Lobby and demand the provincial government and WorkSafe BC increase the number of correctional officers from one to two officers in all direct supervision model living units in B.C.



Energy policy paper

Our GHG management plan is only some of the work we've undertaken recently. We've also produced a policy document to examine and provide recommendations about the union's approach to energy policy.

The BCGEU has taken strong positions on energy. We've opposed the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, the Site C dam and hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.

"We took this policy paper on because of the growing prominence of energy-related issues and recognizing the diverse perspectives among BCGEU members," said BCGEU president Stephanie Smith.

That's why we drafted a policy paper for consideration at the 2017 BCGEU convention. It outlines our existing approach to energy policy, explores current issues and identifies potential next steps.

The policy paper includes four recommendations for action:

- Continue to act to reduce the union's GHG emissions
- Reaffirm the general principles laid out in past resolutions on energy policy—sustainability, reducing GHG emissions, conservation, public ownership, just transition for workers, and develop renewables
- Develop a plan to engage members on energy and climate issues with the goal of refining the union's approach to energy policy
- Re-energize and enhance ongoing efforts to educate members on climate change and emerging sustainability initiatives.

Our work continues and we'll keep you posted every step of the way.



Our union is passionate about the environment and doing our part to protect it. We have a long history of speaking out publicly on environmental issues, including climate change.

We also walk the talk internally with our commitment to try to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in our own BCGEU offices. We've been measuring our carbon footprint since 2006 and taking action to improve environmental sustainability.

We've undertaken many actions, including incentives for staff to use energy efficient vehicles. We've also increased email communication to reduce paper mailouts, completed building retrofits and began using 100 per cent recycled paper.

Even so, our GHG emissions haven't gone down significantly enough yet. That's why the BCGEU's environment committee commissioned the creation of a GHG plan to help further reduce our environmental impact.

The plan has just been released. It outlines strategies for improving energy efficiency in our buildings, greening procurement practices, reducing emissions from staff travel and ideas for engaging staff in sustainability initiatives.

We'll soon begin implementing these recommendations:

- Establish a program of periodic energy audits of BCGEU buildings
- Develop a green procurement policy using a sustainable products ranking framework
- Track paper use and include it in the union's GHG reporting
- Develop strategies to further reduce GHG emissions from corporate travel
- Expand the staff environment officer role and establish a working group to guide sustainability initiatives

The environment committee was looking forward to putting the plan into action.

"Our union has grown a lot over the past two decades, so it's been challenging to shrink our carbon footprint. The GHG management plan provides a good framework and clear guidance about how we can reduce our emissions going forward. It's a tool to help the union walk the talk on climate action, and there's potential for cost savings as well. I'm really proud of the committee's work on this project," said chairperson Brenda Brown.



Continuing conversation about fentanyl crisis

Our work advocating for members touched by the fentanyl crisis continues. In late April, we hosted a live webcast that brought together a panel of experts.

They spoke to our members around the province about the extent of the crisis and the resources available to front-line workers.

The panel of experts included harm reduction expert Munro Craig, front-line worker Massoud Aminzavvar, 803 local chair, and registered clinical counselor Matthew Thompson. Hundreds of people joined us on the webcast.

The experts touched on a variety of issues. Among them: self-care, trauma

and stress, health and safety, and what everyone needs to know about administering life-saving naloxone (narcan).

We care about the fentanyl crisis because it's impacting our members directly. Social workers, community health practitioners, social services workers and housing and poverty advocates have been acting as first responders on the front lines on a daily basis. Saving lives.

Our members have told us that, unlike paramedics and other first responders, they don't have the appropriate resources or training to deal with the crisis. For months, they've been calling for help from their employers so they can better deal with the emotional



and physical trauma this emergency is creating in their workplaces.

We encourage you to watch the recording of the webcast on our YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/BCGEUonline

Please recommend the recording to anyone you know whose life has been touched by the fentanyl crisis, either personally or at work.



Hundreds hear economist speak about Vancouver affordability crisis

The Rio Theatre in Vancouver was packed on April 14 as 400 people turned out to hear renowned economist Michael Hudson talk about the city's housing affordability crisis.

The BCGEU co-sponsored the event with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Hudson's presentation touched on the links between global financial systems and the real estate market.

Vancouver isn't going through a housing bubble, he told the sold-out event, but rather what he calls "debt deflation."

What this means is the housing market isn't being propped up by risky lending practices, which happens in housing bubbles. Vancouver's housing crisis is being fueled by wealthy investors using real estate as a savings deposit and it's promoting speculation.

As a result, people living in Vancouver are forced to use more of their income on housing. This leaves them with little or no money to spend at local businesses and on consumer goods, which ultimately hurts the local economy.

B.C.'s housing affordability crisis — in Vancouver and in many areas across the province — directly impacts the lives of our members and working people more broadly.

"Affordable housing is a fundamental part of wellbeing of individuals, families and communities," said BCGEU president Stephanie Smith, who made the introductory remarks at the event. "Without it, everything from the decision to start a family to the ability of employers to attract and retain workers in our region is being negatively impacted."

You can watch Hudson's talk and the Q&A on our YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/BCGEUonline

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regional districts and other employers.

ABOUT US

The BCGEU is one of the largest and most diverse unions in British Columbia. We represent over 72,000 members in 550 bargaining units in the private sector and public services.

We trace our beginnings back to the early 1900s when provincial government employees formed an association to address their working conditions. Since then, your union has organized thousands of workers outside the government service. We're continuing to grow.

About a third of the BCGEU's membership works in the direct government service. Their jobs include protecting children, providing financial assistance to the poor, protecting the environment and managing our natural resources, caring for the mentally ill in institutions, staffing provincial correctional facilities, fighting forest fires and providing the government's technical and clerical services.

Your union is also proud to represent thousands of members in health care, community social services, education, highways maintenance, casinos, credit unions, municipalities,

You've spoken and we've listened. One of the most common pieces of feedback from members has been a desire to update the look and feel of our website.

"We all want our online presence to be representative of the professionalism and dedication of BCGEU members across the province, and now we have that," said president Stephanie Smith.

The website is the digital face of our union. It's the first thing people see when they type the letters "BCGEU" into a web search. It's the place the media go to find out more information about us. It's also where members turn to when they're trying to find basic information about their jobs.

Over the last three years we've been working hard to make sure the BCGEU is ready for a digital-first future.

"One of our big goals as a union is to make sure we're modernizing to meet the challenges of a new technological era. That's why an update to our website to better serve members is an important undertaking," said Smith.

The new website launched in advance of the 2017 BCGEU convention after a year-long process that engaged members, the provincial executive, and in consultation with experts in the field of digital and web communications.



With the majority of web browsing being done via mobile phones now, the site has been designed to be mobile first. We're proud of the much-improved user experience, allowing people to access the information they're looking for, wherever they are.

You'll also see an overhaul to component pages, which are designed on the same modern principles. Focusing on component events, campaigns, and news will improve the experience of members looking for information about their component.

"Under the lead of BCGEU's digital department, we did extensive data analysis of our current website and its content. Based on the analytics, we changed the structure to meet the needs of site visitors" said Paul Finch, BCGEU treasurer.

The new site includes a special members-only section: my.bcg.eu.ca that provides direct access to your collective agreement,

benefits, and information about which local and component you are part of without having to search!

Thanks to new database technology, members' critical work-site and contract information will be linked to their BCGEU account, which will also provide relevant updates and local event information.

You can also update your contact information with a few clicks. That's so the union is able to keep in touch with members about opportunities and important developments in bargaining.

Your personal BCGEU login will be sent to you via the email address we have on file, or to your home address if we don't have a current email for you. If you want to get in touch about updating your information, or have any questions about the new site, please contact Jacob Hunter at: digital@bcg.eu.ca



Celebrating our unsung superstars

You'll find them in just about every workplace. The colleagues who make things hum. Who stop what they're doing at the drop of a hat to help out others. They're the glue that holds offices together. Workplaces wouldn't function without them.

It's time we recognized and celebrated them. That's why our administrative services component (aka component 12) is undertaking a campaign to acknowledge and broadcast their extraordinary efforts.

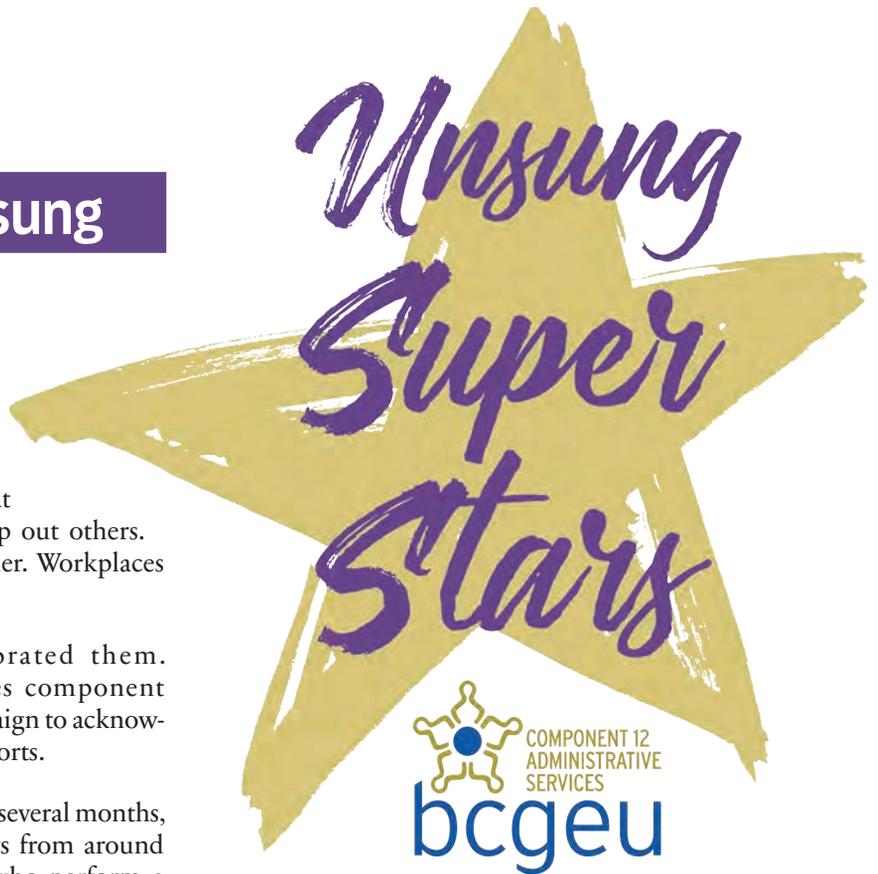
It's called Unsung Superstars. Over the next several months, we'll be introducing you to our superstars from around the province — administrative workers who perform a broad range of jobs, and who've earned the esteem of their co-workers.

A bit about the component. It's one of the largest sectors of the BCGEU with more than 10,000 members who provide front-line administrative and support services. Many work for ministries of the B.C. government — the rest for independent employers in non-government services.

You'd be surprised at the number of different jobs these members do. Here's a partial list of titles: administrative officer, coordinator of volunteers, analyst, court clerk, financial officer, health unit aide, data processing operator, switchboard operator and stock worker.

"Our members face enormous challenges, but they perform to the highest level," said administrative services vice president Maria Middlemiss. She'd know. Middlemiss is a long-time administrative services worker based in Victoria.

"We're having to cover for each other because employers won't backfill vacation time or hire more staff. The days are long and the work is never-ending. This campaign is meant to increase awareness about the value of work performed by administrative services, plus praise their efforts and dedication," she said.



We're highlighting the Unsung Superstars with profiles on the BCGEU website and social media. They've been nominated by their co-workers and the response has been overwhelming.

"That we have so many superstars within our ranks isn't a surprise to me," Middlemiss said.

You can read the profiles on the BCGEU web site at: www.bcgau.ca/campaign/unsung-superstars

Here are just a few of the nominees and what their co-workers said about them:

LIBBY VANDERGRIENDT
Records Coordinator
Ministry of Health, Victoria

"Libby is a pleasure to be around and works tirelessly to get the job done."

GERI BLACK
Administrative Officer
Maximus - Health Insurance BC,
Victoria

"Geri has always been a compassionate caring co-worker, that goes beyond her role to assist her co-workers in every department with a smile on her face and a dedication that is warming to everyone she deals with."

DENISE GARZON
Paralegal, Regional Crown Counsel
Office, Vancouver

"I'm nominating Denise for her unceasing cheerfulness and readiness to help out her colleagues at the drop of a hat despite her own extremely heavy workload."

JENNINE GATES
Senior Resolution Support Clerk
Ministry of Justice, Civil
Resolution Tribunal, Victoria

"Jennine is supportive, approachable, energetic and innovative. She has been the best supervisor I've had in 26 years working with the provincial government."

OHS labour code train-the-trainer

They're ready. Eleven BCGEU members and an employer representative are prepped to deliver BCGEU's basic occupational health and safety (OHS) course specifically designed for members covered under labour code collective agreements.

A labour code agreement is one negotiated with non-government organizations and employers.

In the past, labour code facilitators trained with government facilitators and the instruction wasn't tailored to them. So, in April, your union brought these 11 people together to train them how to present OHS courses specifically for non-government workplaces.

Our focus was to develop facilitators who know the objectives of OHS

programming and can deliver the messages effectively and confidently.

The facilitators were taught how to deliver two of our courses, the basic OHS course (one day) and the anti-bullying course (two or four hours).

They'll use this training to further instruct BCGEU members who serve as OHS representatives in their workplaces. This instruction is necessary to fulfill their duties and responsibilities on OHS committees.

"These are our first dual-trained facilitators ready to deliver both courses. We now have a facilitator trained for every component in the province under the labour code," said BCGEU president Stephanie Smith.

BCGEU OHS officers have their sights set on training even more facilitators in labour code workplaces. The current complement is only 25 facilitators. The department is hoping to at least double that number in the future.



(from left to right) Wayne Williams, local 107 second vice chair; Stephanie Smith, BCGEU president, Cherisse Saul, member at large/women's rep; Dean Purdy, BCGEU vice president, corrections and sheriffs services component; Andrew MacLeod, local 107 chairperson; Brian Campbell, second vice chair, component 1; Glenn Hall, local 107 first vice chair.

WE'RE GROWING: local 107 established

We've welcomed a new local to the BCGEU fold. Local 107 — of the corrections and sheriffs services component — was founded at a meeting in March.

"This marks a milestone, establishing a new local in Component 1 and another exciting sign of growth in our union," said BCGEU president Stephanie Smith.

The BCGEU has represented about two dozen sheriffs in that area for many years — but not enough members to reach the threshold to form a separate local.

That changed with the recent opening of the new Okanagan Correctional Centre in Oliver. The hiring of correctional officers meant the threshold for a new local was met.

"We're excited our Component 1 members in that area will now be completely represented by not only a local chair but an executive," said Dean Purdy, vice president, corrections and sheriffs services component. "The newly elected executive will be getting their feet wet, attending their first component executive meeting, establishing the new local, and getting their new committees up and running."

Local 107 is busy educating new members about their defined rights in two collective agreements — the provincial government public service agreement and the component agreement.

Another focus of the local is familiarizing new members with workplace safety and WorkSafeBC regulations, and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Congratulations to our newly elected local 107 executive members: Andrew MacLeod, chairperson; Glenn Hall, 1st vice president; Wayne Williams, 2nd vice president; Cherisse Saul, member at large/women's rep; and Josh Hiltz, member at large/young worker.



Remembering JOHN SHIELDS

BCGEU's 50th convention was the first major union gathering since the passing of president emeritus John Shields in March 2017. Delegates took time to recognize his life and work with a video looking back at his impact on the BCGEU and more broadly on working people across B.C.

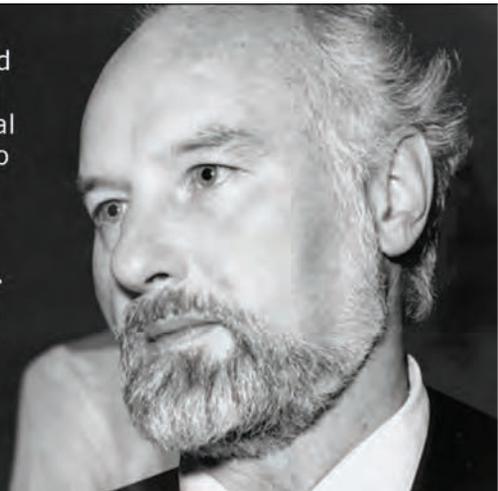
The video was a tribute to Shields' life work – first as a priest in the U.S. civil rights movement, then as a social worker and activist during the operation solidarity movement of the mid-1980s, and his time as BCGEU president.



“They are driven by greed and lust for more, and they have all the financial resources in the world to reinforce that power. And what do we have?

We have each other - and that's pretty damn good!”

John Terrance Shields
1938-2017



Shields fought hard for BCGEU members and their communities.

He pushed back against privatization and won pay equity for thousands of

women members. His victories made a difference for all working people in B.C. — not just the one's fortunate enough to have BCGEU membership.

More than a few tears were shed in the convention hall as delegates remembered the courageous, kind and thoughtful person John Shields was.

He will always be remembered as a leader who contributed greatly to the BCGEU's rich history. We have him to thank for the union's strength and influence today.

You can watch the tribute to John Shields on our YouTube page at: www.YouTube.com/bcgeuonline

Addressing challenges in delivering women's services

The work is hard and rewarding. Our 1,500 BCGEU members who work in women's services can attest to that.

In early-March, we brought 60 of them together at BCGEU headquarters to discuss and explore the challenges and opportunities they face on the job. These hardworking members provide support to vulnerable women and children who often face serious personal crises and gender-based violence.

We've summarized the findings of this conference in a new public BCGEU report, *Collective Wisdom: Challenges and Opportunities in B.C. Women's Services*.

The report describes a sector with difficulties. The work is greatly undermined by inadequate public funding, resource and staffing shortages, troubled working conditions, and a lack of public and government support for both workers and the women they serve.

It also discusses complex identity and voice related issues faced by women's services as both a grassroots social movement and professional subsector.

“Workers in this sector, which is largely made up of women helping vulnerable women, face significant challenges as client needs become more complex, and workload pressures and service

expectations increase,” said BCGEU president Stephanie Smith. “With input from workers from across the province, this report demonstrates the urgent need for government to reinvest in vital public and community social services.”

The report makes several recommendations aimed at strengthening public and government support for the sector, its workers, and core services for vulnerable women.

The BCGEU has shared findings with federal and provincial ministers responsible for women's issues and services, Maryam Monsef and Michelle Stillwell and will be sending to the new B.C. NDP minister.



WORKSAFE BC RALLY - APRIL 20:

BCGEU members sent a message to WorkSafeBC that something needs to be done to address the increasing violence in BC's prisons.

Prior to 2001, the inmate-to-staff ratio in BC's correctional facilities was capped at 20:1. The ratio is now as high as 72:1 and recent statistics from Corrections BC show that assaults on officers and inmate-on-inmate violence continues to rise.



DAY OF MOURNING - APRIL 28:

(right) Day of Mourning wreath display in Kelowna.
 (bottom right) BCGEU members commemorate Day of Mourning in New Westminster.
 (bottom left) BCGEU president Stephanie Smith joins BC Labour activists in Victoria to honour workers killed or injured at work.



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