

Political Action and Mobilization

Provincial Election – May 2017

This May, British Columbians will go to the polls to elect a new provincial government. As I’ve reported in the past, this is a critical election for all British Columbians: our province is facing crises in the housing market, the education system, seniors’ care, increasing income inequality and poverty rates, not to mention the cuts to public services and increased user fees in a variety of sectors. It seems everywhere you look provincial accountability is being skirted by the BC Liberals and the Premier Clark is blaming someone else for her government’s failures. After 15 years of Liberal rule in BC, we desperately need a government that will put the interests of working families ahead of the interests of the rich and powerful.



Labour will have to play an active role in this election to ensure that our collective desire for a new government is brought to fruition. With that in mind, the PSAC BC Region has committed to working with the BC Federation of Labour and its affiliates on the public-facing provincial election campaign, *Better Can Happen Here*. The campaign launched in November with the aim of showing labour and the general public that Christy Clark and the

BC Liberals have not been on their side and that they don’t care about working people. As the campaign is rolled out, it will demonstrate how we can build a better BC together through a renewed commitment to quality public services including health care, education, and seniors’ care, which will provide us all with a better future.

The PSAC BC Political Action Committee and the Region’s Area Councils have also been discussing how they can get involved in the election and support labour-friendly candidates in their geographic areas. To that end, we have asked each Area Councils to reach out and build relationships with these candidates through various party events. To facilitate this, the Region allocated financial support to each Area Council for these activities using regional political action funds. Moreover, at least one Area

Council has already identified two candidates that they plan to actively support with their campaigns: PSAC (and UCTE) member Bowinn Ma will be running for the NDP in the riding of North Vancouver Lonsdale and Janet Routledge (retired PSAC Regional Coordinator) will be running for the NDP in the riding of Burnaby North.

Given the momentum that has already begun with respect to the provincial election, I'm confident our members, along with BC's labour movement, will be successful this May and bring about the change we need in our province. Together, we will elect a government that will provide supports for families, strengthen public services and create good paying jobs.

Phoenix Pay System Day of Action on October 31

PSAC BC members across the province stood in solidarity on October 31, demonstrating that they are being 'haunted' by the Phoenix pay system failure and are in need of a fair collective agreement with the federal government. Armed with Halloween-themed picket signs, candy, and costumes; members voiced their dissatisfaction with the government's inaction on Phoenix and at the Treasury Board bargaining table. Members also used this opportunity to show their support for members in financial difficult positions as a result of the failed pay system.

As the Phoenix Pay System fiasco continues to drone on months and months, we need to continue to put pressure on this government to fix the problem, pay our members (properly), and give us the respect we deserve. In 2015 the Liberal Government pledged they would respect public services and the people who deliver them. So, Liberal Government, put your money where your mouth is. Or more appropriately, put the money back onto our members' pay cheques where it should have been in the first place!



Building Alliances and Supporting the Labour Community

BC Federation of Labour Convention

The BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) held their biennial convention November 28 to December 2 in Vancouver, which I attended along with nearly 50 PSAC members from across the Region. While it wasn't the largest BCFED Convention in recent history, with only 1,000 delegates attending, it was successful.

During the Convention, the BCFED launched the provincial election campaign, *Better Can Happen Here*, in which PSAC members will be participating. The campaign is similar to both the successful CLC

Fairness Works campaign and the campaign conducted by the Alberta Federation of Labour during their last provincial election.

I had the privilege of chairing the Resolutions Committee for the Convention. At the centre of much of the debate was the need to get rid of the Christy Clark government. A reduction in public sector jobs, legal battles over government contract stripping, stagnant wages, and the decline of many industries were all cited as examples of the way the current government is hurting BC's unions and all British Columbians. Other convention discussions included a debate around possible structural changes to the BCFED, which may resurface at the next BCFED Convention.

In terms of elections, Irene Lanzinger and Aaron Ekman were re-elected as President and Secretary Treasurer for the BCFED respectively. With their leadership, I'm confident that BC's 500,000 union workers will be successful in our campaign to oust Christy and the BC Liberal Government this May.

International Day for Persons With Disabilities

BC Regional Council MWD Coordinator Joyce Slett reached out to the BCFED and affiliates this fall to organize a community event for the International Day for Persons With Disabilities. Through her tireless efforts, Joyce and partners from several other unions hosted a successful event on December 3 in New Westminster. The afternoon event included nationally renowned expert Conni Kilfoil, who spoke on the legal Duty to Accommodate; Kara Stanley, author of the critically acclaimed: "Fallen: A Trauma, A Marriage, and the Transformative Power of Music"; as well as other performers who explored what life is like with a disability.

Labour Community Christmas Dinners

For the last 22 years the BC Federation and its affiliates have been working together with our community allies to provide a holiday event for thousands of men, women and children who could use a little Christmas cheer. Each year we've hosted two events on Christmas Eve, one in Surrey and the other on the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver; this past December 24 was no different. During the event we offered not only a warm turkey dinner, but also an opportunity for children from struggling families to receive a toy from Santa. The BCFED also collected and purchased items such as warm clothing and personal hygiene items to distribute to those in need. When the dinner concluded guests also received a hamper to take with them, including fresh produce and canned/non-perishable goods.

The PSAC BC Region is proud to contribute to this event every year, both financially and in terms of volunteer time. It is always a joyous event with wonderful food, music, laughter and the spirit of giving that bring both Labour and community together.

This year, Vancouver RO Admin Assistant Patricia Mullin went one step further. For a number of years Patricia has volunteered to help with the dinner. This year she also sought donations to organize and offer hot chocolate and coffee service for those guests waiting in line for the dinner. I'd like to acknowledge this generous act of Sister Mullin, who embodies what we mean by Labour supporting, and strengthening, community. Well done, Patricia!

Education

Regional Education Schedule

During the spring of 2017, the BC regional education program will be offering 14 basic courses. In addition, there will be three Resolution Writing webinars and four Convention Procedures courses offered to assist members in preparing for this convention cycle. The Young, Organizing, Unionizing, Resisting (YOUR) course will provide an opportunity for young workers to learn more about the Union and become more involved in union activities.

West North Union Development Program

At the time of this writing, successful applicants have just been advised of their acceptance into the 2017 offering of the West North Union Development Program (UDP). Once again, we were in the fortunate (and challenging) situation of having a huge interest in the program; many well qualified activists applied for the program, which we had to pare down to 21 participants. Given the quality of our participants, I'm confident that this year's class will emerge as strong new leaders for their respective Regions much like the previous graduates from West North UDP.

The North Region will be hosting the program this year, with Step II taking place in Yellowknife this April and Step VI taking place in Whitehorse this fall. I look forward to meeting this year's participants later this spring and seeing their hard work in action.

Regional Negotiations

There are several units currently in negotiations in BC.

The bargaining team for the Vancouver Airport Authority hit a road block with their negotiations in December. Initially, their negotiations looked positive, but they have now ground to a halt. They had been moving towards a deal, but during their negotiations the Employer rejected the Team's last comprehensive offer and demanded that the Team accept a bonus for members in lieu of general increases. The Team applied for conciliation, and the first dates were set for January 18-19. It should be noted that there is no immediate possibility for job action; the earliest potential dates would be in the spring.

The Corps of Commissionaires – Victoria, The Island and Yukon conducted a Local meeting in December and elected their bargaining team members. The team will be meeting with the negotiator, Erna Post, very soon as we have received a formal offer from the Employer. As you may recall, this unit served Notice to Bargain in December 2015. However, due to a death on the Employer side, the meetings between the parties were delayed for several months.

The Seal Cove Commissionaires in Prince Rupert are still in collective bargaining. However, they are currently enjoying a statutory freeze with no concessions. That means if they go to the table, there will be concessions on the table. Therefore, progress has been slow and there has been no further update since the last REVP report.

IMP Comox, which reached an impasse in May, applied for binding arbitration on December 16. Since then, the BC team met with their counterparts from IMP Gander to discuss a common strategy for moving forward.

Two other regional units that will in negotiations in the coming months include the First Nations Health Authority and the unit at Granville Island. Currently, the teams are soliciting bargaining input from members.

Regional

PSAC 50th Anniversary Celebration is the Region

To mark the 50th anniversary of the PSAC, we embarked on organizing two separate evening events that would allow members and staff (both current and retired) to come together to reflect on our history as a union, how far we've come and how far we still strive to go.

The first event was held in Victoria on October 15 in conjunction with the BC Regional Council meeting. The second event was on November 29 in Vancouver during the BC Federation of Labour Convention. Both events were well attended, and I believe members appreciated the opportunities to gather together to reminisce.

2016 Regional Young Workers Conference



On November 26-27 the BC Regional Young Workers' Conference was held in Vancouver with over 30 members in attendance. The conference agenda included a number of great speakers, including Brother Carl Gannon who spoke to the members about his experience as a young worker in a nationally elected position. Also present at the Conference were representatives from *Check Your Head* and

Generation Squeeze. These organizations were brought in to talk to participants about social issues that young people face and systemic generational inequality in Canada. Through their discussions, participants talked about what young workers and the union can do to bring awareness to these issues and lessen the pressures Canada's young people and their families.

My thanks goes to Regional Representative Monica Urrutia, BC Regional Council Youth Coordinator Vanessa Miller, and the conference organizing committee for all their hard work. Their efforts produced a very successful conference that will continue to spur many thoughtful and provocative conversations going forward.

Sacred Water Ceremony

I joined members of local First Nations and the PSAC at a Sacred Water Ceremony on the territory known as Lekwungen of Songhees & Esquimalt First Nations on December 10, International Human Rights Day. The event was organized by members of the Vancouver Island Human Rights Committee as

well as the PSAC's NAPC. The aim of the Water Ceremony was to raise awareness about the need for safe drinking water in First Nations communities and to remind the Liberal government of their pledge to end boil-water advisories on First Nations reserves within the next five years.

December 6 Ceremonies

Across Region, members took part in ceremonies to commemorate the anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre in December. My schedule allowed me to attend two of these ceremonies: the first was in Abbotsford on December 3, and the second was in Surrey on December 6.

It was the second year that the Abbotsford ceremony took place. Once again, members from the Fraser Valley organized a successful event. The agenda included guest speakers, music, as well as a poetry recital by local high school students. Throughout the event, organizers were also able to collect shoes and toiletries for women's shelters in the Fraser Valley.



With regard to the second event, this was the sixth time the West Fraser Valley and Vancouver Regional Women's Committee has organized the annual candlelight vigil in Surrey. The event allows members of the public to gather and reflect on violence

against women. Event organizers were also able to collect donations for local women's organizations. I've attended this particular December 6 event a number of times since its inaugural year, and year after year this event continue to grow with new partners being included in its organization. This year's speakers included MLAs Sue Hammell (Surrey Green Timbers) and Bruce Ralston (Whalley North Surrey) as well as Surrey City Council member Vera Lefranc. All in all, it was a great event. My thanks goes to West Fraser Valley Area Council President Jennifer Chieh Ho and the other members who assisted with the event organization; they should be very proud of their hard work.

A Sad Goodbye – Regina Brennan

I am sad to report that Regina Brennan, retired PSAC Regional Representative, passed away on December 20 surrounded by her loved ones.

Regina started her working life as union activist and PSAC member at Canada Post Corporation and began her career at PSAC in 1991 as a Regional Representative in the Vancouver Regional Office. Regina was a strong advocate for workers and an inspiration to both members and staff in BC and across the

country. Regina's passion for social justice, her love of music and labour history and her dedication to defending the rights of workers will not be forgotten, and she will be missed by all who know her.

BC Regional Triennial Convention

In few months, we will be hosting the 7th PSAC BC Regional Triennial Convention under the theme *Honouring the Past, the Future is Ours: 1997-2017 · Twenty Years of Solidarity*. The Convention will be held at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver from June 16-18. Presently the Regional Council's Convention Committee hard at work with REVP Office staff, making plans for the Convention.

Now that our convention call has been issued, the REVP Office will begin receiving delegate names and making arrangement for their attendance. Over the next couple of months we will also be forming our three Convention Committees (Finance, General and By-Laws Resolutions) with members from both the Regional Council and from the general membership of the Region. Together, these committees will be tasked with vetting resolutions and preparing their reports for Convention.

Considering the amount of energy and attention our Convention is already generating, I'm certain that this Convention will be a huge success: it aims to provide members with a forum for renewing their sense of pride in the PSAC, reflecting on how far we have come as a Region, and how far can still endeavor to go as a union.

BC Regional Council

The BC Regional Council held an in-person meeting last October in Victoria. The Region's Component National Officers were also invited to attend, which allowed for good discussions and networking opportunities. A lot of the discussion centred on regional political action, Phoenix Pay System issues, and collective bargaining.

Just before the last BC Regional Council meeting in late October, the BC Regional Council underwent another change: Sister Virginia Vaillancourt stepped down from her Women's position on the Regional Council to take on the NEVP position with her Component in Ottawa. As such, Sister Kelly Sidhu joined the BC Regional Council to fill the Women's Coordinator vacancy for the balance of the term. Our thanks goes out to Virginia Vaillancourt for all her hard work and dedication to the BC Regional Council. We also welcome Kelly Sidhu to her new role on the BC Regional Council.

The next face-to-face meeting of the BC Regional Council is scheduled for January 27-29 in Vancouver. The main focus of that meeting is to finalize the Regional Council's resolutions for the PSAC BC Regional Triennial Convention.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Jackson
Regional Executive Vice-President, BC

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS - October 2016 to January 2017

Date(s)	Event	Location
October 2016		
October 3	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
October 4-7	NBoD Meeting	Ottawa
October 13	BCFED Convention Resolutions Committee meeting	Vancouver
October 14-16	BC Regional Council Meeting	Victoria
October 17-18	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
October 19	United Way Cabinet Meeting	Vancouver
October 19	Vancouver Area Council BBQ and Celebration of the one-year Anniversary since defeating the Harper Government	Vancouver
October 20	NBoD Constitutional Review Committee Meeting	Via Teleconference
October 26	BCFED OH&S Standing Committee Meeting	Vancouver
October 28	Meeting with KDocs Film Festival Organizers	Vancouver
October 31	BCFED Constitution and Structure Committee Meeting	Vancouver
November 2016		
November 1	United Way Cabinet Meeting	Vancouver
November 2	BCFED Convention Resolutions Committee Meeting	Vancouver
November 3	BCFED Ranking Officers Meeting	Vancouver
November 4-8	Treasury Board Bargaining	Ottawa
November 10	PSAC 50 th Anniversary Founders Day Celebration	Ottawa
November 15-16	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
November 15	Special NBoD Meeting	Ottawa
November 17-21	PSAC National Health & Safety Conference	Montreal
November 23	United Way Cabinet Meeting	Vancouver
November 23	BCFED OH&S Standing Committee Meeting	Vancouver
November 24-25	Green Jobs BC Conference	New Westminster
November 26	PSAC BC Regional Young Workers' Conference	Vancouver
November 26	UNE Regional Seminar	Vancouver
November 28-30	BC Federation of Labour Convention	Vancouver
November 29	PSAC BC Regional Celebration of PSAC 50 th Anniversary	Vancouver
November 30	PIPSC Vancouver Branch AGM	Vancouver
December 2016		
December 1-2	BC Federation of Labour Convention	Vancouver
December 3	Violence Against Women/December 6 Event	Abbotsford
December 4	Candlelight Vigil for December 6	Victoria
December 6	Candlelight Vigil for December 6	Surrey
December 7	TC Bargaining Conference Call	Via Teleconference
December 8	YVR RSCC Conference Call	Via Teleconference
December 8	United Way Labour Appreciation Dinner	Burnaby

December 10	DCL 20500 Meeting	Victoria
December 10	PSAC BC Sacred Water Ceremony	Victoria
December 12-13	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
December 14	NBoD Constitutional Review Committee Meeting	Ottawa
December 15	Information Management Interview with Sarah Belanger	Via Skype
December 15	BC Regional Council Conference Call	Via Teleconference
January 2017		
January 7	Agriculture Union Local 20060 AGM	Vancouver
January 9-10	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
January 11	BCFED OH&S Standing Committee Meeting	Vancouver
January 12	BCFED Ranking Officers Meeting	Vancouver
January 16-19	Treasury Board Bargaining	Ottawa
January 25	Meeting with NDP Candidates Bowinn Ma and Janet Routledge	Vancouver
January 27-29	BC Regional Council Meeting	Vancouver
January 29-31	BCFED Ranking Officers Retreat at CLC Winter School	Harrison