

POLITICAL ACTION AND CAMPAIGNS

The summer months provide an opportunity for people to come together at community events, festivals and celebrations. Many communities use the summer months to celebrate their diversity, especially with regard to Pride and 2SLGBTQIA+ issues. This summer was no different.

I had the privilege to march alongside PSAC BC 2SLBTQIA+ members and allies, expressing our unequivocal commitment to protecting and defending the rights of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression at events across BC. In July, I attended the Victoria Pride Parade with the Vancouver Island RWC and Vancouver Island HRC. Later in August, I attended the Vancouver Pride Parade with the Mainland HRC.

The Mainland HRC also participated in the Burnaby Pride Festival and the inaugural New Westminster Pride Street Fest. Unfortunately, I was out of the province on those dates but heard from members that both events were hugely successful.

At the time of this writing, the PSAC and the Labour movement are gearing up for another action to support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community on September 20. Sadly, this effort is in response to a concerted effort by alt-right hate groups to target trans and gender diverse youth and the right to SOGI-inclusive education in Canadian public schools. PSAC members and staff from coast to coast to coast, including myself and the BC Regional Council, will be showing up and standing in solidarity with 2SLGBTQIA+ folks at the September 20 counter protests, making it clear that hate has no place in our society.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Since the spring, PSAC members across the country have been busy with Regional and Component conventions. The same has been true for me. With several Component conventions taking place in BC, I had the privilege to attend the conventions of USJE, UHEW and (soon) UVAE. I also attended my own Component's convention in Winnipeg with fellow UTE members.

In addition to these Component conventions, I also had the opportunity to attend the first ever PSAC National Young Workers Conference in Toronto and will be attending the National Equity Conferences in Ottawa next month with the Access caucus.

Each of these events provided me with valuable opportunities to speak with members about their concerns and hopes for the future of the PSAC. It's clear that the recent national strikes and mobilization efforts within other PSAC bargaining units refocused our membership and our collective priorities moving forward: A new generation of PSAC activists was born on those picket lines who are engaged and willing to join the fight to put people before profits, to demand what workers and families deserve, and to stand up to advocate for legislative and societal changes that would foster greater equity, inclusion and justice for all.

I look forward to continuing these conversations with members in the weeks and months to come and supporting this new surge of activism within our movement.

Labour Day

Canada's Labour movement has a long history of fighting – and winning – battles for decent wages, better working conditions, and stronger protections that improve people's lives. It's thanks to unions and thousands of workers and activists that we enjoy many of our workplace rights today. From minimum wages and protection against discrimination and harassment to overtime pay and vacation pay, there is no doubt unions have helped make Canada a better, safer place to live and work. This has never been truer than it is right now with the collective actions Labour has taken over the last several months – on the picket lines, on Parliament Hill and in the streets of this country.

To mark our accomplishments, members came together to celebrate Labour Day earlier this month. Across the Region, PSAC BC Area Councils joined in several community Labour Day events organized by District Labour Councils. PSAC tables and booths were hosted in Prince George, Burnaby, Victoria, Ladysmith, and the Fraser Valley.

That same weekend, I attended the Saanich Fair with the Victoria Area Council. While not an official Labour Day event, the fair provided yet another opportunity to celebrate and share news of our workplace victories with community and talk about our continued efforts on other social justice issues.

REGIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

First National Health Authority

The bargaining team met with the employer in June. Although progress was made on certain issues, the team believes that the employer's offer needs improvement. The bargaining team is committed to securing the same wage increases that have been granted to other provincial public sector healthcare workers, which are as follows:

- Year 1: \$0.25/hour increase plus 3.24%
- Year 2: 6.75%
- Year 3: Minimum of 2%, but a maximum of 3%, based on inflation.

The team will be meeting with the employer again in this fall.

Purolator

The Bargaining team met with the employer July 17 and 18 and dealt with proposals on language changes. Monetary items will be dealt with at future bargaining dates, which are set for mid-October and early December.

Commissionaires

A new collective agreement has been ratified by the members of DCL 20500 who work for the Corps of Commissionaires, Victoria the Islands and Yukon.

The new contract contains significant wage increases over the three-year term. The union and the employer also agreed to reopen the contract early next year to address wage increases effective April 2024.

The new agreement also resolves long-standing grievances around leave which includes retroactive pay for members who have had their leave removed by the employer, additional personal leave, and increased flexibility for workers to cash out leave on an annual basis.

The agreement also strengthens members' rights to union representation during the grievance process and includes new leave provisions for workers experiencing intimate partner violence. Both parties have also agreed to a Statement on Reconciliation, which will be included as a preface to the collective agreement.

Rising Sun

After a year of hard work, the negotiating team was ready to wrap things up when an Order in Council derailed the final stages of bargaining for Local 22005 and Rising Sun Community Residential Treatment Facilities. The Order in Council legally changed who was bargaining for the Employer and how bargaining was to be conducted by the Union team. Untangling this highly unusual order to ensure Rising Sun members continue to be represented, and to ensure the work done to date is built upon, has been complicated.

The BCGEU (British Columbia General Employees Union) would like to represent the PSAC Local 22005 members at Rising Sun. All that is necessary is a membership meeting and a vote to choose to join BCGEU. Members do not have to sign cards or start over; they remain unionized.

EDUCATION

This fall the PSAC BC Region is offering a number of in-person basic education courses across the province, including the TUB course, Grievance Handling, Introduction to Duty to Accommodation and Local Officers Training. Additionally, the Region will be offering the "Steward Series: Working Through Conflict & Stewards as Allies for Racial Justice" course in Northern BC. The hope is that the fall schedule of courses will continue to engage members who recently got involved with the Union as a result of the recent TB and CRA strikes.

There were some challenges with in-person recruitment in some areas of the Region, but we're hopeful that we've be able to adjust the delivery of courses to meet the educational needs of members across BC.

Apart from the basic educations courses, this November PSAC BC will also be delivering the "Domestic Violence at Work" course, which was postponed as a result of the pandemic. The original 2020 applicants were reoffered their spots in the course and the remaining seats were given to RWC co-chairs.

Union Leadership Development Program

Like all other Regions, we are also gearing up for the Union Leadership Development Program that will begin this January. The program provides training for both formal union leaders in elected positions as well as informal union leaders who are respected in the workplace. ULDP will provide participants with training, tools and shared space to develop their individual and collective capacity to transform PSAC into a stronger, more effective, inclusive, better-organized, membership-based union.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

PSAC BC Area Council and Regional Committee Summit, Part 1

Traditionally the Region schedules a one-day, in-person annual training day for Area Council and Regional Committee executive members in the summer. This year, with it being a convention year and with schedules being compressed with the strike activity and ratification votes, we decided to schedule the in-person session in the fall. However, recognizing that some newer Area Council and Committee executive members still required more immediate assistance with finances and governances as well as membership engagement strategies, we scheduled an additional training day (Part 1 of the annual PSAC BC Area Council and Regional Committee Summit) that was held virtually on July 7.

The focus of the July 7 session was financial and governance best practices for Area Councils and Regional Committees as well a workshop on developing effective strategies for membership engagement, especially given the surge in member involvement with the recent TB and CRA strikes. The virtual session was well attended by committee executives, ranging from seasoned activists to newly engaged members. The feedback received from attendees was very positive and we hope to build on the success of the July 1 session when we provide Part 2 of the training in person this December.

PSAC BC Indigenous Peoples Summit

In November 2022, the previous BC Regional Council agreed to organize three separate regional equity summits in the BC Region for the equity caucuses that do not currently have nationally funded regional conferences: PSAC BC Access (Persons with Disabilities), PSAC BC Pride (2SLGBTQIA+), PSAC BC Indigenous Peoples.

The Council further agreed that the three Summits would be held separately between the fall of 2023 and the PSAC National Convention in 2024 when they made be potentially funded as full regional conferences via resolutions at Convention.

The Summits are to be modeled after the Regional Racially Visible Conference (with the exclusion of resolutions debate) where the respective Equity Coordinator on the BC Regional Council will chair the Summit proceedings.

The first of the three Summits has now been scheduled: the PSAC BC Indigenous Peoples Summit is taking place November 24-26 at the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown under the theme “Building our community as Indigenous members throughout BC.” An official Summit call out was issued in late August that includes an application deadline of October 5, 2023.

Planning for the two remaining equity summits (Pride and Access) will begin soon with delivery in spring 2024.

I look forward to reporting on the success of the Indigenous Peoples Summit at the next NBoD meeting and providing a further update on the plans for the PSAC BC Access and Pride Summits.

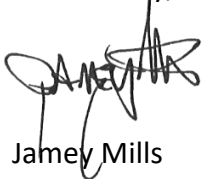
CONCLUSION

As we enter the fall months, the energy within the membership is continuing to grow. Tens of thousands of RAND members signed union cards and are now better connected to the PSAC as a result of the recent strikes. Because of the strikes, we are a more powerful union. Because of the strikes, we have been reminded that when we stick together, we can make real gains.

The collective power of unions will be vital in the coming months as we face not just the challenges we saw at bargaining tables but with a looming threat in Ottawa: a federal election is on the horizon and we cannot allow an anti-labour, anti-human rights party take the reins of this country.

My hope is that the leaders of our organization – at the national level and at the regional and local levels – will continue to remain vigilant and mobilized. We cannot allow any government to tear down all the progress we have achieved over the last several years. These are our victories, and we must fight to protect and enhance them for all workers.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JAMEY MILLS', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jamey Mills
PSAC BC Regional Executive Vice-President

REVP BC ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS – MAY 2023 TO OCTOBER 2023

Date(s)	Event	Location
<i>MAY 2023</i>		
May 1	TB/CRA Strike Action	Various Picket lines in BC
May 1-3	Various media in support of strike position	Via Zoom/Teams/Phone
May 2-3	CRA Strike Action	Various Picket lines in BC
May 2	AEC Meeting	Via Zoom
May 4	BC Regional Council Meeting	Richmond
May 5-7	PSAC BC Regional Convention	Richmond
May 8	BC Regional Council Meeting	Richmond
May 9-12	CLC Convention	Montreal
May 11	TB NSCC	Via Zoom
May 16-18	FNHA Negotiations	Vancouver
May 17	AEC Meeting	Via Zoom
May 18	PSAC BC Staff Strike Debrief	Via MS Teams
May 18	NJC SWOHS meeting	Via MS Teams
May 19	MWD Resolutions Preparations	Via MS Teams
May 27	Okanagan Area Council Meeting	Via Zoom
May 29	DCL 22005 RSCC Meeting	Via Zoom
May 30	UTE/CRA Ratification Vote Meetings	Surrey
May 31	UTE/CRA Ratification Vote Meetings	Victoria
<i>JUNE 2023</i>		
June 1	UTE/CRA Strike Debrief with RSCC	Via Zoom
June 5	TB Ratification Vote Meetings	Victoria
June 6	TB Ratification Vote Meetings	Vancouver
June 7	AEC Meeting	Via Zoom
June 8	BCFED Officers Meeting	Via Zoom
June 13	UTE/CRA Ratification Vote Meetings	Penticton
June 17	Labour Night at BC Lions with BCFED and Affiliates	Vancouver
June 19-20	NEC – MWD Resolutions Committee Meeting	Ottawa
June 20	TB Strike Debrief with RSCC	Via Zoom
June 22	BCFED Executive Council Meeting	Via Zoom
June 26	AEC Meeting	Ottawa

June 27-29	NBoD Meeting	Ottawa
June 28	FNHA RSCC Meeting	Via Zoom
June 29	Pol Comm Interviews	Via MS Teams
June 30	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
June 30	BCFED Officers call re ILWU Strike	Via Zoom

JULY 2023

July 5	NBoD OHS Committee Meeting	Via MS Teams
July 7	PSAC BC Area Council & Regional Committee Training Session	Via Zoom
July 9	Victoria Pride Parade with Vanc. Island HRC and RWC	Victoria
July 11	FNHA Lunch and Learn	Via Zoom
July 13	National TB Strike Debrief	Ottawa
July 14	PSAC BC Organizing Meeting	Vancouver
July 17-21	USJE National Convention	Whistler
July 20	NJC SWOHS Meeting	Via MS Teams
July 26-27	MTMS Training	St. John's
July 31	CFIA Bargaining	Ottawa

AUGUST 2023

August 1-3	CFIA Bargaining	Ottawa
August 6	Vancouver Pride Parade with Mainland HRC	Vancouver
August 9	AEC Meeting	Via Zoom
August 9	BC Regional Council Meeting	Via Zoom
August 14	CFIA NSCC	Via MS Teams
August 14	AEC Meeting	Via Zoom
August 15-16	UHEW National Convention	Vancouver
August 17-19	UTE National Convention	Winnipeg
August 21	ROB CFIA Check-In Meeting	Via MS Teams
August 21	Vancouver Island YWC Meeting	Via Zoom
August 23	CFIA Ratification Vote Meeting	Via Zoom
August 26	CFIA Ratification Vote Meeting	Via Zoom
August 28	Strategy Meeting for DCL 22005	Via Zoom
August 31	DCL 20500 Ratification Vote Meeting	Victoria
August 31	CFIA Ratification Vote Meeting	Via Zoom

SEPTEMBER 2023

September 1-3	Saanich Fair with Victoria Area Council	Saanich
September 5	Meeting with MLA Janet Routledge	Via Zoom
September 7	BCFED Officers Meeting	Via Zoom
September 7	CDA Campaign Strategy Meeting	Via Zoom
September 7	CFIA Ratification Vote Meeting	Via Zoom
September 12	NJC SWOHS Meeting	Via MS Teams
September 12	DCL 22005 Executive Meeting	Via Zoom
September 13	NBoD OHS Committee Meeting	Via MS Teams
September 15-17	PSAC National Young Workers Conference	Toronto
September 18-19	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
September 20-21	BC Regional Council Advocacy and Representation Training	Victoria
September 21	BCFED Executive Council Meeting	Via Zoom
September 22-24	BC Regional Council Meeting	Victoria
September 26-27	CCOHS Forum	Halifax
September 26	Northeast BC Area Council Meeting	Via Zoom

OCTOBER 2023

October 4	NJC SWOHS Meeting	Via MS Teams
October 5	BCFED Officers Meeting	Via Zoom
October 11	PSAC Victoria Regional Office Opening	Victoria
October 12-14	UVAE National Convention	Vancouver
October 18	NEC – MWD Resolutions Committee Meeting	Ottawa
October 19-23	PSAC National Equity Conferences (NEC)	Ottawa
October 27-29	YEU Convention	Whitehorse
October 30	AEC Meeting	Ottawa
October 31	NBoD Meeting	Ottawa