

# YOUR UNION

Local 480



Trail, B. C.

June 2024

VOL.52 No.2



## LOCAL 480, USW EXECUTIVE POSITION ELECTION

There is an Executive election for the  
**Benefits Coordinator** position.

If you are interested in this position, please email Jo-Lynne at [jo-lynn@usw480.com](mailto:jo-lynn@usw480.com). We will be accepting nominations up to, and including, the June 20<sup>th</sup> Executive meeting by 2:15pm. You need to be nominated at the Executive meeting but need not be present.

### Eligibility

The following is an excerpt from the Local Union Elections Manual:

...“the member must have been in continuous good standing from the time that said member joined such Local Union; and (c) has attended at least one-third (1/3) of the regular meetings held by the member’s Local Union during the twenty-four (24) month period immediately preceding the month in which the delegate election is to be held.”

Issued by:  
Local 480, USW  
May 20, 2024

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# We are Online and Live!



[www.facebook.com/usw480](http://www.facebook.com/usw480)

You can also find us at: [www.uswlocal480.com](http://www.uswlocal480.com)

## YOUR UNION

### EDITORIAL STAFF

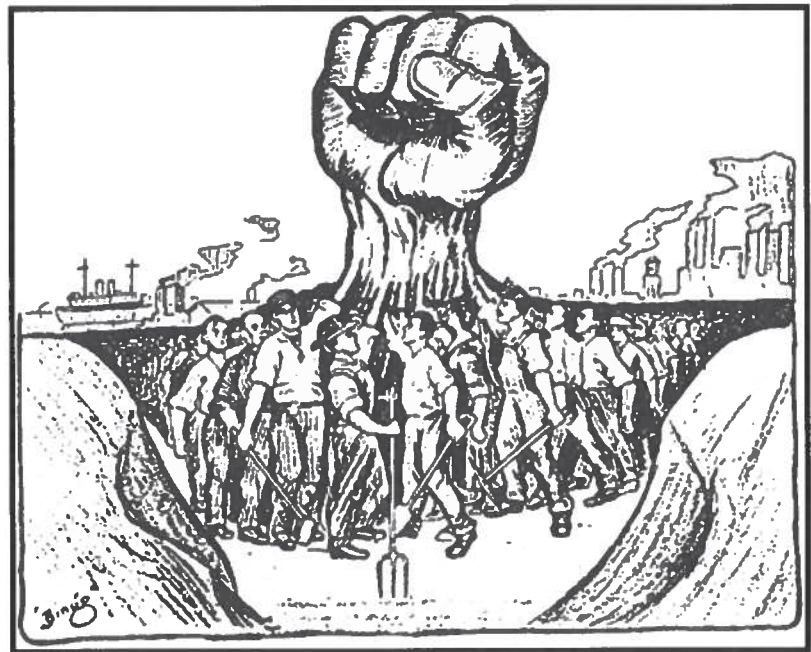
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The editors reserve the right to edit any or all material submitted



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Come check out our Local 480 merchandise! Items may be purchased at the hall. All items are proudly union made!



**LOCAL 480  
MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
June 20, 2024 3:45 PM & 5:30 PM  
480 STEELWORKER HALL**

- By-law Amendment Reading:  
Article VI– Sec 1, Article XIV–Sec 4,  
Article IV– Sec 7 and Sec 14

# President's Report

Chris Walker, President

## Mental Health, CWS & Thank you



I just wanted to start by thanking everyone who put their names forward for our recent election. These jobs are often overlooked and come with lots of stressful responsibilities. It takes a lot for someone to accept that willingly. I'd also like to congratulate all of the successful candidates and say I am looking forward to working with you all over the next three years.

I'm sure we are all aware now of the recent tragedy and serious incidents that have happened to some of our Brothers. I will not share names or details, but most people on site are aware. These things hit many of us extremely hard, I know for myself it has been very difficult and I've had my struggles dealing with it. The reason I share this is because it has been difficult for many of us, and we need to make sure people know that we have resources available if people need someone to talk to.

I am lucky enough that my wife usually knows better than me when I'm frustrated or

struggling, she can usually get me to open up. Not everyone has this or feels comfortable with sharing. I want to make sure you know that we have \$2500.00 annually to use for mental health resources. You can start with a phone call to our EFAP @ 1-844-880-9143. This is 100% confidential.

You can also talk to me if that works for you. I've been president for 6 years now, and I've quietly helped several members get resources that have helped them. I am extremely grateful for every member who steps forward and recognizes they need help. I truly believe the strongest people are those who are willing to admit they need help and ask for it.

I've been consistently asked about when the trades CWS retro will be paid. I do not have an answer, I know that the pay office is working on it. Be patient with them, they are doing the very best they can with the resources they have.

While we're on the topic of CWS, I want to talk about Operations. Some people say that 'the Union is only focused on increase for trades.' That is such BS, and frankly, I'm sick of hearing it. The reason you don't hear about Operations CWS is that we've continually re-rated and received increases. Trades were the first group that we were unable to get an agreement with the Company, so yeah, we fought hard for them because they deserved it. Having said that, we still have lots of plants/groups the committee is working on: IGP, Kivcet Power Engineers, Melting Plant, Ammonia, etc.

Finally, I just want to thank all of you who supported me during the election, and for those who didn't, maybe I can change your mind over the next 3 years.

I hope you all have a great summer.

In Solidarity,  
Chris Walker



# Benefits Co-ordinator Report

Leigh Creegan, Benefits Co-ordinator

## WCB Reviews And Accommodations

To the members of Local 480,

It has been a while since my last article and a lot has happened. I would like to start by congratulating the newly elected executive members and thank you to everyone who put their name forward. Campaigning and running in an election takes a lot of courage, time and dedication so thank you to all candidates that let their names stand. In my last article I had mentioned we were working on 5 WCB Reviews, and I am happy to report back that we have received a decision on 2 of the reviews and 1 was overturned and the other was referred back to the board to rule on the entitled compensation. Two good wins for the local.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> and June 6<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a 2-part retirement seminar at the Hall with Les Zacharias and Jennifer Cook. Thank you to everyone who attended, there was a lot of great information shared with the members. I do suggest that next time we have this seminar anybody who wants to attend, no matter how far from the finish line you are, do so as it is very beneficial and helps ensure you're ready to retire as soon as

you can. Keep an eye out for future seminar dates.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> I attended an online accommodation law conference being presented by Paul Champ (Union Counsel) and Judith Parisien (Employer Counsel). This is presented every year, and the two lawyers present the leading accommodation cases of the previous year and discuss it from each legal standpoint. It was very informative and there was a lot of good information shared. Even though I don't always agree with the rationale, it is always good to hear the perspective from company lawyers to help prepare for when we run into our own accommodation issues here. On that note of accommodations we have managed to get some workers back to work earning; however, accommodations continue to be a struggle, but we will continue the fight for our members to be at work earning a livelihood to support themselves and their families. We are the ones that show up day and day again to earn the Company their money and the very least they can do is to look and find an appropriate place to put a worker should they get hurt so they can continue to earn and work a meaning-

ful job. We are always being told by the Company that they would rather have an employee back making their full wage doing some kind of work than sitting at home collecting 70 1/3% of their wage; however, when it comes to doing just that it turns out to be words not actions. It's never a quick process to find accommodations, but we are always pushing for the membership.

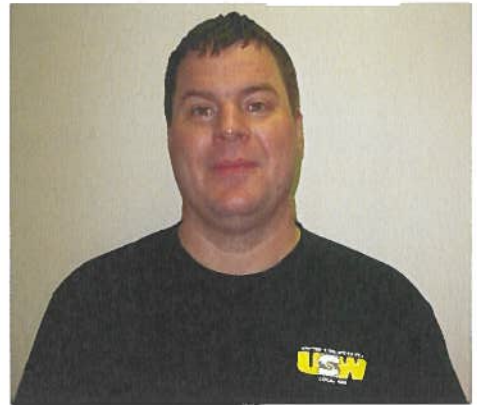
We recently suffered a very tragic loss to our membership. We lost a coworker, friend, father, and son, Luke Ferraro. I didn't have the pleasure of knowing Luke as well as many other on the property did, but the interactions I did have with him were always very pleasant. My sincere condolences go to his family and many friends he had on the Hill. It's ok to not be ok about this tragedy, if you're struggling or are observing anybody who is struggling feel free to reach out I'd be more than happy to help however I can. Be sure to look after each other out there.

In Solidarity,  
Leigh

# Grievance Committee Report

Jesse Nicoll, Grievance Chair

## Concerns Over Recent Discipline



Hello Brothers, Sisters and fellow Steelworkers,

Before I get into the active issues that the grievance committee has been dealing with, I'd like to address some of our deep concerns involving recent discipline. This discipline resulted from several safety incidents. A few of our Chief Stewards and myself attended several investigatory meetings about these safety incidents. It was obvious that there were systemic failures in all these incidents. While we all have a responsibility to work safely, the onus is on the company to provide a safe and healthy worksite. We brought up several arguments around supervisions' failure to communicate, support, develop proper procedures and training to name a few. These arguments were ignored, and the employer indicated that a disci-

plinary response to the workers was the only thing they were interested in. We have filed grievances on all this discipline. Punishing our members is not the way to make this a safer workplace!

The grievance committee has filed a few grievances over the last few months which I will update you all on.

We filed a grievance on the contracting out of the material handling of residue from the Sulfide plant. We tried to resolve this during our monthly contracting out meetings with no success. This grievance is currently at stage three of the grievance procedure and waiting for a response from the company.

We filed a grievance on the improper monitoring of gate times. The HR department is

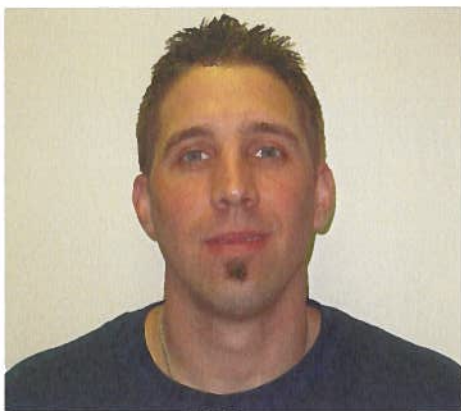
making some attempts to resolve the issue.

We filed a grievance for one of our workers who was disciplined for not following a procedure. We had a third stage meeting with HR and that area's manager. Currently we are waiting for the company to respond to that grievance.

We have three arbitrations scheduled for this year. One in September, October, and then December. We have legal counsel from Victory Square Law Office for two of those grievances. I hope to give you all a positive update on those arbitrations later this year.

In Solidarity,  
Jesse Nicoll.





## Health & Safety Committee

Kyle Jorgensen, Safety Chair

### Stop The Killing

As part of the United Steelworkers National Committee, we are looking at refreshing the Stop the Killing – Enforce the Law Campaign. This campaign calls to hold people criminally accountable for the health and safety of workers. According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, over 1000 workers are killed annually on the job across Canada. In Canada, Bill C-45 The Westray Bill, was created and finally passed on March 31, 2004, due to the Westray tragedy where 26 coal miners died in an explosion at the Westray Mine in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. That tragedy occurred on May 9, 1992. It took 12 years of public pressure to bring that Bill forward and get it passed. The Law amended to add Section 217.1 to the *Criminal Code*, reading:

**"217.1** Everyone who undertakes, or has the authority, to direct how another person does work or performs a task is under a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm to that person, or any other person, arising from that work or task."

There is no Law that will ever give anyone any justice

when they lose a loved one, the point is to stop that from happening in the first place. The Stop the Killing – Enforce the Law Campaign is meant to bring awareness to Bill C-45, to ensure that, when there is negligence, Corporations, Executives and those in charge, that have the ability to prevent these tragedies are held accountable. This is meant to be a deterrent so that these incidents do not happen in the first place. Workers go to work to make a living and they should not be put at risk for profit. If this Law is enacted properly, it will prevent Company's, like Westray, from blatantly disregarding health and safety concerns in order to make a profit. That is the goal, prevention.

Looking at our site, we do not ever want to be in a position where we are looking into this Law. However, we need to fully understand the meaning of this and why it is in place to ensure we do not need to use it. We need to make sure that we follow our processes and procedures. If we say a certain task needs a Hazard Risk Assessment, due to being a new task or a change in scope, we better act on that. If we have a safety work order in to prevent an unsafe situation, we better act on that.

These processes and procedures are in place for a reason, and it is to prevent unsafe situations.

We all have a role to play in ensuring safety. It takes everyone from every level. We cannot have the burden of safety strictly placed on the ground floor level. It takes everyone. It is not ok to skip the hierarchy of controls and skip safe work plans, or disregard controls and rely solely on workers to wear their PPE. PPE is the last line of defense and cannot be relied on as our saving grace. Yes, we need to use it to protect ourselves but it goes along with all the other controls on the hierarchy – "Administrative controls, Engineering controls, Substitution and Elimination." We need to make sure we are doing what we say we are doing or we need to stop saying we will do the right thing. Words without actions, saying we will put in controls and then not putting in controls, are exactly that, just words. No amount of training through Hazard Identification, Courageous Safety Leadership, or any other training will replace putting in proper controls and dealing with the hazard. If we want to fix this, we have to act

(Continued on page 7)

*(Continued from page 6)*

on our words and “do the right thing.”

Remember if all else fails and we are not putting in controls, you have the Right to Refuse Unsafe Situations. That

is Law in BC. Ideally, we do not need to do this as we deal with the situation before it gets to that point, but if you do need it, you are protected by Law in BC and you have the Right to Refuse. Please, if/when you do enact this, phone down to the Hall and

get one of us involved to ensure we follow the process properly, 368-9131.

Stay Safe.  
In Solidarity,  
Kyle



## From the Soapbox

If you want to drink that’s your business, if you want to stop and need help that’s ours!

A bit about my story: Hello, my name is Hannah and I’m a recovered alcoholic. Before recovery I was constantly trying to escape my reality, or thinking I needed a drink to “relax” after a stressful day. I noticed that the most growth I’ve ever experienced was when I looked at the person I saw in the mirror and asked myself “is this the person I want to be?”...It cer-

tainly wasn’t, and I’m doing everything in my power to change that.

If I go back to just a “few”, it won’t look like that. Maybe it will the first time, but eventually it will take me right back to where I was. I can’t have just one, and I don’t want one. I never will magically go back, and drink “normally”, but what is normal anyways? There are almost always consequences. Whether it’s a hangover, a wasted morning, not being present with my loved ones, shame, guilt, regret, embarrassment.

Once I accepted that one drink will take me back there, it makes it easier to not take that first sip.

If you are struggling, you are not alone. I can help connect you with resources and a community of people who have also recovered. Please don’t hesitate to contact me, we are all here to help.

Contact information:

My email is [hannah\\_jt007@hotmail.com](mailto:hannah_jt007@hotmail.com)

Call our 24hr helpline to speak to an AA member if you have any questions or just need someone to talk to:  
1-250-800-4125

Or for more information you can go to the local AA website [aawestkootenays.org](http://aawestkootenays.org)

### Soapbox Continued

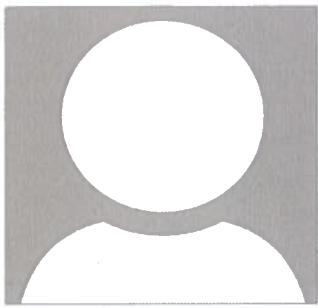
I would like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for those who supported my family this past month and a half. From the phone calls and texts to the generosity of the BBQ. I never thought that we would be on the receiving end in a time of need.

A big thank you to everyone at the Hall that helped out, Danny Ferraro, Hil-Tech, and all the crews on the hill for their generous support.

I do have a bit of recovery, but I am looking forward to coming back and continuing to represent the membership.

Once again thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Nylan, Rosalyn, Kinsley, and Rhyler.

It truly shows that we support each other in a time of need.



# Safety Co-ordinators

Dean Johnson & Jay Walters

## Take Your Time And Assess the Job



Local 480 Members...

We have had a lot of concerning incidents in the last few months that have had high potential for serious injury. Part of what we are seeing out there is that there are multiple examples where our systems and communication have failed.

Make sure you know and understand the full scope of your task before starting and if there are multiple people or groups working on the same task, make sure that everyone involved also understands. **Communicate and confirm the scope.** Don't just assume that everyone knows. Go look at the job together.

If your task involves a lockout, be sure everyone in-

involved is Qualified (as per Con Doc #2771). If the lockout is part of a Con Doc, **review the procedure** that accompanies the lockout beforehand. Be sure that it makes sense, is accurate, and relevant for the job scope. Make sure you are clear on the requirements of the lockout program (Con Doc #2771). If you need a refresher or are unclear on any aspect of lockouts, contact your training department or give the safety department a call.

There are hazards all around us out there. If there is anything that is unclear, **stop and ask the questions.** If you are still unclear, uncomfortable with a task, uncomfortable with stopping a job or if there is a difference of opinion on what the correct course of action is... get

hold of someone who can help before continuing. This can include a trusted co-worker, a trainer and of course any safety representative. We are always willing to help. Sometimes a little bit of clarity can be enough to confirm it is safe to continue and sometimes the job may need to be stopped until it can be reviewed. **We need to know that we are supported out there to do the right thing.**

There is a saying that says, 'Safety Starts with You'. You matter... Your safety matters... You have the right to be safe and act on your safety. Call us if you need support.

In solidarity,  
DEAN

## Kivcet Shutdown

Greetings to the Membership,

I was assigned to represent Local 480 on the safety front for the 2024 Kivcet shutdown starting in early April. Because of this, if you work outside of Lead South, you probably haven't seen me much during that time, and if you do work in Lead south, you probably got a bit tired of seeing me. The main scope of this shutdown was the boiler replacement project (contract work), but there was all

kinds of work for our members at the same time whether it was considered to be "shutdown work" or not. From the standpoint of my job, this was a very good experience for me. I'm the first to admit that I didn't know a whole lot about Lead South when this began; but, because of everyone who works there and their willingness to answer my many questions, I now know a lot more, even if there's still more to learn. Thank you all very much for that.

In terms of our membership's involvement with the shutdown, it really took a whole village. Lead South trades and ops, as well as those called in from other parts of the property, lockout teams, PAPR workers, shops, lift crew, property support, hygiene and many others all working together to get the job done. In addition to observing your work, I also got to visit a few of your morning crew talks, have great conversations in



the field, and attend HRA's with you.

The shutdown had its challenges for sure. There were some issues around communication between job owners, scheduling, overlapping hazards, control zones and a few others. There was a lot of work going on by different groups in the same place, but we managed to navigate through it and find a way to get the jobs done. At the end of the day, I witnessed our 480 crews communicating with each other and working together despite all of that, and it was great to see.

Outside all of that, my time spent with you folks in the shutdown also highlighted some of the daily safety challenges that exist in your workplace. Clearly, we have a hygiene issue in that area that we need to work on, and as is common on other parts of the property, we have a tough time keeping up with maintaining ideal plant conditions with crews that are too small. Please don't accept this as "...just the way it is...". We all need to keep speaking up to make our workplace safer. Continue to report near misses and unsafe conditions. Refuse unsafe work. Call us if you need sup-

port. Attend your safety meetings and be vocal at them. Don't accept subpar working conditions.

Finally, this is the first paper since our executive elections, so I want to sincerely thank the membership for their support. Working for the Local is a privilege I do not take lightly. Thanks to all who ran, and thanks to the election committee for their hard work.

In Solidarity,  
Jay Walters



## From the Soapbox

I would like to commend our CWS committee members, Taylor Troubridge, Tyler Bell, and Jesse Nicoll for the work they have so far accomplished and continue to do for our membership.

Your CWS committee has worked hard on behalf of all members which have led to wage increases, retro pay and updated job descriptions for our operators, custodians, fire protective services and soon to be, our trades.

To President Chris Walker and Trades Rep Travis Storvold, thank you for your devotion to push for trades' increases. Through their hard work, all trades will receive wage increases, retro pay, updated job descriptions and keep language that could have had consequences for our members in the future. All of the increases are from a binding decision set down by arbitrator Vince Ready.

Although some may not be in favour of the decision, the decision was a step in the right direction. Most importantly, we, the trades' stood together by voting down the Company's proposal. In my opinion, if the Company had not included the language in their latest proposal, arbitration would have been averted.

The CWS committee is currently continuing to review our members in gas and dust, the Melting Plant, and Ammonia Plant.

Thanks for all you do.

In Solidarity,  
Brother Jeff Schuepfer.



## Office and Technical Chair, Report

Ron McKenzie, Unit Chair

### Sick Leave Plan, How it Works

Congratulations to all the new and continuing executive officers and thank you to all those who put their names forward to run, helped with the elections, and especially to all the members who cast their vote. We have a strong and engaged membership and I'm proud to be a part of it.

In this article, I'll outline the Office & Technical (O&T) sick leave plan. The O&T and 480 hourly sick leave plans are quite different, so you need to know which applies to you.

The O&T plan has 3 main parts, Basic Sick Leave (BSL), Sick Credits (Sick Days) and Long-Term disability (LTD).

Permanent and Temp employees are eligible for these after 3 months of continuous service. Casuals and employees with less than 3 months service are not eligible for the plan, but can still access 5 full paid sick days per year, under provincial legislation. To use the legislated days contact claims directly.

Basic Sick Leave (BSL) is 90 days of partial-paid time

off when you are too sick or injured to work. It is paid and managed by the company, so you go onto it automatically when you call in sick, and your time is entered. The amount you get is based on years of service:

- 3 months to 5 years service = 40% salary,
- 5 years to 10 years = 50% of the first \$2000 and 40% of the balance,
- 10 years onward = 60% of the first \$2000 and 50% of the balance.

Note that the reduced pay will not appear until the pay period after the one you were actually sick in, (similar to overtime). All of your deductions will be taken off as normal, and taxes will be remitted based on CRA rules for your expected yearly salary, so be prepared for this.

Sick Credits (AKA Sick Days) are 12 days per year at full pay. These count as part of the 90 days on BSL and get used up first to keep you at full pay as long as possible. The number of sick credits in your entitlements only refers to the full paid days, you stay on BSL after your sick credits are all used and can collect BSL for an unrelated illness

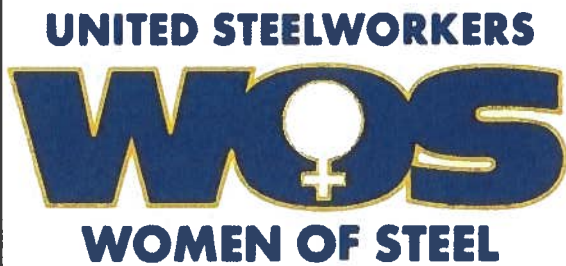
or injury later in the year even if you've used all your sick credits. Unused credits carry over every year to a maximum of 90 days.

Long-term Disability (LTD) begins when you are off work more than 90 days. This is run through Sunlife, so the switch does not occur automatically, you need to apply before the end of your 90 days of BSL. Claims and/or the Union can help you with this, but contact us as soon as you think you may be off more than 90 days to help avoid a delay. LTD is also partial pay and the rates of pay and service years are the same as for BSL above.

These are all valuable benefits, especially the full paid days. You never know when you may need them, so use your sick credits and other leave wisely. As always, if you have any questions call the Union Hall, and we will help find the answers.

The O&T plans are found in, Appendix "C", p. 128-131 of the 2022-2027 O&T contract.

In Solidarity,  
Ron McKenzie



## Local 480's Women of Steel

The Women of Steel have been around for a few years now, and want to take the opportunity to share with you our vision and purpose:

- We are here to work collectively with the membership to address women-specific issues within our union.
- We are active union members who aim to bring women together in a safe and supporting environment.
- We hope to get women more involved in our local through networking and union-sponsored events.

As of late we have been in preliminary talks with Human Resources and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee regarding how to better accommodate pregnancies onsite. We hope to have something to present to the membership soon.

In the past, the WOS have hosted a family summer kick-off party and a well-received bingo night. We are happy to report that our Bingo night will now be an annual event focused on raising funds for seniors at Christmas time.

The WOS help with all the Local 480 events. You have probably seen us at the Kids Christmas Party, Spooktacular and the Pensioners Picnic.

We are always looking for volunteers and we would love to hear your ideas for future events. We welcome any suggestions for events or women's networking opportunities. If you are interested in getting involved with the Local 480 Women of Steel, please contact one of our committee members listed below.

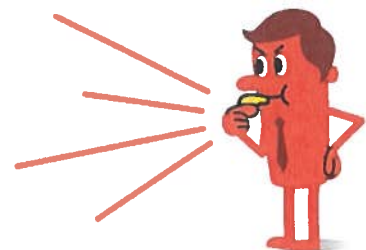
In closing, we would like to give a shout out and a big thanks to our past committee members Kelly Carr, Taylor Troubridge, Jill Kinahan and Christine Wickens.

In solidarity,  
Robynn Fisher, Tonya Farewell, Wendy Castellanos and Lenorra Ciardullo  
Local 480 Women of Steel

### Important Contact information for Reporting!

Doing what's right line # 1-888-873-3745

WCB Reporting line 1-888-621-7233 or report online at:  
<https://prevruw.online.worksafebc.com/>





From left to right: Will McKenzie, Kevin Howard and Neil Smitheram pose for one final picture before the big goodbye. Congratulations on your retirement!



Winner of the Crib Tournament left to right:

In second place Landon Koerber and Mark Blackwell, In first place Rory May and Chris Walker, and in third place Jacob and Darren Smith. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to everyone who attended and helped with the event! See you all next year!

Sign-up For Text Alerts by Texting 480 to 32323