



Elder David Larocque

Elder David Larocque, from Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, opened our 2017 convention yesterday with a prayer. In Cree, Larocque prayed that all delegates and special guests would have a good mind, good heart, and good path in life, and that we all think clearly during convention. On Wednesday evening, Larocque also smudged the convention hall with sage.

“This was done to clear the air, remove anything that was negative, and to welcome the members,” he said.

Originally from Waterhen Lake First Nation, Larocque has been practicing the Indigenous spiritual way of life since he was a teenager. He is a full-time Aboriginal liaison at the Saskatchewan federal penitentiary, and works as a cultural advisor for several organizations, including Eagle’s Nest Youth Ranch, Ranch Ehrlo, and Prince Albert Youth Residence. He also teaches traditional drumming at St. Michael’s church.

With such a busy schedule, we are lucky that he was able to join us. Thank you, Elder Larocque, for your blessings and contribution to our convention!

\$700 raised for shelter

Carol Soles and Sherry Bates of the Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women spoke at the women’s luncheon about the important services they provide, and an upcoming fundraiser, Walk a Mile in her Shoes.



This fundraiser challenges men to walk a mile in high heels. SGEU President Bob Bymo accepted the challenge to walk onto convention floor wearing high heels on the condition that the women’s luncheon raise \$300 for the shelter.

They ended up raising more than \$700! Plus, they passed the hat around convention floor and raised another \$700 for a total of \$1,400 for the shelter.

Stand up for Saskatchewan

The news that the Wall government is reconsidering cuts to libraries should embolden and encourage us.

Now’s not the time to get complacent.

On that note, please remember that today at convention there will be no morning break, and that lunch starts at 11:10 a.m. and goes until 11:40 a.m. Then we will load onto busses to head over for a rally at MLA Joe Hargrave’s office from 12:00 - 12:45 p.m.

Make sure to post photos and videos of the rally to social media, and get ready to make some noise!





Welcome newbies!

About 30 first-time delegates gathered in the log cabin this morning to learn about SGEU convention protocol, and to pick up their Keep Calm & Union Strong t-shirts. Welcome first timers!

First-time delegate profile

Health Sector member Elizabeth Hoffman is a first-time delegate at this year's convention.

After moving to Nipawin, a co-worker encouraged her to get more involved in the union. Earlier this year, she attended the health proposals conference at Manitou Beach, which piqued her interest.

"I want to be able to help people out who can't come to the conferences," says Hoffman. "There's so many questions now with so many changes coming. Mostly, everyone is worried about their jobs, and their pay, and basically hanging onto the benefits that we already have."

It may be her first time at convention, but Hoffman is eager to speak. She jumped up yesterday to second a few motions, but didn't make it to the mic in time.

"I'm sitting in the back, and I'm not as spry and young as I used to be," she says with a laugh.

So far, Hoffman is enjoying convention.

"It's informative," she says. "It's good to know there's a mayor out there who's backing our union."

Hoffman hopes to be able to take information back to Nipawin to share with other members. She's also looking forward to the banquet on Friday.

"I'm a foodie!" she says, laughing.

Not shy, Hoffman already has her Bingo card filled out. "I've been meeting people all day, and I've just been having a riot," she says.



SGEU gets social

SGEU Convention will be using the hashtag #SGEUCon2017 on Facebook and Twitter.

By using this hashtag, SGEU members will be able to see each others' posts and interact with one another. Search #SGEUCon2017 on Facebook and Twitter to see what's going on!

Be sure to "like" the SGEU Facebook page to receive updates to your newsfeed during Convention. To follow SGEU on Twitter, search for @SGEU.



The fight ahead

Hassan Yussuff brought greetings and solidarity from the Canadian Labour Congress and let attendees at SGEU convention know that workers in Saskatchewan have the full support of the CLC in the fight ahead.

Calling it "the worst provincial budget in the history of the province," President Yussuff encouraged attendees to continue their efforts to fight back—not just against this budget, but for the next three years.

Yussuff warned SGEU attendees that their fight is critical to holding the line on public services, and that "if you give Wall an inch, he'll take a mile."

Turning towards the occasion of Canada's 150 birthday, President Yussuff wondered, "What kind of Canada would we be without public services?"

Pointing out that public services are the great equalizer for our society, Yussuff also noted that so many of the things that people celebrate about Canada are things that the labour movement fought for.

The fiery presidential address also urged attendees to engage the unengaged — engage the people who think they don't have a role to play. "Without them, we're not going to win this fight," he said.

"The fightback will make your union stronger."