

VOICES

CELEBRATING WOMEN WHO LEAD, INSPIRE, AND CHANGE.

A SPECIAL IAM UNION DIGITAL EDITION HONOURING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.



THE IAM CANADA'S VERY OWN ROSIE THE RIVETER!



IAM
UNION

VOLUME 3 - MARCH 2026





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HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026!

We are proud to present the third annual edition of VOICES, the IAM Union magazine dedicated to celebrating the incredible women who inspire, lead, and make a difference within the IAM and beyond.

Released in honour of International Women's Day, this issue shines a spotlight on the strength, resilience, and leadership of women who are stepping up and shaping the future of the IAM Union.

Throughout this issue, we are honoured to share just a few examples of the remarkable women taking on leadership roles across the IAM, the union landscape and across Canada.

We are incredibly proud of the work IAM women are doing across the country, and we stand beside them in full support as they lead, advocate, and help build an even stronger union for all.

For questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact: info@iamaw.ca | women@iamaw.ca

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Women In Unions Updates

Janet Andrews Awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal

Congratulations to Janet Andrews, IAM Local 764 member, awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her exceptional service to the community and the labour movement.

A dedicated leader for over 27 years, Janet has championed workers' rights, women's equality, and social justice. She continues to inspire as a trailblazer for diversity and inclusion in leadership.

This medal is a well-deserved recognition of her tireless efforts to improve lives and strengthen solidarity.

Photo credit: Hashnain Patel



Laura Walton Re-elected as President of the OFL

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) re-elected Laura Walton as President. Walton released the following statement on social media:

"I want to thank everyone at the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) for placing their trust in me as President. Congratulations to my co-officer Ahmad Gaied on his re-election and a special welcome to Mike Hamilton as our new Executive Vice President! Together, we will take the learnings and direction from the floor and lead with respect, transparency and accountability.

I want to take a moment to thank my team Donna and Jackie from the bottom of my heart. These are strong activists who will not be gone from the labour stage. It was my honour to run with you both and I will gladly stand behind and beside you everyday. You both are more than running mates, you are my sisters in the struggle."



Meet Karri-Lynn, Station Attendant, Cargo Pet Stop at Air Canada

Meet Karri-Lynn, Station Attendant, Cargo Pet Stop at Air Canada, proud member of IAM Union Local 2323 and the IAM Women's Committee.

Karri-Lynn truly embodies the spirit and strength that drives our union forward every day. Thank you for all that you do!

Scan the QR code below to watch the full video:



District 140 Hosts Its First-Ever District Women's Conference

December 9-12, 2025, marked a milestone week as District 140 hosted its first-ever District Women's Conference at the William W. Winpisinger Center (W3). The event brought together sisters from the District Women's Committee for four days of connection, collaboration, and solidarity.

Committee co-chairs Christy Slauenwhite and Karri-Lyn Airhart met with participants to shape an agenda focused on empowering Locals' sisters to start their own women's committees and exploring ways to foster engagement. *"What a true honour it was to mentor and lead discussions with the sisters,"* said co-chair Slauenwhite. *"It was a pleasure to have been granted the trust to do this."* She expressed hope that the participants would return to their Local energized and ready to break down barriers.

IAM Union International President Brian Bryant and General Secretary-Treasurer Dora Cervantes stopped by to share words of encouragement and support, highlighting the impact of the work being done.

"I am hopeful that the great work that we accomplished this week will have a ripple effect on our organization for a long time to come," continued Slauenwhite.



Magali Picard Re-elected as President of the QFL

The Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL) concluded its 34th Convention by reaffirming its determination to defend workers' rights in the face of repeated attacks from the government.

During the Convention, Magali Picard was re-elected for a second term as President of the QFL, demonstrating members' renewed confidence in her leadership.



WHO WAS *LAURA SECORD?*

1775 - 1868

Laura Ingersoll Secord was a hero of the war of 1812 who walked 32 kilometres out of American-occupied territory to warn British forces of a looming attack by the Americans.

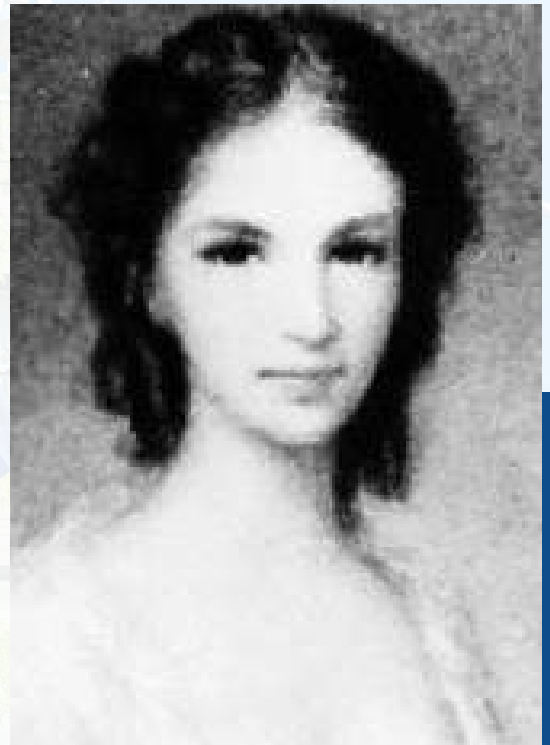
Born to rebel parents in Massachusetts, Secord moved to the Niagara region of Upper Canada with her family in 1795. Soon after, she married Loyalist James Secord, who sustained a serious injury at the Battle of Queenston Heights. While he was recovering, the Americans invaded the Niagara Peninsula.

Early on the morning of June 22, 1813, Secord set out on her long walk to British-controlled territory to inform Lieutenant James FitzGibbon of an impending American attack. Her intervention helped British troops and their Mohawk allies prevent an American invasion at the Battle of Beaver Dams.

Secord's act of courage went unrecognized until 1860, when the visiting Edward, Prince of Wales, presented the heroine, now widowed and living in poverty, with £100 for her patriotic service.

"Mrs. Secord was a person of slight and delicate frame; and made the effort in weather excessively warm and I dreaded at the time that she must suffer in health in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, she having been exposed to danger from the enemy, through whose line of communication she had to pass." (Lt James FitzGibbon)

Source: Government of Canada Website





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**THE SUCCESS OF
EVERY WOMAN
SHOULD BE THE
INSPIRATION TO
ANOTHER. WE SHOULD
RAISE EACH OTHER UP.**

SERENA WILLIAMS



WHO IS *MELISSA MARSMAN*?

At the 2025 Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) Convention, IAM member Melissa Marsman made history as she was acclaimed the new President of the NSFL; becoming the first woman and first person of colour to hold this prestigious position.

With a commitment to workers' rights and social justice, Melissa brings more than 25 years of labour activism to the role. Her journey in the labour movement began with the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU), where she served on the Finance Committee. Her dedication and passion quickly led her to serve on the Human Rights Committee, Board of Directors, and the Provincial Executive as 3rd Vice President.

Over the years, Melissa's advocacy has consistently focused on equity, inclusion, and fairness in the workplace. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that marginalized voices are heard and that workplaces across Nova Scotia reflect the diversity and strength of their communities.



Four years ago, Melissa joined the IAM Union, continuing her advocacy by serving on the Human Rights Committee. She represented both the NSGEU and later the IAM on the NSFL Anti-Racism and Human Rights Committee, further strengthening her role as a bridge-builder between unions and as a champion for equity across the labour movement.

In November 2023, Melissa was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the NSFL, where she worked closely with past President Danny Cavanagh. Through this experience, she gained valuable insight into the day-to-day operations and strategic priorities of the Federation, helping strengthen collaboration among affiliates and advance key issues such as workplace safety, fair wages, and public services.



Melissa's election marks a new chapter for the NSFL; one that celebrates progress, representation, and unity.

In addition, the convention saw an outstanding turnout from the IAM delegation. Together, members pushed forward and successfully passed several resolutions aimed at improving workers' lives across the province. The energy, unity, and commitment from all IAM delegates made this convention truly impactful.

Congratulations to President Melissa Marsman on this historic achievement and for continuing to inspire members across the country with her dedication, leadership, and commitment to justice.

Lobby Day 2025

On November 24–25, 2025, union members from across Canada came together in Ottawa for an impactful two-day Lobby Day event organized by the Canadian Labour Congress, demonstrating the power of solidarity and collective action in advocating for workers' rights.

This year, 75 delegates from the IAM Union, including many IAM women, joined a total of 328 participants representing a wide range of unions on Parliament Hill.

The first day was dedicated to preparation. Union members gathered for strategy sessions and briefings to ensure they were ready to effectively engage with politicians.

On November 25, participants met with politicians from across all parties to advocate for key issues that impact workers' lives. Discussions focused on services that make life more affordable, infrastructure investments that strengthen Canada, trade policies that put workers first, and the threat of airport privatization on workers and the Canadian public.

The day was filled with constructive dialogue, as delegates brought the real-world experiences of their workplaces to the political table, emphasizing the importance of fair policies that support workers, families, and communities.

As union members return to their communities, the momentum from Lobby Day will continue to drive advocacy for stronger protections, better infrastructure, affordable services, and trade policies that put workers first. Together, they are proving that when workers stand united, real change is possible.





WHO IS *KIM VALLIERE*?



IAM delegates were proud to join labour leaders from across the province at the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) 2025 Convention, where we celebrated an important milestone for our union. IAM International Representative Kim Valliere was elected Small Affiliates Vice-President, a recognition of her strong leadership, dedication, and long-standing commitment to workers' rights.



Kim's election strengthens our collective voice within the OFL and reinforces the vital role IAM members play in shaping the future of Ontario's labour movement. Her advocacy, experience, and passion for representing workers make her an outstanding addition to the OFL leadership team.



"Kim is the ideal person to represent our membership on the OFL Executive Board, she is well versed on the issues our members face, she is a passionate advocate and has been involved in political action in Ontario for many years.

Kim will do a great job representing us and the labour movement in Ontario on the OFL team,"

IAM Canadian General Vice-President David Chartrand.



We congratulate Kim on this well-deserved achievement and look forward to the continued impact she will be bringing.



WHO IS **RUBY LITTLECHILD?**

Ruby Littlechild, National Director of Indigenous Relations at AtkinsRéalis, embodies the values of strength, wisdom, and spiritual connection. Littlechild has consistently worked to bridge the gap between Indigenous communities and industry through inclusive collaboration, authentic stakeholder engagement and a deep understanding of cultural awareness.

"We are so proud to present Ruby Littlechild with the IWIL Award," said Tabatha Bull, CCIB President & CEO. *"This well-deserved recognition reflects her dedication to economic development and reconciliation throughout her career. Ruby's leadership and tireless advocacy are helping to strengthen opportunities for Indigenous communities and her example serves as an inspiration to Indigenous women to pursue and excel in leadership roles."*

Littlechild has a strong commitment to inclusive socio-economic growth, and a deep passion for promoting healing, higher education, and First Nations awareness. Her academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Education Degree, and a Master of Business Administration Degree with a focus on First Nations Community Economic Development, she is also currently working towards her Master of Arts Degree in Human Rights from the University of London. She has worked with numerous organizations and sits on national boards to move the needle forward for Indigenous economic development.

"I accept this recognition from the CCIB with great humility," said Ruby Littlechild. "Coming only a few months after AtkinsRéalis' proudest milestone so far with CCIB – a PAIR Bronze Certification – it is a reminder to me that Indigenous people can make a profound impact on society when we tell our story with authenticity, use our lived experiences to inform our work, and partner constructively with our allies. I feel fortunate to apply myself in what I think of less as a job and more as a calling; helping harness our vast capabilities at AtkinsRéalis to engineer a better future for Indigenous communities."

Littlechild was honoured at CCIB's Central Business Forum & IWIL Award Dinner on June 5, 2025, in Toronto.



Ruby's leadership forges mutually successful relationships with Indigenous communities and industry thereby utilizing best practices to successful Indigenous engagement and relationship building.

Source: Canadian Council For Indigenous Business

Key Dates in Women's Labour History In Canada

1907

Women telephone operators in Ontario organize one of the earliest strikes led by women, demanding fair wages and better working conditions.

1918

Most Canadian women gain the right to vote federally, strengthening women's influence in public policy and labour advocacy.

1929

Women are legally recognized as "persons" under Canadian law, opening doors to leadership roles and public office.



1940

In the 1940s, women entered industrial and manufacturing jobs in large numbers during the Second World War, permanently reshaping the Canadian workforce.

1951

Federal legislation is introduced to address equal pay for equal work in the public sector — a critical step toward wage equity.

1960

Canadian women gain the right to vote in Québec provincial elections, completing voting rights across all provinces.

1976

Canada adopts maternity leave provisions under Employment Insurance, recognizing caregiving as a workplace issue.

1981

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* comes into force, prohibiting discrimination based on sex and strengthening workplace protections.



1985

Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms takes effect, guaranteeing equality rights, including gender equality.

2018

Canada passes the *Pay Equity Act*, requiring proactive pay equity in federally regulated workplaces.

NOW

Women continue to lead, organize, negotiate, and advocate within unions across Canada — pushing for equity, safety, and dignity at work.

Journalists For Human Rights Launches A Global Initiative To Amplify Women's Voices



Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) is proud to announce the launch of its newest global initiative, *Amplifying Voices of Women and Girls*, a bold 10-country project designed to strengthen democracy through strengthened media that centers women's and girls' voices and concerns in public life. The project will foster more accurate, ethical and empowering media coverage of women's rights and political participation through capacity building for journalists, partnerships with grassroots women's rights movements and engagement with government officials.

This initiative is part of Canada's new international assistance funding, announced by Prime Minister Mark Carney at the United Nations General Assembly on September 24, 2025. This investment underscores Canada's renewed commitment to global human rights and democratic resilience at a time when many governments are retreating from these responsibilities.

“At a moment when we see the global rollback of human rights, the backlash on women’s rights, attacks on media and rising authoritarianism, this work has never been more urgent,” said Rachel Pulfer, President of Journalists for Human Rights.

“Misogyny, online harassment and harmful stereotypes continue to silence women in media and public life. We are encouraged that at a time when some governments are stepping back from their global responsibilities, Canada is leaning in. This support is critical to countering these dangerous trends.”

The Amplifying Voices of Women and Girls project will directly address these challenges by training journalists, strengthening networks between media, civil society, and government and launching campaigns to counter information manipulation.

The project will operate in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, South Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Iraq, The Philippines as well as within the Syrian diaspora in Turkey and the Somalian diaspora in Kenya.

Importantly, the initiative marks the expansion of JHR’s work into East Asia, with The Philippines as a core focus country.

“We are also proud that this initiative signifies JHR’s growth into East Asia, extending our work further overseas and creating an even bigger impact,” added Ms Pulfer. *“By equipping journalists and media outlets to center human rights, with a particular emphasis on women’s rights, we are not just telling stories but changing narratives, shifting public attitudes and helping build societies where women and girls can lead, thrive and shape the future.”*

Source: Journalists for Human Rights website

About Journalists for Human Rights (JHR):

JHR trains journalists worldwide to cover human rights issues ethically and objectively. For 22 years, Canada-based JHR has worked with over 21,000 journalists around the world.

Currently, JHR operates sector-wide programs in over 16 countries.



WHO ARE *CYNTHIA BLACK, ZITA HILDEBRANDT & JANET BAKER?*



During the IAM Atlantic Council Conference in Moncton, members of IAM Local 2797, Zita Hildebrandt, Cynthia Black, and Janet Baker, successfully put their names forward for leadership positions on the council. They were elected to serve as follows: Zita Hildebrandt, President; Cynthia Black, Recording Secretary; and Janet Baker, Auditor.

The IAM Atlantic Council, formerly known as the Maritime Council of Machinists, held its 2025 conference on September 12 to 13 in Moncton, New Brunswick. Delegates from locals across Atlantic Canada gathered to share ideas, learn, and help shape the future of the union in the region.

The conference provided a dynamic platform for dialogue and collaboration, bringing together key labour leaders from across Canada and the United States. With a focus on organizing, the event featured engaging presentations, interactive workshops, and brainstorming sessions aimed at identifying strategies to grow the IAM throughout Atlantic Canada.

Both Zita Hildebrandt and Cynthia Black are graduates of the Leadership Excellence Assembly of Dedicated Sisters (LEADS), the IAM program designed to foster women in leadership, demonstrating once again the program's success in empowering the next generation of union leaders.

1 WOMAN & 33 MEN:

Why India's Supreme Court Is A "Men's Club"

In September 2021, a photograph from the Indian Supreme Court of then chief justice NV Ramana flanked by his four female colleagues went viral.



This was the highest-ever tally of female judges in the 34-member top court and was hailed as a "historic moment".

Many saw it as a turning point for India's top judiciary and expressed the hope that it would start reversing the skewed gender gap in India's top court.

But four years later, that hope lies in tatters and the Supreme Court is back to being – as lawyer Sneha Kalita described it - "a men's club". Three of the women seen in that photograph with Justice Ramana - Justice Indira Banerjee, Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Bela M Trivedi – have since retired; and as no woman has been appointed to the top court since then, Justice BV Nagarathna is now the sole female judge there.

"This is alarming. It's nothing short of catastrophic," Ms. Kalita, a member of an association of female advocates who have filed a petition in the Supreme Court demanding fair representation of women in courts, told the BBC.

Historically, Indian judiciary has been dominated by men. From 1950, when the Supreme Court came into existence, it took 39 years for Justice Fathima Beevi to be appointed the country's first female judge in 1989.

"I opened a closed door," she told news website Scroll in 2018. But in 75 years, the court has welcomed very few women – only 11 out of the 287 judges or a measly 3.8%.

"With just one woman, we are back to near-zero representation in the top court. This has become a men's club," Ms. Kalita says.

What is also troubling is that there are only 103 female judges compared with 670 males in the high courts - and at least four do not have a single woman. This low representation of women has come into sharp focus in recent weeks after the latest batch of appointments was made to the Supreme Court.

The court had two vacancies to fill and it was expected that the Supreme Court collegium - which includes the chief justice and four senior-most judges and recommends names to the government - would use the opportunity to correct the acute gender imbalance.

But in August-end, two high court judges - both male - were elevated to the role. Media reports say that at least three female high court judges in the country were more senior than one of the elevated judges. The collegium's other recent selections have also ignored women - Bombay High Court last week got 14 new judges, but only one was woman. For Allahabad High Court, the proposed list of 26 candidates includes only five women.

This low representation of women in the top court as well as "in high courts across the country" prompted the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to put out a strong statement expressing "deep disappointment" and "grave concern".

SCBA president and senior lawyer Vikas Singh told the BBC that *"women make for 40% of all judges in lower judiciary, that is district courts and below, where recruitments are on merit and candidates are chosen through written exams and interviews"*.

"But in higher judiciary where they are selected by the collegium, they make for less than 10%. Something very drastic needs to be done. Effort must be made to look for more women," he said.

Most women lawyers the BBC spoke to welcomed the SCBA intervention. *"I'm glad the bar association has raised it, it's not a women's problem. It reflects on us as a society,"* said senior lawyer Madhavi Divan.

It's not that all women judges are more gender sensitive - in the past, the BBC has reported on equally misogynistic judgements by male and female judges.

But senior Advocate Jayna Kothari says India is a diverse country and diversity is important for judiciary too.

“Supreme Court is for the entire country so it chooses judges from different high courts to reflect regional diversity. So, why not gender diversity? Women represent 50% of India’s population so they should have an equal representation in the judiciary too.”

Different life experiences, she says, allow people to respond differently to a case which means that having people from diverse backgrounds will lead to better judicial outcomes and help get better judgments.

Ms. Kothari says studies also show that the mere presence of women on the bench stops other judges and lawyers from making gender insensitive comments.

But the question still remains: how to get more women judges?

Some have suggested a quota system - where a certain number of seats are reserved for women. They say this would force the judiciary to put its house in order. But critics say that could lower the standards as reservation and merit are contradictory.

Ms. Kalita disagrees – women judges and lawyers, like women everywhere, work harder, balancing home life and childcare with careers, she says. *“Many women are much more meritorious than male colleagues. You can’t brush us aside just because we are women. This is discrimination,”* she adds.

Ms. Kothari says the skewed gender ratio *“must be seen as an important public issue, not just as a women’s issue”* and that we must aim for 50% but can start with a more realistic goal of 30% in the next five years.

“It should be a matter of pride to appoint women to higher judiciary. Having more women in the high courts and the Supreme Court will also encourage more women to join the legal profession and stay on. Otherwise many women would think what’s the point of slogging so hard if we are not going to be able to reach the top?” she asks.

Source: BBC.com

IAM Women Across Canada





LEADS

Leadership Excellence Assembly of Dedicated Sisters

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WE ENCOURAGE

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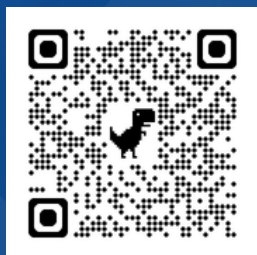
Women Of The IAM

Featured In "Union Stories" Series

Meet Sabiha Khan

Part of Local 1231

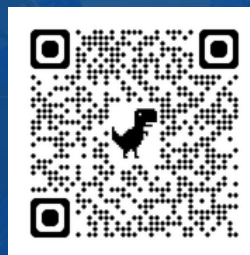
Scan the QR code to watch the full video:



Meet Sandy Neto

Part of Local 1231

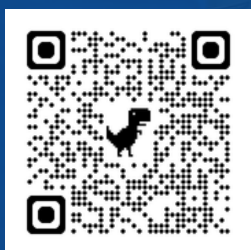
Scan the QR code to watch the full video:



Meet Tamara Johnson

Part of Local 1295

Scan the QR code to watch the full video:



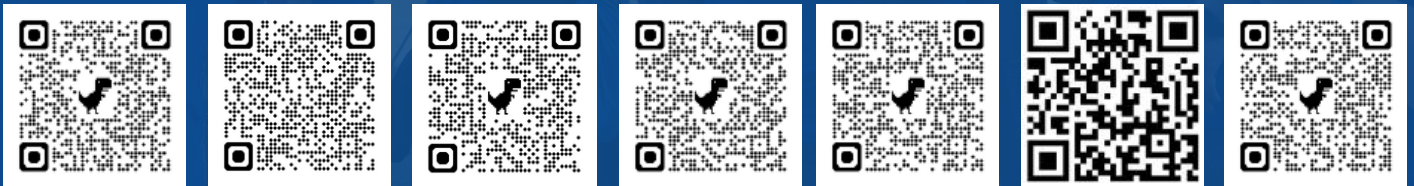
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