
PRESS RELEASE

TO: ALL MEDIA AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
FROM: JOSEPH MAIRS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: MAIRS MEMORIAL 2024/OUR COMMON CONDITION
DATE: NOVEMBER 15TH 2023

The Joseph Mairs Memorial Committee will be holding our annual event on January 21st 2024.

We are trying something new this year. We will be getting underway at 1 pm assembling in the parking lot of St Mary's Church at 1135 4th Ave, Ladysmith, BC. From there we will be escorted to the cemetery by our wonderful piper Neil Hewitt. We will hold a service at the cairn which will include a brief tribute to Joseph and the laying of flowers by individuals and organisations.

The second part of the day will be conducted at the home of Ken and Morgan (longtime supporters of the memorial) in Ladysmith and the address will be supplied at the cemetery. There we will ask a selection of hardworking local campaigners to talk to us about their work focusing on the details of struggles within our labour community. There will be snacks and a lovely warm atmosphere as always.

The program will conclude around 4 pm. We welcome you all and look forward to the discussion you will no doubt contribute to.

In 1911-1912 the United Mine Workers of America succeeded in organising all the mines on the Island. A bitter strike started in Sept. 1912 which lasted until the start of World War I. The Vancouver and Nanaimo Coal Co settled in 1913 but the other three owners would not. They brought in strikebreakers and evicted strikers from company housing. Clashes broke out between strikers and the police and strikebreakers at all the mines. The AG William Bowser sent in the militia and they remained until the end of the strike.

Joseph was arrested on August 15, 1913 after the Militia retook the Town of Ladysmith from striking miners. Miners had held the town from August 12th to 15th. They stoned the residences of scabs and drove them out of town. He was sentenced to one year in jail and a \$100 fine. In January, Joseph became ill and receiving no medical attention, died on January 14th, 1914.

A post card portraying Joseph after winning a biking competition was sold by his fellow miners to raise funds for his cairn in Ladysmith.

We must all pledge to follow in the footsteps of Joseph Mairs and Ginger Goodwin and everyone who fought at great cost to themselves to make a better world for workers and their families.

Joseph Mairs....Your brothers did not forget you in 1914 and we will not forget you ever.
Like Joe Hill, where workers fight and organise, it is there you will find Joseph Mairs.

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