



HOTLINE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
PUBLICATION OF
LOCAL 258 IBEW
FALL, 2007

LOCAL 258, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Kamloops Safety Rodeo for BC Hydro Workers



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HOTLINE Fall 2007

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THE UNION OF HEARTS AND MINDS

HOTLINE is the official newsletter magazine published for the members of Local 258, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in British Columbia, Canada.

Address all correspondence to:
IBEW Local 258
7535 Sixth Street
Burnaby, BC V3N 3M2

Phone: 604-520-3305 Fax: 604-522-3371
Toll Free: 1-877-520-3305
Dispatch Office: 604-524-3547

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Editor, Layout & Design: Michelle Boudreau, Leopard Print Communications Inc.



Local 258 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is affiliated to the British Columbia Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress.

Local 258, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers:

Executive Board Members:

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Local 258 IBEW Legal Counsel: Rebecca Murdock

FRONT COVER PHOTOS: The IBEW-BC Hydro Safety Rodeo took place in beautiful Kamloops, in BC's central interior this September and IBEW members and their families came out in full force to support the event. See article and photos starting on page 8.

Cover photos by Christine McLennan and Michelle Boudreau.

VIEWPOINT from your Business Manager Doug McKay

This year is passing quicker than ever and it's hard to believe we are already into October and the winter storm season will soon be upon us.

Storm conditions throughout last winter and spring challenged many of our members to the best of their skills and abilities as they found themselves working extended hours to restore power to the public as lights went out all over the province. At the same time, another type of storm was brewing in Victoria with Premier Gordon Campbell's hand-picked commission reviewing MLA pay raises. Their resulting report made recommendations for hefty pay increases and, as a result, Bill 37, voted in by the majority BC Liberals, placed MLAs in the 90+ percentile of their counterparts across the country, with Gordon Campbell pole vaulting to the 100th percentile for compensation paid to provincial Premiers (only federal members are paid more).

The Report on which Bill 37 is based observed that MLA's were being paid around the 50th percentile: "BC follows rather than leads the country in annual salaries for elected officials. In 2006/07, the province ranked in the middle of the pack...".

This begs the question – if it is appropriate to set wage packages for MLA's at this level, why does the BC Liberal government continue to impose a 50th percentile standard, or less, on public sector employees, in particular, our members working at BC Hydro and for the BC Transmission Corporation (BCTC)? If the middle of the pack is rejected for MLA's it should also be rejected for other public sector employees.

Under the Public Sector Employers Council (PSEC) guidelines imposed by the BC Liberal government, it seems that a double standard has been set, as public sector employees are denied compensation on par with the higher end of their counterparts in other provinces. It is apparently perfectly fine for BC MLAs to give themselves massive wage increases that places them at or near the top level of their counterparts in other provinces, as Bill 37 has accomplished, but public sector employers are not allowed to negotiate similar wage increases for public sector workers.

Just imagine, if workers had similar privileges as those granted to MLAs through Bill 37, and not have their employers restricted to PSEC guidelines imposed by an anti-worker provincial government, maybe then we could attract workers to BC and keep them here to help alleviate the skilled worker shortage that is affecting both employers and workers in this province. Such a comparison would remedy, in part, the higher cost of living in British Columbia, and allow public sector workers to benefit from the same set of standards that underpin Bill 37.


This is particularly troubling in a province with the most expensive residential real estate in Canada, and a cost of living second only to Ontario.



Local 258 Business Manager Doug McKay joined with members of the labour community at the Miner's Memorial services held at the Ginger Goodwin gravesite in Cumberland on Vancouver Island in June. A special ceremony was observed honouring IBEW members who have been killed on the job.

We have a critical skills shortage in BC. For example, BC Hydro recently paid for four Alberta Power Line Technicians (PLTs) to come to BC to perform a qualifying "show-me" skills test. Three of the four elected not to accept employment with BC Hydro because the compensation was not attractive after cost of living considerations were factored in. The compensation package for PLT's and other classifications is locked in at the 50th percentile, or in some cases at lower than the 50th percentile. This mistake is costing the province revenue in the long run and PLT's are only one of many classifications affected by a skills shortage.

I believe our MLA's ought to be paid for the hard work they contribute to serving British Columbians and I recognize theirs are not easy jobs. Whether a hefty 29% wage increase can withstand public opinion, though, is a matter that will be tested at the next election.

However, as the elected Business Manager of Local 258, I have urged this Liberal government to do the right thing and, in a letter sent to Minister of Finance Carole Taylor, I have asked for this government to either end the 50th percentile rule, or raise the standard to something approaching what they have granted for themselves. At the end of the day, the membership of Local 258 working for the public sector employers, and all workers in this province, deserve to be treated fairly. 



We've Got Mail!

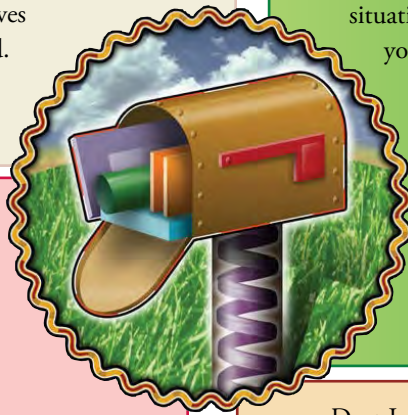
Dear Local 258 IBEW,
Thank you to the Executive of Local 258, especially Brother Dan Klassen, for the support and donation of prizes for our summer event, which included a horseshoe tournament, here in Port Alberni. The day-long event included a barbecue and corn roast, and was attended by approximately 70 IBEW brothers, sisters and their families. The winners of the tournament were the team of brother Dick Green, and Janni (Brother Glen Pearson's girlfriend), closely contested by the second place team of Brother Larry Dwolinsky and his partner.

The day and evening were perfect. Thanks again to our local for the donation of prizes that were awarded to the top four teams. The support that we, as members, receive from this Local for the activities that enrich our lives outside of the workplace is really appreciated.
Sincerely
Brother Ryan Malcolm

Dear IBEW 258,
I am writing to give a big thank you on behalf of the Steelworkers Lower Mainland Fraser Valley, Union Community Alliances Committee, for your generous donation to our recent "No One Goes Hungry" campaign in support of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank. With your help, several thousand dollars were raised.

As the Food Bank's need is greatest in the summer months, your contribution was especially welcome. More campaigns are planned for the future so that it can truly be said that no one has gone hungry. Thank you once again.

In Solidarity
Monty Bartlett
Committee Co-Chair



Dear IBEW LU258,
The Lambe Family would like to thank the members of LU258 for the lovely fruit basket sent to us after my father Hugh passed away. It was very much appreciated.
Sincerely
Glenn Lambe & Family

Dear Local 258,
Thanks for everything.
Thanks for the year pin.
I wear it proudly by the several US Local pins and safety awards. And my special hard hat.
Stay Strong, Fight Hard, Don't Give Up!
W. Winacott
IBEW Local 258

Dear IBEW Local 258,
On behalf of us at St. Barnabas Anglican Church and St. Barnabas Place in New Westminster, I want to thank you for your generous donation.

At St. Barnabas we see the suffering of folks who are poor and marginalized through economic privation, sickness or circumstance and we are often reminded that any of us could find ourselves in their situations. Through the generosity of people like you we are able to offer food, clothing, referrals to other resources and welcome.

Everyone at St. Barnabas sends their heartfelt thanks and sincere wishes for the continuation of your support.
Yours truly,
Mavis Brownlee
Interim Priest

Dear Local 258,
On behalf of the 2006 Curling Committee, I would like to thank the IBEW Executive Board for the generous financial assistance of \$300.00 for our Northern Curling Bonspiel held March 17-19 in Vanderhoof.

All curlers had a great time as teams "seriously" competed for those prestigious trophies.

Our numbers were down but the spirit was there as we passed the "Curling Torch" on to GMS to start preparing the 2007 Bonspiel in Hudson Hope.

Thanks again for the support.
Brian St. Germain, Chairman
Northern Curling Bonspiel



Thank you from
Camp Jubilee!
Dear Local 258 IBEW,
Thank you for your gener-
ous donation to
help send a deserv-

ing child to camp. Your donation
can make a real difference in a child's life.

D. Duckworth
Mitch Bloomfield
And the rest of the Jubilee Team!



Dear IBEW Local 258,
Many thanks for the basket of cheers sent to me. It really
made my day. I am recovering nicely and hope to be back at
work very soon.

John Van Nieuwland

Dear Brothers and Sisters of IBEW Local 258;
Well, our Golf Tournament has come and gone
and was a great success, thanks to all of our
sponsors. The weather cooperated with us, we
couldn't have asked for a nicer day and the food
and company was excellent.

Everyone had lots of fun, food and prizes
and we are already looking forward to next
year's event. Thank you again for your kind donations,
they were appreciated very much.

Sincerely,
Wayne N. deDelley
Business Manager & Financial Secretary,
IBEW Local 993

Dear Michelle Laurie:
I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all
your hard work in making this year's Summer Institute
for Union Women such a success. Judging from the
participant's enthusiasm during the Institute and their
evaluations following, it appears this was a very positive
experience for the women who attended this year.

I want you to know
how much we appreciate
your assistance, especially
in light of your hectic work
schedule.

In sisterhood,
Jane Staschuk
Director, BC Federation of Labour

**LOCAL 258
IBEW**



HAVE YOU MOVED?

**If you have recently moved, make sure your local
union office has your new mailing address.**

**Contact Local Union 258 IBEW and let us know
your new address so we can make sure you con-
tinue to receive news alerts, The Hotline news-
letter and be notified of current events.**

*Your employer is not responsible for forwarding your
new mailing address in a timely fashion, so please let
your union know where you are.*

**Call the office at 604-520-3305, fax us at 604-
522-3371, or e-mail us at info@ibew258.bc.ca**

Dear Local 258,
The First Annual 108 Mile Hydro Hackers Golf
Tournament was a great success. The sun was
shining and the golfers were hacking. We had 29
golfers and everyone received a great prize be-
cause of your generous donation. Thanks again!
Steven Pilkington
The Lillooet & Hundred Mile Line Crews
FOUR!!

More mail next page...





Dear IBEW 258,
 I would like to thank the union for the great jacket I received for retirement. I shall enjoy wearing it with all the wonderful memories I've had over all the years working in many parts of the province.
 Thank you
 B.R. Gloutelin



IBEW member Jason Cunningham, nephew of 258 ABM Dan Klassen, is currently on withdrawal and is attending college in Riverside California. He sent forward this photo of the sports scoreboard at the college - notably sponsored by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Brother Cunningham is a member of the football team, the RCC Tigers, and is originally from Mission, BC.

Dear IBEW,
 Thank you very much for your generous donation to support my softball team this year.
 Our team consisted of thirteen girls from Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Langley. We had a great time playing softball from February till June. Your donation played a big part in our team being able to purchase the equipment that we needed and to travel throughout the lower mainland. We sure appreciated your donation that helped to make the above possible.
 Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and please extend our appreciation to all of your members of IBEW.
 Yours truly,
 Jessica Kilian



To all IBEW First District Local Unions
 Greetings:
 Each year the United Way raises upwards of \$440M of which the vast majority is invested in local communities to support programs and services directed at improving the social conditions of many Canadians. Almost 25% of the funds raised come from unionized workers and from various unions across Canada.

Over 124 volunteer-based offices across Canada employ 900 staff and engage tens of thousands of volunteers to help improve lives and build communities by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action.

On behalf of the IBEW First District Canada, I encourage you to participate in the 2007 United Way Campaign and by doing so you are helping members of your community.

The IBEW and the United Way do make a difference!

Thank you for your support.
 Fraternally yours,
 Phil Flemming
 International Vice President

Dear IBEW Local 258 members:
 Thank you for your generous support of our IBEW Local 2067 Swift Current members on strike.
 Your donation helped our members with their struggle for fair wages and benefits.
 In solidarity,
 Neil B. Collins
 Business Manager and Financial Secretary
 IBEW Local 2067



Local 258 funds fight to the BC Court of Appeal

In early October this year, IBEW 258 staff lawyer Rebecca Murdock attended the BC Court of Appeal to argue a Charter challenge case on behalf of a Local 258 member that is currently before the court.

As reported in the Fall, 2006 issue of The Hotline, this specific case attacks the Workers' Compensation Act and the policy that interprets the Act as contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In 2003, an IBEW Local 258 member went off work after being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of a workplace accident giving rise to a Level 1 Near Miss incident report.

According to Ms. Murdock, "The three judges hearing the case appeared sympathetic to the worker's case brought against the Workers' Compensation Ap-

peal Tribunal, the Workers' Compensation Board, BC Hydro and the Attorney General of BC. Of course, that is no guarantee of the outcome".

Ms. Murdock anticipates the Court of Appeal will send the matter back to the BC Supreme Court that failed to address the Charter issues when the case was argued there in 2006.

Local 258 agrees with the worker and his claim he was denied WCB benefits due to discriminatory standards that apply to psychological injury claimants under the Workers' Compensation Act. Under amendments introduced in 2002, psychological injury claimants must now meet eligibility standards that are so rigid most claims are eliminated at the outset. As a psychological injury claimant, the worker is seeking equal treatment under the law

vis-à-vis physical injury claimants. Prior to 2002, all claimants were in fact treated the same and subjected to the same eligibility rules.

The Attorney General of BC has indicated that if the government loses it will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. If the case ends up at that final court of recourse, the Charter decision will be binding on all workers' compensation bodies across the country.

A decision will be issued in 2008. ☑



IBEW

First District Education Scholarships

In conjunction with AIL Canada, Union Savings and MWG Apparel, IBEW First District is again offering five scholarships in the amount of \$1000.00

(one thousand) each to all IBEW members and their families who are in studies pursuing a post secondary diploma or degree. All applications must be submitted into our office no later than January 31, 2008, and there will be a random draw on February 8, 2008 to select the winners.

Application forms will be available in the Fall issue of IBEW Journal in the Canadian content section.

Attention all Local 258 IBEW *A* members

This is a reminder to all *A* members to update your beneficiary information for your International Pension when there is a change in your personal status. Please contact Lesli or Judith at the Union office in Burnaby for further information or if you have any questions.
Phone: 604-520-3305
Toll Free: 1-877-520-3305



Safety Rodeo heads to Kamloops

By Don "Red Dog" McLennan
Photos by Christine McLennan

The BC Hydro/IBEW Safety Rodeo took place on September 15, 2007, on a typical Kamloops sunny day! The rodeo took place on the grounds of the Kamloops Rugby Club, who were great hosts.

Five lineman teams and 12 apprentices took part in the competition. On Friday, a 'Meet n'Greet' golf tourney was held and a good time was had by all. Ron Waller and Trevor Williams did a great job with organizing this event and getting donations for prizes.

Saturday morning it was "game on" as teams and apprentices were piped into the Rodeo. Lineman competition events included Pole Top Rescue, Egg Climb, Cross Arm Change and Wire Splice, and the very tough mystery event, a coiled rope toss over the conductor and tie off.

Apprentice events were Egg Climb, One Man Pole Top Rescue and Liveline Fuse Change. The competition was close, with all teams demonstrating skill, knowledge and safety.

At the end of the day, the real west coast linemen from Vancouver Island came out as the first place team. Team members were Rob Jack (Rob was on the winning team in 1991 that went to St. Louis for the 100th IBEW Anniversary Rodeo), Dale Fulton from Nanaimo, and Jeff Stites from Port Alberni.

Runners up and also representing BC Hydro and IBEW 258 when they travel to Kansas City for the International Safety Rodeo is the Interior Team of the O'LANEYS. Proud father Scott from Merritt, sons Jeremy from Kamloops and Tim from 100 Mile House.

Apprentice winner was Mike Perry from LMS.

A lot of work took place before and after the rodeo, and members of the Kamloops line crew, Al Bogetti, Trevor Williams, Ron Waller and Kenny Walters lent the tools. The Clearwater crew of Pete Trarup, Kelly and Art, and Kamloops apprentices Kaleb Hutheson MacDermid built the rodeo site. Many thanks to Hasso Behn, Randy Groves and Rick Austrom, for support and experience from past rodeos that made the Kamloops rodeo the success that it was!

The COPE members from Kamloops did a lions share of volunteering and organizing and we can't forget the retirees who came out and helped out with everything, Rhino and Maggie, just to name a few. ⚡



Master of Ceremonies Don "Red Dog" McLennan.



At the Kamloops Safety Rodeo are, from left, Dave Poisson, Darcy Davis, Doug Swoboda.



From left, Local 258 IBEW Business Manager Doug McKay with Brother Hasso Behn.



LOCAL 258
IBEW





Winning team from Vancouver Island, left to right: Rob Jack, Foreman Lineman, Campbell River; Dale Fulton, Lineman, Nanaimo; Jeff Stites, Lineman, Port Alberni.



Safety Rodeo participant Pete Trarup.



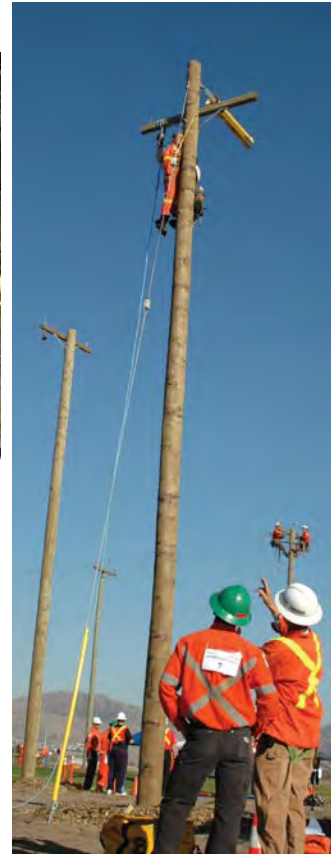
Scott O'Laney and fan.



From the North Shore are, from left, Al Pollok, Greg Pollok, and mom!

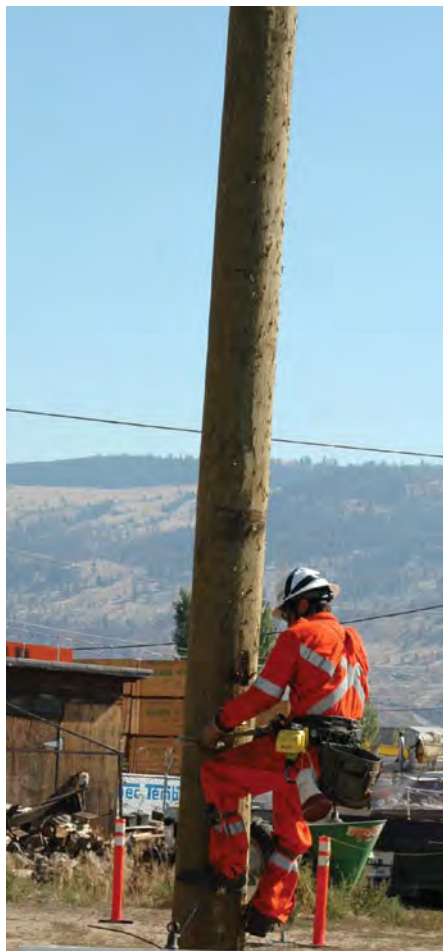
*more photos
next page...*





From left are Al Bogetti of the Kamloops Line Crew with Rodeo Judges Maggie Wold and Dale Leiske.





Safety Rodeo participants Paul Lu, Adam Lee.



IBEW Local 258 Golf Tournament raises funds for Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada



Brother Dan Klassen has been the lead organizer for the union's annual golf tournament for many years and his skill and devotion to this event has helped raise thousands of dollars for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada on behalf of IBEW.

This year's IBEW Local 258 annual Golf Tournament to raise funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada was another great success, both for those who participated and for the charity that has a long relationship with IBEW.

The Golden Eagle Golf Club in Pitt Meadows was the location for this year's event and the tournament took place on a beautiful 'end of summer' day. More than 150 participants hit the links followed by an awards banquet featuring a hearty BBQ steak dinner with all the fixins!

Every year, proceeds from the tournament are donated to the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. This non-profit organization and the IBEW have had a long standing relationship that goes back many years, begun, in part, due to the involvement of Brother Jim Wolfgang, a long standing IBEW member who has MS.

Brother Wolfgang began his career as a construction electrician with Local 230 and in 1958, became an Assistant Business Manager with the Local before taking on the role of International Representative working out of the Toronto office.

Brother Wolfgang was initially diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in the mid-60's and continued to work until his doctor advised him to retire in 1985. It was then he became involved as a volunteer with the MS Society, and has contributed to the successful relationship between IBEW and the non-profit charity organization.

This year's golf tournament raised a total of \$7,500, and the cheque will be presented at a formal ceremony taking place later this year. Thanks to all those who participated and we'll see you again next year! 🏌️‍♂️



Many thanks to the volunteers from the MS Society of Canada and the Power Pioneers who helped out with this year's Golf Tournament. From left are Kathryn Willey, and Pat McSherry from the MS Society and Donna Walker and Pat Campbell of the Power Pioneers.

Congratulations to the Golf Tournament Winning Team members: Dick Brodie, Sheldon Canning, Al Solley and Stewart Boldt. Other winners were: Dwayne Robsinson, Mike Lukoni, Jeff Unger, Darlene Hayward, Al Lockhart and Al Laurie.

John Mellis, Matt Hollybow, Richard Jack, Steve Pulford



Denny Bennett, Barry Frizzell, Jim Exelby, Bob Fun



Laird Cronk, Amber Hockin, Rob Rollins, Tom Woodcock



Sergei Janjowski, Jeff Wilkins, Earl Radu, Bruce Miller



Bruce Masse, Brad Masse, Dwight Williams, Steve Roach



Kevin McInnes, Rob Lidstone, Mike Armstrong, Bill Finley



Ray Masse, Lloyd Hayward, Darleen Hayward, Ken McKillop



Doug McKay, Dan Giesbrecht, Neil Sharpe, Derek Egloff



Rick Stewart, Jim Exter, Darrell Guinan, Bruce McKenzie



Rod Byrnell, Al Bruder, Spencer Hamilton, Dave Byrnell



Ken Reid, Doug Reid, Ross Baker, Derick Lee



Steve Hildebrant, John Hildebrant, Mike Land, Felix Kramar



Mark Davison, Jim Botham, Chuck Smalley, Joe O'Donnell



BC Citizens for Public Power welcomes new Executive Director



Melissa Davis, BCCPP's new Executive Director.

The revitalization of the British Columbia Citizens for Public Power began this summer with the hiring of Melissa Davis as the new Executive Director. Melissa has a background working in communications and is now set up at the BCCPP office in downtown Vancouver.

The BC Citizens for Public Power is a dynamic grassroots movement that supports publicly-owned, affordable, reliable, clean, and renewable energy in British Columbia, and was formed in response to the BC Liberal government's agenda of dismantling and privatizing BC Hydro.

The BCCPP is currently seeking volunteers to help expose the actions of these companies and collaborate with community and environmental groups to block these damaging projects. Their new website is expected to launch in November at www.citizensforpublicpower.ca.

The next issue of The Hotline will feature an extended article about the BCCPP campaign to stop the privatization of British Columbia's most valuable resource - energy.



Brother Jarret Bublitz, left, is presented with his Journeyman Electrician certificates by Martin Koehl, BC Hydro Manager, Prince George.



Congratulations to new initiated members at the July Dawson Creek Unit 2 meeting. From left are: Elis Mant, Rodger Myram, Darren Bignell and Pro-tem Unit 2 Chair Dwight Stevens.



Unit 6 Chair Barry Bell welcomes new member Brad Franklin, a trades trainee, as he was initiated as an IBEW member at the Chillwack union meeting held in October.

<http://www.ibew258.bc.ca>

Your union website



Did you know your local union has a website?

Local 258 IBEW has had a presence on the internet since 2002. The union's website contains current information about your union's activities and includes contact information. You can also find out when & where your local union meetings are.

So take a moment and visit your union website. We welcome your participation.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for the website, please contact the webmaster at hotline@shaw.ca



Check out
WWW.THE TYE.CA

BC's fastest-growing independent online source of:

- Feisty takes on books, film, TV, music, and life in BC
- In-depth coverage of environmental and social issues
- Sharp investigative journalism you won't read elsewhere
- Lively reader feedback forums

IBEW 258 volunteers help strengthen community



The United Way of the Lower Mainland/Labour "Day of Caring" event took place at the Silver Harbour Centre in North Vancouver this year.

Labour volunteers recently made a difference in Lower Mainland communities by participating in The Vancouver Sun/United Way Day of Caring.

Every year organizations, unions and workers join to raise funds for communities across British Columbia with United Way. Through The Vancouver Sun/United Way Day of Caring, many United Way supporters spend a day helping those in need. Teams of volunteers from United Way supporting organizations are matched with non-profit agencies throughout the region.

For example on June 4, a large group of United Way Labour volunteers, including members of IBEW 258, showed up early in North Vancouver with their gardening tools and gear.

For the seventh year in a row, participating volunteers represented the labour committee of the United Way of the Lower Mainland board, the United Way campaign labour committee, the Vancouver and District and New Westminster and District labour councils as well as various unions.

IBEW 258's Michelle Laurie and Dan Klassen lent a hand.


This year the group was matched with Silver Harbour Centre, a seniors recreation centre in North Vancouver. The centre's mis-

sion is to inspire and enhance the physical and mental well-being of adults over 55. The agency does this by offering more than 60 different social, creative, educational and physical activities as

well as many opportunities for volunteer participation. Volunteers weeded, trimmed, power-washed, planted and cleaned all day.

United Way Labour volunteers have participated in a project every year since the inception of the Day of Caring program. Said Bill Gaucher, a member of the campaign labour committee, "The initiative provides union members with an opportunity to contribute to their community in a meaningful way by helping non-profit agencies complete projects which might otherwise not be completed. As a result of connecting with the agency directly, the labour members also gain a greater understanding of the services in our communities."

Meanwhile other teams of volunteers will complete numerous other projects at agencies located throughout the Lower Mainland. Day of Caring is a community partnership between United Way, The Vancouver Sun, Volunteer Centres, community agencies and organization employee groups.

**See From the Back Corner, page 23, for more about the IBEW – United Way connection. *



Success depends on all of us.



Attend your Union Meetings!



Union members working in British Columbia's North Coast have been attending their union meetings. One of the largest geographic areas of Local 258, Unit 1 covers from Burns Lake in the west to the west and north of Bella Cooola and also includes the Queen Charlotte Islands.

1. Unit 1 Chair Klaus Kraft, center, presents 15 year service pins to Terry Nazarruk, left, and Ed Brigden, right, at the union meeting in Terrace.



2. Klaus Kraft presents Bill Woodworth, right, with a 30 year service pin at the union meeting held in Masset in the Queen Charlottes. Ten year pins were also presented to James Grosse and Danny Youngson.



3. Paul Russell, Shop Steward, left, welcomes new member James Lowe, center, on being initiated as Unit 1 Chair Klaus Kraft looks on at the union meeting held in Prince Rupert.



4. Unit Chair Klaus Kraft, left, initiates new members Alex Wright, center and Mike Richard, right, at the union meeting held in Masset.



Congratulations on completing your Lineman (PLT) Apprenticeship!



Congratulations to IBEW members who have successfully completed their PLT Apprenticeships. From left are Brother Matt Willox, Brother Brian Bradley and Brother Shayne Gabert.

RUMINATIONS OF A RETIREE

By **Ken McEwen**

The coastal winter rains have started early this year. Usually, at this time, we are preparing to head south for the winter. In the past few years, in late October, one or the other of us has remarked that the weather is so nice it's kind of a shame to leave. I don't think that will be the case this year. You see, I am in the clutches of the medical community who want to do a series of rude things, called "tests", to my body. The last of these "tests" is scheduled for October 31. So it will be sometime after that before we are able to hit the road south.

I made an error in judgement and went to see a doctor in August. My old Dad used to say that if you stay away from doctors, you will be alright, because, when you go, they always find something wrong. Anyway, this doctor decided that I needed to go and see other doctors. These other doctors determined that I needed to undergo the aforementioned rude procedures. So far, it sounds pretty reasonable, but here's where I have the problem.

The one doctor says I "need" to see another doctor. The doctors that I now "need" to see are booking appointments at least two months from the referral date. There was one doctor who offered me an appointment in May, 2008. I declined, with thanks, and kept looking. Once in to see first available doctor, the "needed" tests have to be scheduled. The test procedures are being booked six to eight weeks down the road. Then, I have to get back in to see the doctor to review the test results. So, if I really "need" this stuff, how come I don't "need" it right away? And, if I don't really "need" it right away, why couldn't I "need" it next year or the year after that? I know, from past experience, that in California you can get all that stuff done the same day or the next day and certainly within the week. Of course, in California I'd have to pay for it and its more or less free here. So I guess I'll wait.

While I was in one of these doctor's waiting rooms, I kind of got to ruminating about car insurance. We have an old Plymouth Voyager that we bought new in 1994. If I remember correctly, it was worth about \$27,000 and the insurance premium was fairly close to \$1,200 per year. Because it's in pretty good condition, it might be worth about \$2,500 now and the insurance premium is still fairly close to \$1,200 per year. Actually, for every one of its thirteen years, the insurance premium has been fairly close to \$1,200 per year. So, if I had totalled that old car in 1994, I would have received close to \$27,000 in insurance payout. If I totalled it today, I'd probably have to fight to get \$2,500 paid out for the same \$1,200 premium. Now what kind of a deal is that?

This past summer was kind of uneventful for us. We had visitors from England and from Texas and so took a few "Tour BC" road trips. Both parties had visited us just last year. They had such a good time they decided to come back. There is now talk of a


return visit next year. Perhaps there is such a thing as being too hospitable.

At the end of the summer, Catherine Dear and I went on a boat ride to Alaska and back. It was a nice cruise, but I think I prefer the ones that take you to warm sunny places with sandy beaches and palm trees.

One of the best things I did this year was buy a GPS unit. That thing is about the greatest toy I've ever had. When we were doing the "Tour BC" trips with our visitors, it was invaluable in finding motels and eating places. You know, you can ask to be taken to the closest Boston Pizza and that lady's voice will take you right to the front door. I'm sure Catherine Dear will be able make use of it on our trip south (whenever that happens) to discover even more shopping opportunities.

There are some definite benefits to spending the winter in southern California. Chief among these is the absence of rain. This year, an added benefit will be the lack of endless news stories about the 2010 Olympics. I realize it is unpopular to be anything but ecstatic about the 2010 Olympics, but I am everlastingly tired of the daily bombardment. It might be more palatable to me if there was some consideration given to the sports or to athleticism but all the discussion centers around money. I think the Olympic Games have lost their way from being an opportunity for the best athletes in the world to compete with each other and showcase their abilities. Given the news stories, the focus of the Olympics now is how the entrepreneurs, developers and movers and shakers of the host jurisdiction can reap the maximum profits from the event. Oh oh, this looks like it's turning into a rant. I'd better get off it before it leads to talking about how every aspect of life, from transit to homelessness to road repair to construction seems to be centered around the two or three weeks of the 2010 Olympics. And please remember that your premier has asked all you Lower Mainland residents to leave your cars at home during that two to three week period.

Just one more little thing before I go. Have you ever wondered why men's shirts button left over right and women's shirts button right over left? Like, who decided that and what's the point of it? I've done some ruminating on this and have come to the conclusion that shirt manufactures could probably save a lot of money by establishing one standard for all shirts. I think it would be best if they would make all shirts button the way men's shirts button. I say this because I'm sure there will be a learning curve for whichever group has to change and I've noted that Catherine Dear is more adept at grasping new concepts than I am. Well, except for the metric system. But that's for another day.

Please be sure to work and play safely because, apart from occasional "testing", retirement is good. 

UNIT 2 PHOTO OP

Many thanks to Unit Chair Gerry Pope & Assistant Business Manager Don McNabb for making sure The Hotline continues to get photos from BC's north country! If you have digital photos that would be suitable for publication in The Hotline, please send via e-mail, with captions identifying who is the photo and a brief description of the occasion, to hotline@shaw.ca.



Kirby Pederson (center) receives his IBEW Apprenticeship Completion Certificate. He is shown above with the Line Crew in Prince George who work for ESC Contracting.



Unit 2 Chairman Gerry Pope is shown above on the left after swearing in new IBEW member Rod Honrade (Meter Technician) at the September union meeting held in Prince George.



Unit #2 Chair Gerry Pope, left, initiates new members Kyle Hohert (Apprentice Mechanic) and Nadine Cross (DIH) at the August union meeting held in Hudson's Hope.



Congratulations to the new initiated IBEW members at the July Dawson Creek Unit 2 meeting. Left to right are: Elis Mant, Rodger Myram, Darren Bignell and Unit 2 Recorder Dwight Stevens.



Brother Larry Nichol, left, was awarded an IBEW jacket & retirement plaque from ABM Don McNabb at his retirement dinner held in Chetwynd.

More than 380 years of service combined

LOCAL 258
IBEW



Congratulations to long term Local 258 IBEW members who together have more than 380 years of service combined. From top left are: Brother "Ike" Eidsness, 55 years, with Unit 3 Chair Leon Arishenkoff; Brother Bob Gunter, 60 years. Second row from left are: Alex Mazer, 55 years; Brother Clarence Johnson, 60 years; Brother Mike Scheer, 50 years. Bottom row from left are: Brother Marvin Uphill, 50 years, with Unit 3 Chair Leon Arishenkoff; and, Sister Karen Porter, Unit 6 Vice Chair with Brother Rod Trenholm, 50 years.

Life lessons

Internet/CALM

Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

Always keep your words soft and sweet—in case you have to eat them.

If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

Never buy a car you can't push.

Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because you won't have a leg to stand on.

Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.

Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.

The second mouse gets the cheese.

Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.

You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once.

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

We can learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colours, but they all live in the same box.



Brother Gord Burr receives his 40 year service pin from Unit 6 Chair Barry Bell.



Congratulations to Brother Larry Lupul, left, on receiving his 15 year service pin award.



Brother Rod Trenholm, center, was recently awarded his 50 year certificate as a member of IBEW by Business Manager Doug McKay, left and Unit 6 Chair Barry Bell, right.



Senior Assistant Business Manager Jim Greenwell congratulates Brother Andy Bucknell on the occasion of his recent retirement.



ABM Dan Giesbrecht, right, congratulates Brother Sam Rae (Topped Out PLT Apprentice).



Brother Jeff Campbell, shown above on left, receives his 15 year service pin award from Unit 3 Vice Chair Ray LaPointe.



Brother Dirk Rozenboom was recently awarded his 5 year union service pin.



Congratulations to Brother Rudy Funfer, left, on the occasion of his recent retirement.



Congratulations on membership in the IBEW goes to Sister Kim Bell, right, who was initiated into the union by Sister Karen Porter, Unit 6 Vice Chair, at the June Surrey meeting.



Brother Lou Lazkovic from the Vernon Electrical crew is shown above with an IBEW jacket awarded to him on the occasion of his recent retirement.



Brother Barry Bell, left, receives his 10 year membership pin from Sister Karen Porter, Unit 6 Vice Chair.



LABOUR NEWS

A supreme decision: Collective bargaining as a constitutional right

By Elaine Bernard/Our Times/CALM

It's not often that labour celebrates a decision by the courts, but a June ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case involving health care unions and the British Columbia government, is a notable exception.

Proclaiming collective bargaining as a "constitutional right" supported by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Supreme Court has rendered a landmark decision.

The decision is 135 pages, but is well worth the read for its analysis and review of the history of the Court's thinking on freedom of association and collective bargaining. In an important reversal, the Justices declared that earlier court decisions refusing to recognize freedom of association as including the right to bargain collectively "do not withstand principled scrutiny and should be rejected".

This sudden recognition by Canada's highest court of collective bargaining as a fundamental right may breathe new life into ailing labour rights in Canada. As well, it may put provinces and the federal government, always quick to introduce legislation limiting and undermining collective bargaining rights of workers, on notice that the Court has a new-found appreciation of the role of collective bargaining in promoting the core values of "human dignity, equality, liberty, respect for the autonomy of the person and the enhancement of democracy."

This case arose out of a January 2002 attack by BC's Liberal government on the rights of unionized health care workers. The government gutted health care workers' collective agreements and placed limits on the unions' future ability to re-establish


rights lost through the unilateral government action.

The Court's decision is a much delayed victory that sends health care workers and their union back to the bargaining table. The Court has suspended of its decision for one year "to allow the government to address the repercussions of this decision," but it has done nothing to redress the tremendous loss experienced by BC health care workers. With about 8,000 workers having been fired so far, and thousands more having had their wages and benefits slashed, bargaining promises to be very contentious. And the Court reminds us that collective bargaining is "a limited right," a "right to a process" and not a guarantee of "a certain substantive or economic outcome."

In recognizing collective bargaining "as the most significant collective activity through which freedom of association is expressed in the labour context," the Court reversed 20 years of Supreme Court decisions. The Justices argued that workers coming together to negotiate their terms and conditions of employment has a long history in Canadian labour relations. Quoting numerous labour scholars and historians, the decision reviews the long legal battle to establish labour and bargaining rights for workers in Canada. In a ringing endorsement of bargaining expressed in the language of human rights, they conclude that, "the right to bargain

collectively with an employer enhances the human dignity, liberty and autonomy of workers by giving them the opportunity to influence the establishment of workplace rules and thereby gain some control over a major aspect of their lives, namely their work."

Future decisions on labour relations issues may be possible because of the Court's explicit and detailed rejection of the argument from earlier Charter labour cases that collective bargaining and the right to strike are "modern rights" created by legislation, and not "fundamental freedoms." In this BC case, the Court contends that "long before the present statutory labour regimes were put in place, collective bargaining was recognized as a fundamental aspect of Canadian society." Legislation did not create collective bargaining, but legislation eventually came to protect bargaining because of its "fundamental importance" to society. One might make the same case for the right to strike.

Unfortunately, this case did not involve the right to strike and so it remains an open question whether the Supreme Court, in a future case, will recognize "the right to strike" as a constitutional right. Like collective bargaining, the right to strike "is consistent with, and indeed, promotes other Charter rights, freedoms and values" and therefore deserves to be recognized and protected by the Charter. 

• Elaine Bernard, a labour educator from Canada, directs the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School. Our Times is an independent, pro-union Canadian magazine dedicated to promoting worker's rights and social justice. www.ourtimes.ca

Community success depends on each of us

Another winter is coming on, and as I write this the rain is pouring down, I'm sure there has been snow already for many of you around the province. Still, I am warm and dry in the comfort of my home, as I hope you are as you read this issue of your newsletter. For many in our communities, though, that isn't the case. Increasingly, even working people are finding themselves without a home, unable to afford the basic needs on insufficient incomes.

As a labour movement, we have been lobbying hard this year to have the minimum wage increased to \$10.00 per hour. Even that won't provide a living wage, but we must begin to raise the bar, to decrease the poverty levels in this wealthy province. Wealthy, yes, and in the midst of a great economic boom, yet we still have the highest child poverty rate in Canada, with nearly one in four children living below poverty levels – and poor children have poor parents who aren't able to earn a living. The gap between rich and poor is far too wide in a province that has named itself “the most beautiful place on earth”.



From left are Brother Ed Hill, IBEW International President; Brother Phil Flemming, International Vice-President First District Canada; Brother Phil Venoit, Local 230 Business Manager; Sister Michelle Laurie, Local 258 President; and Brother Jon F. Walters, IBEW International Secretary-Treasurer. They joined with hundreds of delegates from across Canada who attended the IBEW All Canada Progress Meeting held in Victoria, BC, this August.

Union workers in BC have a different motto – “What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all”, and we continue to fight to achieve that – through bargaining, through lobbying governments, and through volunteering in our own communities, where we can help to create change with other like-minded people. We also support, as a union and as individuals, organizations in our communities that do create change, that do help where there are needs, for children, for seniors, for individuals and families in crisis. We do all of this because we believe that collectively we truly can effect positive change.

Unionized workers across Canada through our national organization, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), have formed a partnership with the United Way because we share the same principles about social justice and collective action to create change.

From the Back Corner

Report from
Michelle Laurie,
President, Local 258 IBEW




It is the only such partnership that the CLC has formed, because United Way is the only charitable organization whose principles so closely align with Labour's. In many of your workplaces, United Way campaigns are in full swing, and I urge you to participate. If you don't have a workplace campaign, you can still participate as part of Local 258's campaign through regular or one time donations (please contact me for more information if you are interested).

United Ways throughout BC bring together research, community based agencies and donors like you to identify the real needs in our communities and to find the most effective ways to address those needs with the funds donors provide. As individuals, we see the problems around us in our communities and through United Way we can most effectively address those problems. United Way's anthem is completely aligned with our beliefs as union members:

“I believe in my community. I believe that its success depends upon the people who live in it. That everyone has something to contribute. That everyone deserves respect. That everyone's potential can be realized. That diversity is vital. That every person has value. That everyone needs help and everyone can offer help. That a safe, supportive community is everyone's responsibility. I believe in possibility.”

The partnership with the CLC has evolved into another very important project for labour – the Union Counselling program. Some of our members have been trained in the basic peer-to-peer techniques of the program, and see a need to form a broader network within Local 258 of like trained individuals that can strengthen our ability to help each other in times of crisis. These union counselors give a great deal of themselves to reach out a hand to a sister or brother in need, and we, as a union, need to establish a system to support and develop the program. Many of our members are struggling with increased stresses in the workplace, and in their lives, and it can sometimes become overwhelming. In those times especially, our commitment to support each other is most critical, and yet can be the most difficult. Your stewards and elected members are coming together in early November, and one of the important issues we will tackle is how we effectively create and support a network of trained union counselors.


So, stay safe and keep reaching your hands out to help your brothers and sisters – it is what makes us so strong and proud. 

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