



HOTLINE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
PUBLICATION OF
LOCAL 258 IBEW
WINTER, 2007

LOCAL 258, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, BRITISH COLUMBIA



**Volatile
winter
weather
impacts
workers,
their
families
and our
communities**

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QUICK ACTION SAVES LIFE

SISTER BARB BOYLES IS GRATEFUL BROTHER CLARK FERGUSSON KNEW CPR AND WAS THERE TO HELP SAVE HER LIFE

READ ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE IN THIS ISSUE OF THE HOTLINE

HOTLINE Winter 2007

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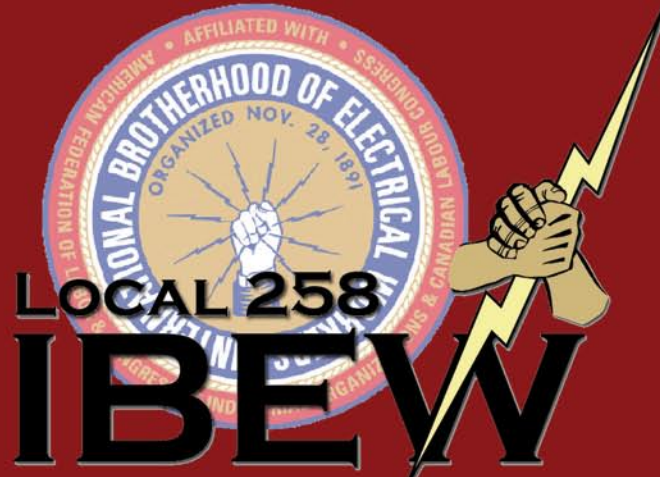
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THE UNION OF HEARTS AND MINDS

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Local 258 IBEW Legal Counsel: Rebecca Murdock

FRONT COVER PHOTOS: Winter weather has increased the workload for many members of Local 258 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in British Columbia. Shown here in a photo taken by Brother Tim Somerville is Brother Rod Damon, an Utility Arborist with Asplundh. In the photo below are Sister Barb Boyles whose life was saved by Brother Clark Fergusson when she suffered a life threatening medical condition while at work. See story page 7.

Cover photos by Tim Somerville and Michelle Boudreau.

VIEWPOINT from your Business Manager Doug McKay

A “community” is often described as a group having something in common, be it their geographical location, a specific interest or a distinctive feature. A union can be described as a community, as we are unified by a common interest, while at the same time we function as part of and are affected by the larger community we live in.

As a union, I believe we may be on the verge of losing our sense of community. We have been under attack from all sides — the current elected government, our employers, and in our industries, international market forces. As workers, our job is to go to work everyday, work safe, do our jobs and at the end of the day, take home a pay cheque. But we can't forget that in our dedication to our jobs, we are also contributing to putting money into the company's pocket.

In a perfect world, the company would then share that money with those who helped create the profit — but in today's world, there seems to be a new factor in play, and that is the corporate greed factor. More and more corporations are subscribing to the tune of having to increase their take on the “market share”, a philosophy that doesn't necessarily equate with simply making a profit. This singular dimension viewpoint has crept into government policy creation and has far reaching effects that try to weaken our union community's ability to get a fair deal for those who help make that corporation's profit.

The challenges our union community faces are becoming more and more difficult to overcome. At one time it seemed we had it all under control - we represented a group of workers in a company and we could negotiate a fair and respectful deal where everyone benefited. These days we find ourselves faced with numerous obstacles placed in our way by influential corporations and the stakes are much higher.

For example, within our workplaces exist various job classifications, and unfortunately not all these jobs are of equal importance to the employer. In the past, we could leverage those jobs that were more valuable to the employer's bottom line and through negotiation, gain protection and benefits for everyone. In today's world, with the realities of outsourcing, temporary foreign workers and world market labour rates, as well as a difficulty with our own union community members sticking together, the challenges have become immense.

A good part of our union membership are known as “public servants” and being so, we often find ourselves subjected to restrictions imposed by the government of the day. When it comes to preparations for collective bargaining, it is becoming more and more difficult to “get the facts” we need to present our case when the government (one that announces regularly that it is “the most open and honest government”) does not allow a level playing field



Local 258 IBEW Business Manager Doug McKay, shown above on left, sat on the Resolutions Committee at the 50th BC Federation of Labour convention held in Vancouver, November, 2006.

and freedom of access to information. It seems like once they got into power, they began behaving like a private corporation.

The current Liberal government in BC has taken away our right to freely access information that we could use to further our arguments for increased wages, benefits and improved working conditions, and in that, I get the sense that the union's strength is vulnerable to being weakened.

What we are fighting today is a difficult battle and to win we must remember to stand shoulder to shoulder. It is the “divide and conquer” mentality inflicted upon us by the corporate world and their influence on government policy on a daily basis that can fracture our community. We also must be aware of the power of influential corporate advertising at every level that focuses on individuality and personal success at the expense of the community. If we succumb to these “divide and conquer” forces, we will lose the power we have gained over the decades to make the fair gains we deserve when the companies we are working for are making record profits.

As a union leader, I have an obligation to try and do my best for each and every member of my union community. I will continue to endeavour to fight to the best of my ability to ensure we make the gains we deserve and I look forward to working together with you in these efforts, because that is where our strength lies.

I strongly believe in our union community and I know that together we can successfully face these challenges head on by continuing to show our resolve to stick together. We must not let the “divide and conquer” forces win and we must remember that it is the community at large that will benefit when **our** community sticks together. Our future and our children's future depends on it. Keep this in mind when it comes time for bargaining, as our strength is our union community. 🇺🇸



We've Got Mail!



Dear Doug McKay,
Enclosed please find a photograph of Gary Quast, Journeyman Lineman and Shawn Quast, 5th term Apprentice Lineman (see above).

The job was to install two redheads on the center and one outside phase on the buck arm three phase take off in order to remove the risers, install an auxiliary arm on the feeder circuit to move the field and center phases in order to set a new pole in line.

I had the opportunity to work with my son, who was temporarily assigned to Nanaimo hydro construction and was working in Powell River. It was an opportunity to hot stick three phase with my son and may never come again as he will top out in 18 months and I expect to be retired by then. For me it was quite a thrill.

Gary Quast
Powell River, BC



Dear IBEW Local 258;
On behalf of the sponsors and organizing committee, we want to thank you for your sponsorship and support of the 2006 Safety Rodeo.

While the importance of safety is the priority focus of the Safety Rodeo, what made the event meaningful was the spirit of community, commitment and partnerships present on the day as well as in the weeks and months leading up to the event. Given the wonderful weather, the hats were certainly appreciated. And, the very successful Saturday evening event was a great way to 'cap-off' the 2006 Safety Rodeo.

BC Hydro is now committed to sponsoring the Safety Rodeo every two years. We hope that you will continue your support and look forward to 2008.

Thank you very much.
Sincerely
Vern Krienke and Ross Fitzgerald
Power Pioneers,
2006 Safety Rodeo Co-Chairs

Dear Michelle Laurie;
Thank you for all your time and hard work you put into my WCB reviews and appeals. I wouldn't have achieved the outcomes without you and the IBEW 258 staff.
Again, thanks a lot,
Ian Letkeman

Dear Local 258 IBEW Executive Board;
I would like to thank Fred Ruttan for contacting the Executive Board of Local 258 IBEW. Both myself and my son Jeric would like to send a hearty "thanks" to every one of your members. Your generous donation of \$200 was a contributing factor in sending Jeric to Newfoundland for the Canadian National Karate competition.

Jeric is a member of Campbell River Wado Karate Club. This 15 year old is a member of the Karate BC Team with Brown Belt status.

Jeric proudly brought back to BC and Campbell River a bronze medal in fighting (Kumite). In team fighting he returned with a gold medal to honour BC.

The IBEW Local Union 258 can be proud of the athlete they supported.

Many thanks from
Barry Ross and Jeric Ross

To the Brothers & Sisters of Local 258 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; When we needed someone you were there to show how much you care. Thank you for being there.
Sue Vig & families



Greetings Sisters & Brothers; I would like to thank IBEW 258 for your support of the two teams and apprentice that competed in the 23rd annual International Lineman Rodeo in KC, Missouri.

The competition is intense, winning teams make no mistakes with speed being the factor that decides where your crew will place.

We held our own in spite of not working with these methods or wearing rubber gloves ground to ground! We did prove that linework is linework, no matter where or how, we adapted on the fly and did the work safely with more than one judge commenting on sound teamwork and good method. Our teams looked very professional with the Canadian flag and BC Hydro hi viz.

I am proud of what we showed and proud of what we did.

Thank you for your support.
Don McLennan

Dear Brother Dan Klassen, During our last union meeting we had discussed the possibility of our union making a contribution to our needy family this Christmas.

I would like to make that request (\$200 was discussed) and inform you how this drive has gone in the past and our plans this season.

This is my third year at collecting bottles from all the brothers and staff at the Victoria line offices. Last year we collected over \$450 towards helping a needy family. I am pleased to say that we have collected more than that this year and with the unions' help, we are hoping to sponsor three families this season. The families are screened and put forward to us by a charity organization.

Thank you for any help and I reassure you that this action, while helping the needy, can only help to spread goodwill to all involved.

In solidarity,
Brother Rick Benjamin

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 continue to receive news alerts, The Hotline newsletter 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 ibew@ibew258.bc.ca

LOCAL 258 IBEW



To the Executive Board of Local 258 IBEW; On December 15, the Construction Business Unit from Vernon will be putting on and hosting their annual Christmas party. Throughout the year they solicit items from suppliers and businesses to raffle off at the Christmas party. Monies raised go to the food bank for those less fortunate.

It would be greatly appreciated if the union's Executive Board would consider approving a donation of clothing items for the raffle.

Thanking you in advance.
In solidarity
Brother Greg Fanning



Call for submissions

Local 258 IBEW Tom Forkin Student Scholarship

Once again, it is time for Local 258 IBEW's annual Tom Forkin Memorial Scholarship essay contest. This Scholarship was created in 1991, in memory of our first Local President - Brother Tom Forkin, and is open to members, or dependants of members, of Local 258. Up to three individual scholarships of \$1000.00 each will be awarded this year.


The essay topic for 2007 will be: "Raw Log Exports In BC – What is the trend, and how is it affecting Labour". The essay should address changes in the workforce, changes in the economy, effects on communities and on the forest industry in British Columbia. Submissions must be a minimum of 1,000 words in length, and submitted with a cover letter explaining the applicant's educational plans and career goals. Submissions must be submitted in an electronic format, provided either on a CD-ROM, or via e-mail to info@ibew258.bc.ca. If you are submitting via e-mail, you must include "Tom Forkin Scholarship" in the subject bar.



To be eligible, applicants must be registered in, or plan to register in a full-time post-secondary educational institution. Applicants must have a letter-grade standing of C or better, and copies of the letter-grade standing must be included with the application letter. Mature students may have this requirement waived if approved by the Executive Board.

Application letters and essays can be sent to:

Tom Forkin Scholarship
Local 258, IBEW
7535 – 6th Street
Burnaby, BC V3N 3M2

All submissions must be received by 4:00 p.m. on April 13, 2007. The Executive Board shall assess all submissions, and will make a final and unalterable decision by May 11, 2006. Successful applicants will be notified immediately. Scholarship funds will not be released until proof of enrolment is provided. 

LOCAL 258
IBEW



Quick action saves life

June 22, 2006 seemed like it was going to be like any other day at work when Barb Boyles left her home in Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island that morning. Barb, a Local 258 IBEW member who has worked for Island Traffic Services for 17 years, was meeting up with her union sister and long time work colleague and friend Terry Munn and they were travelling up the highway into Duncan for their scheduled assignment.

Barb and Terry arrived at the location and as they were beginning to set up, Barb was having an impromptu conversation when suddenly her eyes rolled back in her head and she collapsed to the ground, hitting her head hard on the pavement. Terry, her workmate, ran over and saw blood pouring from the back of Barb's head and called for help.

Across the street working on a power line repair were three IBEW members, Brother Clark Fergusson, Brother Morgan Keith and Brother Evan Binely, who work for Central Island Powerline in Cobble Hill, and they heard Terry's cries for help.

Brother Fergusson saw Barb lying on the ground and took quick action based on his workplace CPR training. He ran across the street and attended to Barb who was lying motionless and unresponsive. He called to his colleagues to phone 911 and began a quick assessment of the situation that he learned how to do through the CPR training he received at work by St. John Ambulance.

When he reached Barb, he quickly realized she wasn't breathing and didn't have a pulse, so he immediately sprang into action and began to resuscitate her, doing mouth to mouth. Clark recalls, "After I gave Barb two quick breaths of air, I heard a gurgling sound. I gave her a shake and two more breaths and she began to choke, so I knew she was still alive. An off-duty paramedic was close by and came over to help. We turned her onto her side and fluid began pouring out of her mouth, but she was breathing."

What Barb had suffered was a life threatening medical condition known as a ruptured cerebral aneurysm, a condition that results in bleeding in the brain. She had no prior warning that day that anything was wrong and claims her life was saved by the quick action of one of her union brothers who heard her friend Terry's cries for help.

Barb recalls in a recent interview, "I was in the middle of a conversation and the next thing I know I'm waking up in a hospital with my head wrapped in bandages. I don't have any recollection of what happened that day."

When the two met for lunch recently, they recalled the events. "All those years of taking CPR training paid off I guess," said Clark. "It all happened so fast, but I knew I had to do something. I knew Barb from working with her on a number of assignments over the years when she protected me by controlling traffic while we did power line repairs, and there she was lying on the ground, helpless and bleeding. I knew I had to do something to try and help."



Sister Barb Boyles, left, is grateful for the quick actions of Brother Clark Fergusson who helped save her life after she suffered a life threatening medical emergency while at work. After knowing Clark for many years while working as a traffic control person on a number of his power line assignments, Barb thanked Clark when they recently met for lunch and added, "I know I will always be safe with you around, but it doesn't mean I won't ever give you shit again!"

Clark recalls the ambulance arrived and removed Barb from the scene, taking her first to the hospital in Duncan where she was immediately transferred to Victoria and underwent emergency surgery.

"I don't really remember anything about the incident," recalls Barb. "I was in the hospital for three months. I had to have a number of surgeries and rehabilitation and I've continued my recovery and rehab since I've been back at home with the great support of my husband and family. I don't know what would have happened to me without the quick actions of Clark Fergusson. Thank you seems to be so inadequate."

Barb first saw Clark after the incident when she ran into him at the local grocery store. Clark recalls, "I kept up on Barb's progress through her friend Terry and knew she was recovering slowly but surely. She sure has been through a lot and I'm glad I could help. It was a life changing event for me and I just hope that any one of us would do the same thing."

Barb is glad to be at home with her family, her two dogs, five cats and four fish and is looking forward to returning to work in February.

She has committed to being on the union's negotiating committee for upcoming bargaining. Sister Susan Longva, Assistant Business Manager for Local 258, is looking forward to Barb's return. 🙌

IBEW members rise to task at hand

So far, the late fall and winter season of 2006/07 has seen British Columbia get hard hit with a series of destructive wind and snow and rain storms that have wreaked havoc on many communities across the province, leaving people without power for days at a time.

Members of Local 258 IBEW have risen to the occasion and have been working at breakneck speed to bring the power back on across the province, while maintaining high safety standards.

One of the more notable power outages saw 250,000 BC Hydro customers left in the cold and dark in late November when the lower mainland was pummelled by a major winter storm. Vancouver Island hasn't fared much better, with some customers facing the frustration of lengthy power outages, sometimes lasting up to a week.

The destruction has been so severe in some places that repair crews have faced unprecedented conditions when trying to get power restored. Downed trees combined with ongoing storm conditions challenged workers who have been working long hours with limited time off. Some workers reported not even being able to take time off during the holiday season to spend with their families.

The union thanks all our members who have been so committed to their jobs and have continued to work safe throughout these trying times. 🚧



Many thanks to Brother Tim Somerville, an accomplished photographer and Local 258 member who works for BC Hydro on Vancouver Island, for sending these photos in to The Hotline. To see more photos Brother Somerville took during recent storm damage repair by BC Hydro crews, visit the union's website at www.ibew258.bc.ca.





*Attention: IBEW members
who work in Traffic Control*

Industrial First Aid

Local 258 IBEW will be hosting a number of Industrial First Aid courses in the coming months for members who work in Traffic Control. These day long classes will be held on a Saturday and will include lunch. The first in this series of courses will take place on Vancouver Island and Shop Stewards will be notified of times and locations. Please watch for notices in your workplaces.



United Way
of the Lower Mainland

Three union and community leaders awarded at 14th annual Labour Appreciation Night

Three union and community leaders were honoured Dec. 7 at the 14th annual Labour Appreciation Night held at the Westin Bayshore Vancouver.

Awards are given annually to individuals who have devoted a large part of their lives to their unions and to their communities.

Said Mervyn Van Steinburg (member Local 213, IBEW) Director of the Canadian Labour Congress United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM) Labour Participation Department, "Each one of our recipients provides an inspiring example of the kind of positive power that an individual can contribute to create progressive social change in our communities."

Sister Eunice Parker received the Labour Community Service Award presented by the New Westminster and District Labour Council.

Parker's labour career began the day she was born. Her father was a farmer in Saskatchewan and shared his strong belief in labour values and farmers' rights with his children. Sister Parker has been a member of the TWU and OTEU.

In the community, Eunice served as a school trustee and city councillor in Coquitlam. A long time community volunteer, she served on the Board of Governors at Riverview Hospital and was a founding member of the Evergreen Theatre. She currently serves on the board of the Tri-Cities Art Council.

Parker is one of 10 citizens of Coquitlam to be honoured as a Freedom of the City Recipient and is the current co-chair of the Coquitlam chapter Council of Canadians.

Brother John Fitzpatrick is this year's recipient of the Syd Thompson Community Service Award, presented by the Vancouver District Labour Council.

Fitzpatrick was born and raised in



Recipients of the 2006 Labour Appreciation awards are, from left, Brother John Kirkpatrick, Sister Eunice Parker and Brother Brian Nasu.

Scotland and began his labour career at Burrard Dry Dock in North Vancouver. He held several key labour positions over the course of his career including Secretary Treasurer, Vancouver and District Labour Council.

Fitzpatrick has been involved in community service as a volunteer for 30 years, and has served on the board of Four Corner Community Savings Bank in Vancouver. He is a partner in education with Queen Alexander School, helping students in this inner city school to reach their full potential through the Morning Program.

Now retired, Fitzpatrick serves as Secretary of the Campbell River Courtenay and District Labour Council and is on the Board of the Comox Valley United Way.

Brother Brian Nasu received this year's Joe Morris Labour Community Service Award, presented by United Way of the Lower Mainland.

Nasu began his labour career at IGA in 1979 and his union involvement is far

reaching. He has served as vice president of UFCW 1518 (executive board from 1988 to 2000) and is a union counsellor. He has served as treasurer for Union Label for the last 10 years and is one of the main organizers of the annual Labour Day Picnic held in Burnaby. He also helps to organize the trade show at the CLC Harrison Winter School each year.

Brian has held numerous community volunteer positions, including chairing the Vancity Community Foundation in 2005-2006. He continues to serve on the board.

Nasu also served for on the board of Community Savings Credit Union and Burnaby Multiculturalism.

Nasu has volunteered with UWLM since the late 1990s and has been a member of the Labour Committee for the past six years, serving as co-chair of the committee for the past four years.

Nasu is also a proud volunteer for the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association.



UNIT MEETING SCHEDULES – 2007

UNIT 1

MEETING SCHEDULE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
MASSET Where: Line Room When: 4:30 pm		15										
PRINCE RUPERT Where: Line Room When: 4:30 pm		14				13						
QUEEN CHARLOTTE CITY Where: Line Room When: 4:30 pm						14						
SMITHERS Where: Line Room When: 5:30 pm	09		13		08		10		11		13	
TERRACE Where: Carpenters Hall When: 7:00 pm		13		10		12		08		09		11

UNIT 2

MEETING SCHEDULE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
PRINCE GEORGE Where: Royal Canadian Legion When: 7:00 pm	16*		14*	17*	09*	12*			11*		20	
DAWSON CREEK Where: Labour Temple When: 7:00 pm		21					17*					12*
FORT ST. JOHN Where: Northern Grand Quality Inn When: 7:00 pm		20*				14				16*		
HUDSON'S HOPE Where: Pearkes Centre When: 4:30 pm				18				14*				
FORT NELSON Where: TBA When: 7:00 pm						19				17		
QUESNEL Where: Line Room When: 4:30 pm			15						12		22	
WILLIAMS LAKE Where: Elks Hall When: 4:30 pm	17					13						24*
100 MILE HOUSE Where: TBA When: TBA					TBA							
BELLA COOLA Where: TBA When: TBA					16				TBA			

* denotes Official Meeting



LOCAL 258

IBEW LOCAL 258 IBEW UNIT

UNIT 3

MEETING SCHEDULE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BRIDGE RIVER Where: Lunch Room B2 When: 5:30 pm	09*				08				11		13	
KAMLOOPS Where: IBEW #993 When: 7:00 pm	10				09*				12		14	
VERNON Where: Army & Navy Club 2500 46th Avenue, Vernon When: 7:00 pm	11		15*		10		12*		13		15	13*
MICA Where: Curling Rink When: 6:00 pm	15				14				17*		19	
REVELSTOKE Where: Hydro Dam Conf Room When: 4:15 pm	16				15				18		20*	
CASTLEGAR/TRAIL Where: Travel Lodge, Castlegar Terra Nova Hotel, Trail When: 7:00 pm		Trail 13		Castlegar 10		Trail 12		Castlegar 14		Trail 09		
CRANBROOK Where: Labour Temple When: 4:30 pm		14		11*		13				10		
INVERMERE Where: Hydro Line Room When: 4:15 pm		15		12		14*				11		

* denotes Official Meeting

UNIT 5

MEETING SCHEDULE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BURNABY Where: Union Hall, 7535 Sixth St., Burnaby When: AS LISTED	11*	15	15*	12*	10	14*	12*	09*	13	11*	15*	13*
SECHELT Where: Seaside Centre, Sechelt When: 5:00 pm		21*			16*				19*			

* denotes Official Meeting

MEETING SCHEDULES 2007

UNIT 4

MEETING SCHEDULE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
VICTORIA Where: Line Room When: 4:00 pm	09*			10			10*				14	
GANGES Where: Line Room When: 4:00 pm	10			11*						10		
DUNCAN Where: Cowichan Valley Inn When: 7:00 pm	09				MTG. AT 4:00 PM 08*					09*		
QUALICUM BEACH Where: Line Room When: 4:00 pm		14			09							11
PORT ALBERNI Where: Clutest Haven Marina When: 4:00 pm		MTG. AT 7:00 PM 14					13*		13			
NANAIMO Where: Nanaimo Legion #256 When: 4:00 pm				14*	MTG. AT 6:30 PM 09			07*				12*
PORT HARDY Where: Line Room When: 4:00 pm			13						12			
COURTENAY Where: Line Room When: 4:00 pm		13*				12			11		13*	
CAMPBELL RIVER Where: Maritime Heritage Museum When: 7:00 pm		13				12			11*		MTG. AT 4:00 PM 13	

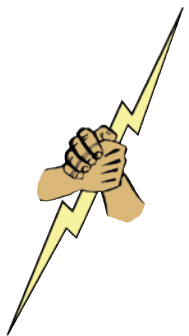
* denotes Official Meeting

UNIT 6

MEETING SCHEDULE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
SURREY Where: Millwrights Union Hall, #202-14625 108th Ave., Surrey When: 7:00 pm	09*	13	13*	10	08*	12	10*		11*	09	13*	11
CHILLIWACK Where: Best Western 43971 Industrial Way, Chilliwack When: 7:00 pm		14*		11*		13*		08*		10*		12*

* denotes Official Meeting



Canadian power line worker falls to his death at ESMO Conference

A demonstration on emergency power line repair went horribly wrong this past October during an international utility conference being held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, when a 60-foot temporary tower fell, resulting in the death of Canadian power line worker David Desjarlais and critically injuring lineman Mike Merchant from Texas.

Both were part of a crew working near the top of a tower that was being erected that toppled in front of hundreds of spectators who were attending the 11th annual International Conference and Exhibition on Transmission and Distribution Construction, Operation and Live-Line Maintenance (ESMO 2006).

According to a witness at the event, the tower "was leaning at about 20 degrees, and then it was, oh... , one of those words you can't say." The tower fell about 9 a.m. behind Public Service Company of New Mexico's (PNM) Reeves Power Plant.

More than 2,000 utility profession-

als from over 20 countries attended the conference, organized by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Power Engineering Society.

Desjarlais, 32, was an independent line worker from Manitoba. He was assisting Toronto-based Tower Solutions with the demonstration.

Merchant, of Hemphill, Texas, is an employee of Winco Powerline Services of Aurora, Oregon.

Tower Solutions has developed a range of modular towers that can be used to prop up power lines during an emergency while line crews work to repair the main towers. Winco had reportedly contracted with Tower Solutions to help with the demonstration.

The accident happened shortly after hundreds of spectators had arrived by bus and car to check out dozens of exhibits and demonstrations held on vacant land south of the PNM power plant during the second day of the conference.

During the demonstration, ropes supported a tower while crew members attached stronger wire lines. As the crew tightened the wires, one snapped, sending the tower and two crew members to the ground, according to a preliminary investigative report from the Occupational Health & Safety Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department.

Most of those in attendance were initially unaware that the accident had occurred and continued walking around the exhibits. Conference organizers made an announcement once they realized the severity of the accident and demonstrations were temporarily halted until the organizers received clearance from the police and fire departments to proceed.

The conference consisted of two days of indoor exhibits and workshops at the Albuquerque Convention Center and two days of outdoor exhibits and demonstrations at the PNM plant. ☒

BCTC bargaining set to begin

Negotiating a new contract is on the agenda for Local 258 members who work for the British Columbia Transmission Corporation this spring with the contract expiring at the end of March.

About 95 union members are seeking wage and benefit improvements in a new deal. The company has recently announced that it has filed with the BC Utilities Commission to invest \$3.2 billion in BC's transmission assets over the next 10 years.

Members of this year's bargaining committee are Brothers Bill Majors, Dave Harrington, Tim Reid and Doug Buchanan. Negotiations will take place in Vancouver and will be headed by the union's Business Manager Doug McKay. Dates have been set for Feb. 1 & 2 when both sides will meet. ☒

<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

Bargaining updates in the Manufacturing & Traffic Control Sectors

November saw Local 258 members who work at CODE Electric and CODE Manufacturing in Coquitlam ratify new collective agreements.

Assistant Business Manager Susan Longva reports that a four year agreement was reached at CODE Manufacturing that features a new and improved health & welfare plan and wage increases totaling 12.5 per cent over the term of the agreement as well as a \$300 signing bonus in the first year. A clause was also added into the agreement adding the wording from Employment Standards Act regarding family responsibility leave: An employee is entitled to up to 5 days of unpaid leave during each employment year to meet responsibilities related to (a) the care, health or education of a child in the employee's care, or (b) the care or health of any other member of the employee's immediate family.

Many thanks to Shop Steward Bobby Sami who was on the bargaining committee.

Members working at CODE Electric ratified their new collective agreement that in-


cludes a new and improved health and welfare plan as well as wage increases totaling 12.25 per cent over the four-year agreement. Members also agreed to a \$300 signing bonus in the first year of the agreement.

Many thanks to Shop Steward Craig Anselmo who was on the bargaining committee.

Copies of these new collective agreements will be distributed to members at these properties after being reviewed, proofed and printed.

With the contract having expired at the end of December, 2006, bargaining proposals have been received from the members working at Cam Tran Pacific Ltd. in Chilliwack and a meeting date has been set for January 24. Members of the bargaining committee are Shop Stewards Steve Roscoe and Arlene Runke.

Shop Steward Ron Norgaard who works at All Clear Traffic in Gibsons has agreed to step forward to be on the bargaining committee with ABM Longva for upcoming negotiations.

Bargaining is being scheduled for a number of manufacturing facilities where Local 258 members work including Canadian Processing & Controls (CPC) in port Moody, Eaton Electrical in Delta, Schneider Canada in Richmond and Hobart Canada on Annacis Island, with all contracts expiring at the end of March of this year. 

Winter work season starts out very busy




Brother Barry Bell, right, Unit 6 Chair, congratulates Brother Bob Abernethy and awards him with a long term service pin on his recent retirement.

Assistant Business Manager Dan Giesbrecht reports the workload has been heavy so far this winter with the extreme weather conditions plaguing Vancouver's lower mainland resulting in numerous power outages throughout the areas.

Many members have been working 16 hours days, seven days a week and Brother Giesbrecht would like to extend his thanks to those who have shown their commitment to their work and have been working safely.

Congratulations are in order to some of

our most recent retirees, including Brother Bob Abernethy who was recently awarded his long term service pin on his retirement (see photo to the left). Brother Abernethy was a 27 year member and long time Unit 6 Chair and the union will definitely miss his service and commitment to his union brothers and sisters. Best wishes on your retirement Brother Abernethy.

Happy retirement wishes also go out to Brother Len Hildebrandt and Brother Ken Irwin on their recent retirements. 

OOPS! WE MADE A MISTAKE...

The last issue of The Hotline incorrectly identified Shannon Sawchuk, Bruce Scott and Richard McGrath as workers for BC Hydro. These Local 258 members work for Allteck Inc.. We apologize for this error.

LOCAL 258
IBEW



RUMINATIONS OF A RETIREE

By Ken McEwen

Happy New Year to you all. This being winter I am once again henscenced in sunny southern California. From this location I have been keeping up with weather reports from our more northern home. Given what I have heard I am glad to be here and not there. Along with the weather reports I have also heard a lot of discussion about “Global Warming”. I’ve been ruminating a lot about that. Now, I don’t want to make light of what seems to be a serious concern but I have yet to personally experience a whole bunch of that warming business. Like, yeah it’s warmer here than it is in New Westminster, but that’s just the natural order of things. South is generally warmer than north. Well, until you get to the equator and then it’s the other way around.

As a quick aside, if this column is too late for publication the responsibility lies directly with Catherine Dear who pulled me away from the computer to pick oranges and grapefruit. It was my position that the oranges and grapefruit have been hanging on the trees for some time and would still be hanging there tomorrow, but Catherine Dear determined that today is the day for picking. So I picked. Fortunately for me, the oranges on the largest tree are not quite ready yet so I was able to defer that chore to another day.

Anyway, back to Global Warming. In late October, when we left home for our journey south, we decided to visit friends in Omak, Washington, for a few days. Omak is south of Osoyoos, BC, and therefore, in accordance with the above mentioned south/north theory, should have been warm. That was not the case. On two of the three days we visited, the night time temperature plummeted to -12 degrees Celsius and didn’t rise much above 0 degrees during the day. I learned that two nights of -12 degrees Celsius will cause all the water in the pipes in the camper to become hard and not flow out of the taps. So where is this Global Warming when you need it? The lack of Global Warming also caused us to modify our route on the way south. We had intended to travel through Bend and Klamath Falls, Oregon, in making our way to Reno, Nevada, where Catherine Dear would make her seasonal contributions, via several casinos, to the welfare of all Nevadans. Because of forecasts of continued night time temperatures of -12 degrees Celsius in those areas, we turned right at the Columbia River and made our way west to Portland, Oregon. The temperature rose, the water in the pipes became fluid again, nothing was broken and the rest of the drive down Interstate 5 was warm, though uninspiring. The Nevadans will just have to wait for increased Global Warming to receive their contributions from Catherine Dear.

In southern (and therefore warmer) California there are a number of bugs and critters that we co-exist with. I generally operate on a “live and let live” philosophy. Like, if they don’t bother



Retired member Ken McEwen delights readers with his quarterly Ruminations column in the union’s news magazine, The Hotline. Brother McEwen is a former Senior Assistant Business Manager with Local 258 and former Editor of The Hotline. He spends his

retirement winters down south with his wife “Catherine Dear” and their dog Sesame.

me, I won’t bother them. Catherine Dear, who will not see harm come to any living thing, operates on a strict catch and release philosophy. Over the years we have caught and released numerous flies, crickets, wasps, hornets, black widow spiders, roaches (the natives call them palm beetles), the occasional scorpion and one rattlesnake. On those days when Catherine Dear is partaking of the many local shopping opportunities or playing Bingo at the local casino, any of the aforementioned critters that are foolhardy enough to intrude on my space are quickly and terminally dispatched to wherever incautious bugs go. There is now in my world a critter that will not be offered, regardless of Catherine Dear’s location, the clemency of our catch and release policy. There is this rat (the natives call them palm squirrels) that had the rudeness to enter the engine compartment of the camper and chew through a vacuum hose that operates the heater control. I could probably live with a critter who is only seeking shelter, but I take great umbrage with any critter that messes with my camper; especially when I have to pay, from my limited retiree’s income, the cost of repairing the damage. As we speak (and while Catherine Dear is away at Bingo), steps are being taken to shorten said critters stay on earth in warm and sunny southern California. Perhaps if this rat had taken advantage of Global Warming and remained outdoors, it would not be in such dire peril.

Well, it seems I have again run out of space and time. I sort of wanted to share my ruminations about Conservative governments. Another issue I have been ruminating on has to do with politicians that are so lacking in commitment that they can espouse the policies of one Party and then when elected, cross the floor of the House to espouse the policies of the Party in power. But I guess I’ll have to leave that until next time.

Please work and play safely because retirement is good and sometimes warm. 📧

BC HYDRO'S AMAZINGLY BAD DEAL FOR RATEPAYERS

*We give big firms \$15 billion.
We get higher prices, no assets,
no guarantee of supply.*

By John Calvert

On July 2, 2006, BC Hydro announced the outcome of its 2006 tender call for electricity from private energy developers. The results were startling. Not only had BC Hydro agreed to buy three times the power requested in the tender, it had done so at locked-in prices far above projected market rates.

According to its submission to the BC Utilities Commission, over the length of the contracts BC Hydro and its ratepayers will pour up to \$15.6 billion into the pockets of private investors. Yet for all that money, the public gets no assets, no price protection once the contracts expire and no guarantee that private energy interests won't export the electricity in the future.

The 2006 tender call is part of a seismic shift in the way British Columbia produces, buys and sells electricity. It means a bonanza for private energy interests and an enormous financial liability for ordinary BC ratepayers.

The deals BC Hydro agreed to under the tender will cost between \$400 and \$500 million every year from 2012 to 2039. Which means higher electricity rates -- 8.1 per cent higher, according to BC Hydro's own calculations. And that's just from this tender. The 2007 tender "call" has already been announced for the purchase of even more private energy. The way the government's Energy Plan is structured, more tender calls are guaranteed to come as energy demand grows in the province.

BC LIBS' PUSH TO PRIVATIZE

Since its election in 2001, the BC Liberal government has moved to deregulate and privatize BC's electricity system while integrating it with the US-dominated energy market in the Pacific Northwest. The core of

that policy was laid out in the 2002 Energy Plan, which prevents BC Hydro from building new generation assets, and transforms the Crown corporation from a generator of publicly-owned electricity to a purchaser of energy from the private sector.

The rationale for this change is hard to fathom. The old policy worked very well. By generating its own power, BC Hydro ensured that ratepayers enjoyed, on average, the second lowest electricity prices in North America. This is because prices were based on the historic cost of production, not the current energy market price. At the same time, BC Hydro contributed about three quarters of a billion dollars, annually, to the provincial government from dividends, water rentals and taxes in lieu.

Under the new plan, BC Hydro has to buy virtually all its future electrical energy from private power developers. To do this BC Hydro has to enter legally binding contracts -- called Energy Purchase Agreements -- with private energy corporations. The agreements lock BC Hydro (and BC taxpayers) into financial commitments of up to 40 years.

Under the terms of the agreements, BC ratepayers have to buy a fixed amount of private energy every year throughout the contract. Because the price of the energy is indexed, meaning it goes up every year, energy investors are guaranteed escalating revenues. But those revenues have to come from somewhere, and in this case, it's the BC ratepayers.

But all of this we knew before the outcome of the 2006 tender call was announced in July.

What we didn't know was just how fast the changes were going to happen.

NO PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The 2006 energy call originally requested bids from private power developers for 2,700 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity. (A GWh is one million kilowatts.) This represents about four per cent of the total energy used in the province each year. But when the results were announced in July, the amount of energy on the table had risen dramatically. At the end of the day, BC Hydro had agreed to buy 7,125 GWh (plus an additional 226 GWh from the Brilliant Expansion program of Columbia Power), three times the size of the original tender call.

BC Hydro's explanation for the huge change was simple: BC's projected energy needs had risen significantly. The original call was based on projections made in December 2004. But new information, BC Hydro claimed, indicated that there could be a significant shortfall unless it acquired a much larger amount of energy, so the volume it purchased went up.

There are big problems with that rationale. One obvious question is whether it is appropriate to change the volume of energy after a tender call has gone out. But even if you put that one aside (and that's a big if), BC Hydro is still a Crown Corporation. When it embarks on a major policy shift, it should engage in widespread public consultation to ensure all options have been properly assessed. Given that the amount of private energy BC Hydro committed to purchase in July is so much larger than what was assumed by participants in its major stakeholder consultative process, the Integrated Electricity Planning (IEP) committee (of which this author was a member), only a few months earlier, such a major public discussion was fully warranted.

OPTIONS IGNORED

What's more, even if the forecasts changed, buying that much private energy was by no means the only option available to the government.

- It could use the downstream benefits energy from the Columbia River treaty instead of selling it in the US.
- It could stop private energy exports to ensure that energy produced in BC stayed in BC.
- It could expand energy conservation through PowerSmart.
- It could review the policy of providing heavily discounted public energy at \$37 per MWh to major industrial customers, a policy that dramatically reduces their incentive to conserve.
- And, it could let BC Hydro build its own new generation plants as it did in the past.

But the size of the tender is only half the story. Because even though BC Hydro is buying big, it isn't getting a bulk discount. When BC Hydro started work on the tender process in early 2005, energy was going for between \$50 and \$55 per MWh in the Pacific Northwest market. Previous tender calls, which restricted purchases to private power facilities located in BC, had resulted in prices in the \$56 to \$61 per MWh range -- still fairly high. But in the 2006 call, prices were up, way up.

According to BC Hydro, the average price over the term of the contracts -- at today's prices -- is \$87.50 per MWh delivered to the Lower Mainland. But that number doesn't accurately reflect what ratepayers will pay. For the contracts are inflation indexed. In actual dollars, prices will rise during the term of the contracts to \$124 per MWh by 2051.

LOCKED INTO DOUBLE THE MARKET PRICE

To put this price in context, BC Hydro told the BC Utilities Commission in 2004 that the cost of generating energy from its own BC Hydroelectric facilities was only \$5.43 per MWh. That cost reflected investments made in the 1960s and 1970s and would obviously be considerably higher today if BC Hydro were allowed to make new investments again. But it underscores how cheap

our public electricity is over the long term if we own the generation assets. And there's no reason it wouldn't be cheaper than private energy even in the short term.

During BC Hydro's Integrated Electricity Planning process, the Crown utility estimated the cost of energy from Site C (if it were built by BC Hydro) could be as low as \$42 per MWh. It could also provide almost as much power as called for in the 2006 tender. Alternatively, if BC Hydro were to build the same kind of small BC Hydro projects it is now purchasing much of its private energy from, it would benefit from lower borrowing costs and significant economies based on avoiding the expensive duplication inherent in projects built by numerous private developers. But such costing is precluded by the government's Energy Plan because BC Hydro is not permitted to build such projects at all.

To understand just how much BC Hydro is overpaying, it helps to examine some independent numbers. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), part of the U.S. Department of Energy, predicts that energy prices will be about \$50 per MWh at the BC border until 2018. Throughout this period, according to a table BC Hydro submitted to the BCUC on August 31, the indexed price to be paid under the BC Hydro contracts will average nearly \$100 per MWh, or approximately double the predicted market price. Moreover, even if we go further into the future -- where predictions become more and more problematic -- the estimates show that BC Hydro will still be paying far more than the projected market price for at least another decade.

Confer Consulting, another well respected energy forecaster, provides estimates of future electricity prices that are even lower than the EIA estimates. If these forecasts prove accurate, it means that BC ratepayers will be paying more than double the market price for the next two decades.

Given this information, it is hard to understand how locking BC Hydro into long-term contracts at such high prices is justifiable public policy. The one thing it will do is make a lot of private energy developers rich.

SECRET CONTRACTS

When BC Hydro built its own generation assets, British Columbians were ensured reasonable prices and a secure, self-sufficient supply of electricity. All that has been changed under the current Energy Plan. The contracts BC Hydro is signing give developers a guaranteed public revenue stream that they can use as collateral to finance their new power plants. That means BC ratepayers are effectively paying to finance them, like a tenant paying rent to cover the landlord's mortgage costs. Yet for all the money the public spends on these contracts, it gets no assets, no price protection once the contracts have expired and no guarantee that the energy they're paying for won't be exported in the future.

There is no "crisis" that would justify locking BC Hydro into such large future expenditures. Once the contracts have been signed, the public will be committed to buying the energy at the very high prices specified, regardless of whether changes in BC's economic position, lower projected demand in the coming years, or energy prices in the Pacific Northwest energy market -- as predicted -- continue to remain far below the contracted prices.

In light of the huge amounts of public money involved, ratepayers might expect that the BC Utilities Commission -- the agency mandated to protect the public interest -- would be holding major public hearings to ensure that all other options are fully examined before allowing BC Hydro to proceed. But instead, it has chosen to give its approval to the contracts. And, it has also ruled that, for reasons of "commercial confidentiality," the actual terms of the contracts will not be open to public disclosure.

However you look at it, \$15.6 billion in one tender call is a lot of money. And, at the very least, the huge sums now being committed should finally be generating a major public debate about the Government's energy policy.

John Calvert is a member of the board of Citizens For Public Power and an adjunct professor in the Department of Political Science at Simon Fraser University. The above article was also published on the internet at www.TheTjee.ca.



**FOR MORE PHOTOS VISIT
THE UNION'S WEBSITE AT
WWW.IBEW258.BC.CA**



Local 258 IBEW members attended the 50th convention of the BC Federation of Labour held in Vancouver in November, 2006. From left are Colin Kenney, Unit 3 Executive Board member; Doug McKay, Local 258 Business Manager; Klaus Kraft, Unit 1 Chair; Barry Bell, Unit 6 Chair; Tom Greenwell, Unit 4 Chair; Susan Longva, Assistant Business Manager; Tony Brand, Vice-President; Larry Byhre, Treasurer; Dan Giesbrecht, Assistant Business Manager and Michelle Laurie, President.



Congratulations to Brother Dalton Murray who recently retired as a PLT. Brother Murray worked in the Abbotsford Line Room and is shown above with his union brothers at his retirement gathering.



The New Westminster & District Labour Council celebrated its 40th anniversary in October, 2006, and IBEW members Susan Longva, right and Murray McDonald, center, were in attendance with union president Michelle Laurie (who took the above photo). They are shown with Bill Harper, City Councillor in New Westminster.

Unit 6 members attend their union meetings

Congratulations to the Local 258 members shown below who attended their Unit 6 membership meetings in 2006.



Brother Bob Abernethy is shown above on the left with Brother Dale Haines, both former Unit 6 Chairs. Brother Haines is the union's Recording Secretary.



LABOUR NEWS

BC Federation of Labour celebrates 50 years

As a thousand delegates travelled from all over British Columbia to attend the 50th convention of the BC Federation of Labour, a major snowstorm descended on the lower mainland in late November, 2006. But this didn't stop the committed labour activists from almost every union in the province from getting down to the business of the convention by helping set the path for the future of BC's labour movement.

Five days of business featured a number of important resolutions and officer elections. Jim Sinclair and Angie Schira were returned to another two year term as President and Secretary-Treasurer respectively.



Sister Michelle Laurie took the opportunity at the convention to address issues concerning the need to fight the privatization of BC Hydro and also spoke to delegates about ensuring that tradespeople take back control of trades training in BC.

Local 258 president Michelle Laurie continues as an Executive Officer of the Fed, representing membership interests of the union. Business Manager Doug McKay sat on the Resolutions Committee at the convention with Brother Dan Giesbrecht serving on the Balloting Committee and Brother Tom Greenwell serving as a Sargeant-at-Arms.

A protest rally was held to address the raw log export crisis in BC that is negatively impacting thousands of jobs in this province's forest industry. Hundreds of loud and vocal delegates stood in front of the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre where they listened to Fed president Sinclair, among others, demand the Campbell Liberal government take immediate action to deal effectively with this crisis.

Delegates at the convention also resolved to continue the annual convention format and defeated the resolution to alter the convention to a biannual event. 🇺🇸



IBEW 258 convention delegates were at the rally to protest the export of raw logs. From left above, Brother Larry Byhre; Brother Dan Giesbrecht; Sister Michelle Laurie; Brother Klaus Kraft; Brother Barry Bell; Sister Susan Longva; Brother Tony Brand.



Convention delegates had the opportunity to hear support for their issues from political and labour leaders. From top, Jack Layton, Federal NDP Leader; MP Libby Davies, NDP Labour Critic; Carole James, BC NDP Leader and Brother Ken Georgetti, Canadian Labour Congress President.



Local 258 IBEW delegates attending the 50th convention of the BC Federation of Labour.

Well, as I write this, I am looking out on a scene I haven't seen much since moving to the lower mainland – there is a foot of snow in my back yard, and the sun is shining in below zero weather. Personally, I love this kind of weather, but it has come on the heels of some violent storms in the north and south west of the province. Our brothers and sisters repairing the damage of those storms have been working long, hard hours in some nasty conditions. Thanks to all of you for staying safe, and for looking out for each other in difficult conditions. We all know the public appreciates it when you get their lights back on, but we also know how much more important it is that you get home safely when the job is done.

The past few months we've seen the public discussion about climate change ramp up dramatically. The right wing Conservative federal government introduced environmental legislation that was so watered down as to have no real impact. The people of Canada spoke out against the weak-kneed attempt, and now we see Mr. Harper running around the country talking about green energy and conservation. Earlier this year, he was in our province, touting incentives for alternative forms of electricity generation, specifically talking about some under-water turbines around the Race Rocks area.

The debate about what forms of electricity generation are truly the best will continue for many years, as none are without some impact on the environment and it is a matter of deciding which create the most efficient usage. What truly concerns me, though, is the government's response of offering monetary incentives to private companies to produce green energy. The carrot of cash simply confirms that the main driver for these private companies is profit. That means as the demand for electricity goes up, the ability to hold us ransom for greater profits will also rise – never forget the lessons of California in the nineties.

Electricity isn't something we just want – it is something we need. We pay our taxes so that we have governments to ensure that our society has the things we need, like education, medical care, roads, water and electricity. It is irresponsible of the government to hand those critical social needs over to the private sector – a sector that must survive on profit. What voter has said that “yes” someone should make a profit of our social needs? Not to mention loss of control of supply when electricity generation is owned privately. So, if California or Alberta are willing to pay a few dollars more for power produced here, should BC ratepayers, owners of the resources creating that generation, pay higher prices to a private company that plays the market to its best advantage? I'm very proud to know that our members, at least, are prepared to fight this insidious sell-off of our public utility, and have again committed to support BC Citizens for Public Power in its fight to ensure that all voters are truly aware of the issues.

This issue of the Hotline has looked at many aspects of our communities, and on that note, I also wish to congratulate the entire staff at your Local Union offices in Burnaby – they have again stepped up to the plate and this year received an Award of Excel-

From the Back Corner

Report from
Michelle Laurie,
President, Local 258 IBEW



lence from the United Way for 10 continuous years of giving at a leadership level. Our brothers and management staff at Allteck Powerlines had their first United Way campaign this year, and I want to personally thank each of the employees and the company for the very generous contributions that were made. Your communities will be helped by your thoughtfulness, and you prove that we truly do desire for all what we wish for ourselves! ☑




*THE UNION
OF HEARTS AND MINDS*



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