



# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## IBEW Settles Construction Memorandum

After a year and a quarter of meetings and six (6) legal challenges at the BC Labour relations Board, I am pleased to announce the IBEW in the Province have signed a Memorandum of Agreement which, I believe, is worth taking back to the members for ratification. The deal includes an \$8.00 increase over the next five years, including increases of another 5% for our servicemen and "B" Foremen and another 8% for "A" Foremen and 13% for General Foremen. It also includes improved protection for our shop stewards and increases to our living out allowance (LOA). In return, we have hard changed the sunset provisions in the Agreement that we have been working under for the past 14 years; the obvious reality was we would renew them again for the length of the Agreement. This would have amounted to almost 2 decades as "sunsets". In my mind this was simply an unreal condition to keep our members in. We have come a long way over the past decade in recovering our market share; if we work hard and organize our non-union competition over the coming 5 years we can negotiate some these "sunsets" back hard into the Agreement. Until then we can bank on the significant wage package increases we were able to negotiate in this round of bargaining.

Although we have a Memorandum of Settlement, we will have to wait for a majority of the Trades to settle their trade negotiations prior to going back to the main table to settle the balance of the issues that effect ALL Union Building Trades and the Industrial provisions. Until then, along with the other three (3) IBEW Business Managers in the Province, we have decided to "enable" the memorandum into place and thus as of August 7th, the new Journeyman rate is \$27.44 per hour. The memorandum calls for raises in each of the five years, along with other changes we will be bringing to the membership to vote upon when the Main Table concludes.

Over twenty to twenty-five years ago we saw much of our work taken away by the non-union contractors. Many of them were IBEW [Brewis, Edwards, Trilec (Bridge) etc.] and most that remain were started up by IBEW members like Henneberry, Apple and Den-Mar. This trend has been changing for some time thanks to programs like market recovery. The IBEW on Vancouver Island is back as the major player in the Commercial and Institutional markets, but our non-union competition is still paying a fraction of the wages and non-existent benefits we have demanded from our Union Contractors. Many of you have friends working in the non-union sector and I am asking all of you to pass on the message to them that if they don't want to join us, they should be asking their employers for their raise as well! They need a raise and we have set the bar again and increased the competitive gap between ourselves and the non-union. We have to narrow it so our contractors can continue to win work with consideration of the increases coming. Remember, when our contractors win work, we go to work.



Brothers R. Farnsworth & K. Coppinger install fluorescent fixture strips.



Brother I. Logan foreman at University of Victoria, Engineering and Computer Sciences Building.

## Summer 2005

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November 19th, 2005

### Get Out And Vote On Your Local Issues!

# Business Managers Report



**Philip M. Venoit - Business Manager/  
Financial Secretary**

Firstly, I would like to thank those who participated in **our recent Local Union Elections**. Congratulations to those who were successful and best wishes to those who were not. The membership has democratically decided to install Brothers Neil Banman as President, Dave Lambert as Vice-President, Pat Baxter as Recording Secretary and Bob Lacquement as Treasurer; these are your Table Officers and I will be returning as your Business Manager/ Financial Secretary. On behalf of the entire Local I hope together we can really begin to move forward. **This is going to be a very challenging 3 years;** with the construction market experiencing a boom and how the business office can facilitate the success of our construction contractors in expanding our

market share of the work, essentially keeping our members working, putting them back to work and organizing those currently working in our jurisdiction in the non-union sector. The Province currently has \$70 Billion in construction work on the books and to put things in perspective, the Olympics will account for almost a half-billion dollars; a drop in the bucket compared to all the other projects. Over the past month over 20 million electrical was tendered in the mid-island area alone.

**I have hired Brother Robert Arndt as Business Representative** with his main focus on Organizing and to service the mid and north Island areas. His service groups will include Campbell River TV, Westburne Wholesale, the Motor Winding Shops, E&N Railway and he will also be visiting larger construction jobs. He will begin receiving Organizing Training later in September and will be employing our strategic organizing plan early this fall. Again, I would like to thank those who showed their interest in the Business Representative position.

After three years of working out of a very small office in Victoria, **we are finally set to move**. When we originally moved our office back to the Victoria area, we reduced our staff down to three (3) to bring our finances back in order. We have now brought our staffing levels back up to four (4) full-time and one (1) part-time to properly service our jurisdiction so on some days we have five (5)

people sharing approximately 300 square feet with filing cabinets and desks which has become an obvious dysfunctional situation. Unfortunately, we are not quite prepared to buy an office at this point in time, so we are relocating to our new Langford location. Many of our members live in the West Shore area so please send all correspondence and dues to our new location.

Unfortunately the TWU is still locked out so we may have some technical difficulties, and possibly only have 2 incoming phone lines, so if you call in and receive a busy signal please exercise some patience until we get settled in. For those of you with internet access you can also contact us via email, and you can find all of our personal e-mail addresses located on the "Contact Us" page on our website at [www.ibew230.org](http://www.ibew230.org).

We recently reviewed where our members live around Vancouver Island and here are the results:

- Victoria area – 517
- Duncan area – 31
- Nanaimo area – 137
- Pt. Alberni area – 78
- Court./ Camp. Area – 108
- Other areas – 28

Although these numbers will change, history dictates on a percentage basis these numbers will stay fairly relevant into the future.

**As of October 1st we will  
be moved!**

**#204 - 2780  
Millstream Road  
Victoria, B.C.  
V9B 3S6**

**Remember to pay your dues to the  
Victoria office only:**

## Brother Bill Dickie Retires



Our members in the Marine Section put on a great retirement party for Brother Bill Dickie, where we had the opportunity to present him with his 45 year pin, a special thanks to Brothers G. Woodcock and H. Owen for putting this event together.

# Financial Secretary's Overview

Over the past quarter as Trustee to the IBEW Group Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) some startling news was revealed. Many of our members have not embraced the Plan; either they are not directing their monies or worse yet, they are not even enrolling in the Plan. This problem appears to be worse with our younger members. In the past, we have tried to have the members meet with our financial administrators with very little attendance. You all must remember, this plan was set up so the members could direct their own funds. The only alternative I can suggest is polling the members to see if there is some interest in directing at least some of our RRSP's back into a traditional Pension Plan; perhaps a vehicle like Concert Properties which benefits us directly through good returns on our investments and indirectly by employing our members when they build on Vancouver Island. RRSP's can be inferior, risky and insecure especially if they are not properly directed. I will be researching this option on a going forward basis and will be reporting on this possibility in the near future. If it seems like a good alternative, I will, at that time, send it out to our members on a Collective Agreement basis and the members working under each Collective Agreement will be voting individually. Until then, as Trustees, we have moved the default position for those who have not directed their RRSP's from a money lending account earning minimum interest to a conservative fund allocation.



Congratulations to Blaise McDonald for putting another stellar softball Team together coming in second place in the "B" Division.



IBEW Tournament of Hope Softball Team won 2nd place standing, and donated their winnings to Victoria Child Find.

## Sector Report

**Appliance Repair** – CAMCO, Manufacturers, Marketers and Services of GE, Hotpoint, Samsung and BeefEater Appliances has entered into a Support Agreement with Mabe, a Mexican company, and a leader in the Latin American appliance market. This takeover bid should not affect us as we are in the service and supply end for these products, and Mabe is a major supplier to the U.S. and Canadian markets through their relationship with G.E.

**Cablevision** – We have settled a couple of grievances for outside contractors performing bargaining unit work on the CRTV Tower and for hiring a non-approved marketing firm.

We are also currently working on a definition for a new classification of IT Worker.

**Residential Construction** – Canem has picked up the Parkside Condo in Victoria, Houle has picked up the Ironwood Place in Campbell River.

**Commercial Construction** – Emery Electric picked up the rebuild of Victor Brodeur School, U-Vic Field Hockey; Canem Systems won the Ladysmith Rec. Centre, The Home Sense, The Dominion Astrophysical Observatory; Houle Electric has won the Can-West Mall expansion, The Brick furniture store, Kidney Centre & Rona Store in Victoria, Port Alberni RCMP Detachment, North Cedar Fire hall, Inland Kenworth, and the NRGH prenatal addition, Malispina University; F&MI won the Victoria Airport Runway Lighting,

**Industrial Construction** – Vicar Electric is just wrapping up a number of smaller jobs like the Kraft Mill hot water system up in Elk Falls with 16 guys, and Aines & Tyler is wrapping up a power

line extension at the Somas Mill, and is optimistic with work coming out of the Pulp Mill.

**Federal Government Dockyard** – The Business Manager's affiliated to the Federal Government and Dockyard Trades and Labour Council have met with Captain Reuben the new C.O. to discuss Broader Employability, this is the Captain's mandate and we will have a short period to capitalize on this mandate through a compensation review and re-classification to negotiate an increase for our members during the closed period of the Agreement.

**Motor Winders** – Beaver Machinery is just finishing off their new shop in the Nanoose area, while Duncan Electric is slow for the summer.

**Municipal Government** – We have been working with the City's HR Department trying to clear up a long standing practice of paying our members on rest after a callout.

**Private Marine** – In the Marine Section Victoria Shipyards has recently been awarded the mothball contract on the Huron.

The Search and Rescue vessels constructed for the Coast Guard has come to an end these vessels have received nothing but the highest of praise by the Federal Government and the Coast Guard; they came in on budget and 14 months early. This sort of track record has secured more work with the Orca program beginning this summer and I believe it will lead into even more work into the immediate future. Vic Ship has also been awarded the design contract for the Joint Supply Ships; this is but the first step to seeing these 3 vessels built in BC.

The troubles continue at CME with no work, and



Brother D. Nanos prepares Astoria for the slab.

owed approximately \$250,000 for work completed at the new Victoria Arena by RG Properties, our understanding is the Machinists and Labourers Union have had little success in negotiating a standard agreement with CME and we will see where we go next.

**Provincial Health Care** – The Affiliated Unions which make up the Facilities Bargaining Association are currently putting their bargaining proposals together for the next round in collective bargaining, yes it seems just like yesterday the Hospitals around the Province were all out on strike, and six (6) months from now we may likely be revisiting that scene.

**Railway** – The proposed buy-out of the E&N Railway appears to be held up at this time by the Provincial Government's tax exemption or lack thereof.

**Wholesale** – Just a reminder to those up Island Servicemen, please remember to use Westburne Wholesale whenever possible, in support of our members in the Nanaimo and Port Alberni locations.

# Dispatch and Training

Our dispatch has been very busy lately and I would like remind everyone, if you have not told us whether you're willing to travel off of Vancouver Island, you will no longer be called for work outside of our area. It is your responsibility to check to **make sure you have the letter "T" for Travel beside your name on the Dispatch List.**

Our Lobbying efforts have finally paid off in terms of receiving travel assistance outside of the Province and more specifically to the Tar Sands in northern Alberta. **Any of our members going to Syncrude will receive up to \$550 for their initial travel to the job.** You will need to keep all of your receipts and produce them for the contractor you are going to work for but this is good news for our members willing to travel.

Apprentices will also be seeing some minor changes in the way we account for their hours. **The Industry Training Authority has directed us to establish** a 6,000 hour on the job training component, along with all four (4) levels of schooling. The old system accounted for a 7,200 hour apprenticeship inclusive of schooling, so we will simply be adjusting each school year to 300 hours and this will allow us to conform to the new system without any bumps in the road.

On another note, we are attempting to find ways to get any late term apprentices who had finished all four (4) years of schooling out to the Alberta Tar Sands if they are interested.

And one further note, **the Inter-provincial exams are currently being re-written** with the intent to make the language "less complex". I believe this HRSDC mandate is coming prior to a large increase of foreign construction workers coming to Canada which should require them to write the exam shortly after they begin work. It should also help some of our members who end up in the 65-69 percentiles on the exam. We will obviously have to stay vigilant on this issue as it unfolds before us. The I.P. will have to be upheld as there are thousands of Canadians restricted from working across provincial borders. We can only imagine the law suits coming forward from a loss of past employment if a double standard is created on this issue.

The Western JETS held our Annual General Meeting and after review of all our apprentices in the Province and we are pleased to announce the **Golden Pliers Award for last year** went to Al Rintoul from Parksville. Great job Al!

We can also all be proud and offer our congratulations to Brothers Jonathan Leneveu



2004 Golden Pliers Award winner was Al Rintoul flanked by BM Phil Venoit, and Western JETS Chairman Lew Williams.

and Aaron Emery for receiving **Awards of Excellence at this years' Camosun College Awards Night.**

**Upcoming courses for this fall** will include Nordex, CAT 6 and Field Service Rep courses along with other courses the members have requested. If you are interested in these or other courses email us at [dispatch@ibew230.org](mailto:dispatch@ibew230.org).

Congratulations also go out to this year's Ron Callaghan scholarship winners Elaine O'Neil and Dustin Meredith. Best wishes to them in their future studies.

## IBEW Members Lost in Bus Accident

It's with a heavy heart that we report a horrific accident that took place May 20, 2005.

The accident occurred while buses were returning from work in the Fort McMurray area. Approximately 45 minutes from Edmonton, a bus carrying 23 IBEW members as well as members from other Building Trades Unions was involved. The traffic had been stopped for a period of time due to another accident up the highway. Many vehicles had turned around and proceeded on another route to avert the roadblock. After a long ten-day work schedule at Syncrude and while watching their long weekend grow shorter, many of the members grew impatient. Some encouraged the bus driver to do as other vehicles had done and turn the bus around. The bus driver, with the assistance of someone providing signals and someone else watching the bus progress, attempted to turn around on the narrow highway. When the bus wheels went onto the grass it became stuck 90 degrees to the roadway, blocking southbound traffic. An RCMP cruiser arrived and used its lights to warn oncoming traffic however, for whatever reason, the cruiser left the scene while the bus was still awaiting help. Shortly after the RCMP left, a southbound semi truck came down on the bus and failed to stop. At the time of the impact, people were also outside the bus and didn't know the truck was approaching. When the collision occurred, people were thrown out of the bus while others came in through the bus windows.

Over one hundred rescue personnel responded to the accident and acted quickly to assist the injured. We are all thankful for their prompt and professional response. Many of the members were treated and released that same night.

Unfortunately, IBEW Local Union 424 members Steve Batherson, Andrew Daszuta, Hugh (Dallas Thrust) Kiernan and Steve Wallis Jr. did not survive this terrible accident and will be sorely missed by all. Two other Building Trades members also did not survive. Brother Wallis's home Local was 230 and he was from a proud IBEW family with his father and brother both members of Local 230. As well, two of our brothers are still in hospital receiving care. Brother McCulloch from Local 424 suffered a broken hip, broken ribs and punctured lung but is recovering with his lung working well and his hip repaired. Brother Parks from Local 2166 suffered a severe leg injury and was recently reported to be suffering from pneumonia. We wish them a speedy and full recovery.

The contractors as well as both Syncrude and Suncor have been very responsive and helpful with grief and trauma counselors available to all workers upon their first day back following the long weekend. In addition, Local 424 has made counselors available to all members and their families.

Our heartfelt sympathy and condolences go out to all those affected by this terrible accident.