



# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter Since 1902



## IBEW Local Union 1 Opens Henry Miller Museum

Henry Miller, considered to be the father of the IBEW, along with nine other Linemen realized there needed to be a National body of Electrical Workers to have any clout when it came to making our job's safer and to develop a process for training, or an apprenticeship. They founded our Union in a small boarding house in the west end of St. Louis which is the home of the IBEW's first local union. Local One found it for sale a couple of years ago and decided not only did it make great sense to preserve the historical building, they couldn't pass it up. They soon developed a plan and began renovating it back to better than its former self with the use of as much original materials and structure they could to preserve its original historical integrity. The outside has a park feeling, with paving stones bought for by many local unions, and with ten mock power poles representing each of the ten original Charter Members. The inside is devoted to telling the story of the IBEW and its original Leaders through the very early years of those brave enough to stand together. In a fitting copper wire "ribbon cutting" ceremony International President and the 11 Vice-Presidents opened the Museum on Thursday prior to the IBEW Convention with hundreds of members from the United States and Canada in attendance. The Local 230 contingent delegates all found time throughout the Convention week to walk through and take in an incredible historical testament to our IBEW Legacy.



## Convention Newsletter

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## News & Notes

Christmas Closure: Local 230  
Office is closed Dec. 23rd 5:00 PM  
Re-opening Jan. 3rd 8:30 AM

IBEW Construction Organizing  
COMET Courses Victoria Feb. 24th  
& 25th in Nanaimo. Call Jen or Nicole  
to register.

Local 230 now takes Debit in the  
Office.

Local 230 is working towards putting  
on a Youth Conference, if you are a  
member under 35 years old and  
would like to participate call Jen or  
Nicole to register.



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# Report of the Law Committee

The Law Committee is formed for the purpose to consider any proposals seeking to change the IBEW Constitution, and develop a position on the proposed change. From time to time, they use accountants, actuaries, lawyers and other professionals to help them with their decision to concur or not, prior to reporting to the Convention Delegates. The Convention Delegates agreed with all of the Law Committee's recommendations on whether to accept or reject the changes as described below. These described changes are simply a summary in layman's terms, if a member is seeking clarification of the changes to the IBEW Constitution at the 39th Convention, please read the changes in the new Constitution when they become available.

The first three proposals had a focus of clarifying eligibility and representation at IBEW International Conventions. Article 2, Section 7; requires every local union to be paid up their per capita dues for the month of August, and that the International Office does not require that dues be paid until the 10th of each month it becomes a little constrained to determine local union eligibility as the registration can literally begin prior to the 10th of September which could change a local union's number of allowable delegates, so the amendment proposed to move the qualifying month from August to July.

Article 2, Section 8; provides that the month of May is used to determine the number of Delegates to the Convention, and this can also create some uncertainty in a local union knowing how many delegates are to be elected. The change is to look at the previous 12 months of dues paying members in good standing from March, to March of the year of the Convention, to determine an average number of local union members with certainty, going into local union delegate elections for International Convention. Article 2, Section 10; will allow the International President to grant special dispensation to a local union to allow an election regardless if it was impractical or impossible to hold an election as they do not

qualify under the two year eligibility rules. For example, if a merger between two local unions took place within under two years of a convention, the members merging into the new local union would not be eligible under the current requirements.

Article 4, Section 2; proposed to provide the International President the powers to remove an International Executive Council member for incompetence, disability, or non-performance of their duties. Article 4, Section 3(i); proposes to address some ambiguities and to clarify that a Trusteeship of a local union can be imposed prior to conducting a hearing if, in the judgement of the International President believes the

our members when they reach the end of their work life, with many of our members reaching retirement age over the next five years the Fund will need the injection of revenue to continue to support IBEW members into their retirement. Essentially, it moves a small amount of money and gives it back to us when we will likely need it more, in our later years. Article 14, Section 7, renumbered as 7(a), with new sections (b) and (c); proposed new rules for Railway System Councils concerning negotiations, and their implementation. (We don't have a Railway System Council on the Island), the Law Committee did Not Concur with this proposed change. Article 16, Section

10; clarifies that all officers of a local union must remain in good standing throughout their term of office as well as the two years immediately prior to the election for office. Article 16, Section 11; proposed to allow local union retirees to act as election judges or tellers, this was a Constitutional change at the previous Convention and was done in recognition that the U.S. Department of Labor guidelines state that only members of a local union may participate in the business of the local union. The Committee did Not Concur with this proposed amendment. Article 16, Section 11; proposed that only members of a local union in good standing may act as

election judges, tellers, or observers to an election. Article 17, Section 11 and 12; proposed to provide some direction in the event a trial board member finds themselves previously involved in a case, thereby in a direct conflict with hearing a case unbiased, or at the very least with a perception of bias, and therefore requiring them to recuse themselves. Article 25, Section 16; proposed to clarify the rights of a charged party to appealing decisions only of a local union trial board if the charged party has been penalized or disciplined, it has never been the intention that a member may appeal each decision at each level of appeal, they would be appealing the original decision.



Local 230 Delegation L-R President Greg Gyorf, Treasurer Cheryl Arseniuk, Representative Shane Scott, Business Manager Phil Venoit, Marine Unit Chairman Raj Takhar, Youth Delegate Jackie Oliver.

circumstances warrant immediate action, and that the International Executive Council may decide, if the Trusteeship should continue after a hearing within six months. Article 9, Section 2; proposed to increase our per capita dues by \$1.00 beginning January 1, 2018, and a second \$1.00 on January 1, 2020. The IBEW dues rate continues to be less than most of the International Unions, with better levels of service and an emphasis on organizing and education. Article 9 Section 6; proposed an increase to our pension benefit fund (PBF) of \$3.00 over the next five years, \$2.00 January 1, 2017, and the third \$1.00 January 1, 2019. The PBF provides for a modest retirement cheque for

# Report of the Resolutions Committee



When we draw a strong position in favour or in opposition to something, many of our local unions will draft resolutions with the purpose to have the entire Brotherhood endorse that position, and thereby solidify our resolve on the position. We do that, as one of our primary functions at our International Convention every five years. The Resolution Committee met in August at the International Office to begin discussing and deliberating on each of the 52 resolutions sent to the International to be vetted by the Committee, consider the merits of the resolution, and derive an opinion on whether we concur or do not, along with our reasons why. We merged similar resolutions to combine their interests, and/or re-wrote sections of resolutions then offered them as substitute resolutions to remain constitutionally correct, then, sent them on to the floor of the Convention in September. International President Stephenson appoints the Committee members from each of the 11 IBEW Districts, and I was appointed as District 1, or Canada's Representative.

I couldn't begin to give these resolutions justice in content on 1 page when it took 50 in their original form. So, a very condensed version goes like this; we re-committed ourselves to several programs that have continued to serve the union well such as; Code of Excellence, Organizing, Business Development, Union Sportsmen's Alliance, National Safety Council & IBEW Safety Caucus, the Pension and Health & Welfare Reciprocity System, the National Training Institute, IBEW Hour Power, Helmets to Hardhats & Veterans Electrical Entry Program, New Member Orientation, Local Union Women's Committees, March of Dimes, ALS Awareness, Local Union RENEW and NexGen Committees, and Project Tracker to name a few. We combined two resolutions to develop a public education program focused on the value of public sector workers, several motions to help in electing

political friends with Grassroots Tools and Funding, a number of resolutions supported a stronger Diversity within the IBEW, Radio Frequency Radiation and Skin Cancer Awareness, several utility resolutions in support of Nuclear Energy, Advanced Coal Technology and Baseload Generating Stations, as well as the development of a Tree Trimming Coordination Council and a closer look at a possible merger of the Utility Union of America, a 50,000 member union who perform the same work as our Utility members, growing our Union and theirs would result in a stronger IBEW and Utility Branch, a call to market our local unions and to Buy IBEW, as well as investing our pensions in union friendly real estate development such as INDURE, a Concert Properties style development firm who provide a strong return on our investments as well providing good union jobs for

our construction members, there was a motion for our International Secretary-Treasurer to research the possibility for an electronic warrant system, re-establish the Injury and Fatality reporting system, with a look at an industrial illness section as well, there was continued support for Davis-Bacon a form of Fair Wage throughout the U.S., to fight for a Discrimination free workplace, North American Call Centres, and Electrical Workers Without Borders, a Not-for-Profit



organization within the IBEW being set-up to help move our members to countries that have undergone natural disaster, and to provide them with necessary heat, light, power, communications and clean water in aid to a quicker recovery. As usual, it was an incredible honour to sit with Business Managers, all stellar leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences within our great organization to consider these resolutions, develop statements to help guide the Convention Delegates with their own resolve, and present them for discussion and debate on the floor. It was also personally satisfying to know that the Delegates agreed with the Resolutions Committee on every Resolution presented to the Delegates.

# IBEW Delegates Elect a Great Experienced Leadership Team

International President Lonnie Stephenson was unanimously elected at our 39th IBEW Convention in September. Lonnie was appointed by past President Ed Hill. President Stephenson comes with a great deal of experience as the Vice-President of the 6th District, and Business Manager of his home Local 145 in Illinois. President Stephenson strongly supports IBEW initiatives like our Code of Excellence program and Membership Development in organizing.

*"Unless we double-down on our commitment to organizing, unless we commit even more resources and time, all our gains we've made will be gone sooner than you think. When you're on the right road, that's not the time to put on the brakes."*

International Secretary-Treasurer Sam Chilia was unanimously re-elected as well, from Local 38 Cleveland Ohio,

*"We stand on a powerful foundation. We enjoy a rich and inspiring history, and now it's in our hands. With bright days ahead, I'm excited about the future of this Union"*

International Executive Council Chairman Chris Erickson was also unanimously elected, the current sitting Local 3 Business Manager from New York City said,

*"there is no greater honour than to be elected by your peers to represent them, you have a responsibility to act on their behalf with integrity and with the resolve that the decisions that you make are in their best interests."*



## Appeals Committee

When a member is charged under the Constitution, local union bylaws, policy manual or collective agreement, and found guilty, members have rights to an appeal, first from the International Vice-President, then by the International President, then by the Appeal Committee who then rules and presents the reasons why the Appeal should be upheld or over-turned finally to the Convention floor of the following International Convention. All costs of attending the Convention are those of the charged member.

This Convention saw only one appeal to the Convention Delegates, one member from Toronto, Ontario who showed up to a Special Called Meeting in 2013, to which he was not invited and had no purpose in attending, and when asked to leave by the Chair of the Meeting, he refused while causing a disturbance. The local police were called in and the member was removed. The member was suspended from attending any local union meetings for a period of time as well as fined four thousand dollars (\$4,000), the monetary fine was overturned by the Vice-President, but the suspension from meetings was upheld and moved through the appeal process. Even though the suspension of time had ran out, the member still felt it important in some way to continue the appeal to the Convention floor and Delegates. The Delegates found the member's disturbing behaviour that day unbecoming of a member, and agreed he had no reason to attend the Special Called Meeting to discuss contract negotiations he had never worked under, and had to interest in working under, the Convention Delegates rightfully voted overwhelmingly to uphold the suspension.

## Global Ties that Bind

Our International Union represents members in the United States and Canada; however we also represent workers in Puerto Rico, Guam, Saipan and Panama. We are also constantly improving our relationships with our electrical unions throughout the world, whether that is through the U.K. Joint Industry Board (JIB) of Unite, the Electrical Trades Union of Australia (ETU), and others. This year we were joined by Paddy Kavanagh, General Secretary of the Technical Engineering and Electrical Union of Ireland, with words of continued solidarity,

*"By and large the problems faced by the IBEW in the U.S. and Canada are similar to the issues we face in Ireland. The question we must ask ourselves is how we can meet these challenges as modern, innovative and organized trade unions."*

We were also joined by Carlo DeMasi, Secretary-General of the Italian Federation of Utility Workers, who brought a message of Brotherhood to the Convention.

*"The IBEW and the FLAEI (Italy's Electrical Workers Union) represent an important part of the workforce, that being electrical power, which has always represented the symbol of light. Light that takes darkness away from our homes, our streets, and our cities."*

He further congratulated us on the development of the Electrical Workers Without Borders, an international group also bringing together unions in France, Germany, Italy and Spain, along with the U.S. and Canada to help countries recover from natural disaster. These comments were especially gratifying to me, as I was asked to head up this initiative on behalf of the IBEW in Canada earlier this year. The Corporate world has truly gone global, and it is time our Union moves in that direction as well.