

THE UNION OF HEARTS AND MINDS

HOTLINE



Local 258 I.B.E.W.
WINTER 2003



IBEW Local 258 members Dale Fulton and Terry Price, Linemen with BC Hydro who recently donated their time to put up Christmas lights in the Town of Ladysmith on Vancouver Island.

IBEW 258 Members Donating Their Time

Business Manager, Doug McKay



I would like to send out my best wishes for a great holiday season and Happy New Year to all our membership.

A person's word isn't what it used to be. In past times, a signed document wasn't necessary to finalize an agreement. A person's spoken word, sealed



Local 258 IBEW 258 Business Manager Doug McKay at this year's BC Federation of Labour Policy & Resolution convention.

by a handshake, was his or her bond. And the deal was honoured on the basis of the person's honour.

Sadly in today's world, spoken words and handshakes mean little, especially if they are being delivered by a politician. I use the term "politician" loosely because lots of employers handle themselves like politicians, failing to keep their word and refusing to honour signed contracts with their unions.

Self interest is often a plague on management. With various performance targets and goals, some managers are more focused on their own bonuses than in maintaining the integrity of the system. They could take a lesson from our bargaining unit members. It is often our union brothers and sisters who know the value of honour, and the value of loyalty.

On a day-to-day basis, our members uphold their end of the employment bargain. They provide an honest day's work and expect to have their jobs secured for them in return. It is something other than honour that inspires some employers to contract out bargaining unit work, or erode employee morale through hit-and-miss practices and procedures.

Employers sometimes try to infect the membership with their style of

doing business. It won't work. Transforming our members, especially those in the Line trades, is like trying to put "lipstick on a bulldog." All you get in the end is smeared cosmetics and an ugly, angry bulldog. If transformations are required, management could learn the old fashioned meaning of honour from our membership. A deal is a deal.

Union leaders and members have a line to tow as well. We are prepared to tow it and that includes keeping watch over the collective agreement and the collective interests of the bargaining unit. We live by the principles we defend.

Warriors used to say, live by the sword and die by the sword. We've evolved beyond those tribal ways, but the principles are the same. If we have honour, we will treat others with the honour they deserve. Our membership will set the standard for employers to follow.

Please work and play safe! ☑

HOTLINE

Published by Local 258 IBEW

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Call for submissions

IBEW Local 258 Tom Forkin Student Scholarship

In 1991, Local 258 created a scholarship essay contest for post-secondary students who are members or dependants of members. The Scholarship is in memory of our first Local President, Brother Tom Forkin, and will be granted in the form of up to three individual awards for \$1,000.00 each.

This year's essay topic will be: "Canada's Public Health Care System". The essay should address the history of the formation of our public health care system, including what motivated such action, where it started, and how it developed into a national plan. In addition, the essay should discuss changes to the plan over the years, with a look at what is happening today (with a focus on BC), including threats to and strengths of the system, along with a brief discussion of current trends in healthcare in Canada. Finally, the applicant can provide a brief subjective section on what changes they feel should occur (if any) and what the future may hold for our public health care system.

To be eligible, applicants must be registered, or plan to register in a full-time post-secondary program at a BC educational institution. Special consideration may be given to applicants who are attending or planning to attend a post-secondary institution outside of BC, if the program they will be attending is not available in BC. 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

If submissions are being made by conventional mail, they must be typed, and we would appreciate a copy of the submission on a CD or 35" disc as well, in a format compatible with MS Office Word for Windows (PC). Alternatively, submissions can be sent via e-mail to ibew258@telus.net and MUST include the words "Tom Forkin Scholarship" in the subject line.

All submissions must be received by 4:00 pm on April 16, 2004. The Executive Board shall assess all submissions, and will make a final and unalterable decision by May 17, 2004. Successful applicants will be notified immediately, but the scholarship funds will not be released until proof of enrolment is provided. ☒



Brother Tom Forkin
First President of Local 258 IBEW

IBEW Local 258 Members donate their time

The Town of Ladysmith on Vancouver Island is a brighter and more colourful community tonight as a result of the volunteer efforts of members of IBEW Local 258.

Linmen Dale Fulton, Terry Price and Apprentice Lineman Dan Flynn are shown in the accompanying photos as they “light up the town” in anticipation of this year’s Christmas Season.

Many thanks to Town Councillor Duck Paterson who shows his appreciation in the photo, bottom right next page.

IBEW members have been kept busy this fall season with the numerous wind storms necessitating long and dangerous hours of work. We congratulate their efforts to make their communities a better place for the people of British Columbia.

Thanks goes to BC Hydro as well for their participation.





*Happy
Holidays from
IBEW Local
258 Officers
and Staff!
May the
New Year
bring you
health,
happiness and
prosperity.*



We Got Mail!



Dear IBEW Local 258,
The Prince George Branch of the BC Hydro Power Pioneers wish to thank you for your generous donation of t-shirts for our Jamboree 2003. It was a great success and your gift was greatly appreciated.
Carmen Foucher & Shirley Gratton,
Co-Chairs, Jamboree Committee



Dear Brothers and Sisters;
Thank you for remembering me with the Fifty-Five Year pin and plaque. I really appreciated the get together with the boys, though some could not attend due to storm trouble.

I am sorry that due to my health, I could not attend the luncheon in Victoria as I was looking forward to it.

Thank you again for all your efforts and thoughtfulness.

Yours truly
Joe Rozzano,
Salt Spring Island



Dear IBEW 258,
Thanking you all who came to my retirement party and for the gifts. I had an interesting job and lots of fun over the years and met many great friends. Keep in touch.
Thanks again,
Tom Murray

Dear IBEW Local 258, Friend of the YMCA;
The YMCA of Greater Vancouver has countless stories to share about building strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Thanks to your generosity and vision, we have one more story to share: the story of our newest YMCA, which celebrated one year of operation on September 14, 2003, and is now serving the community. On behalf of the board of directors, staff, volunteers, and most importantly, the thousands of families who will use the YMCA each year.

We thank you for your generous support. Please be advised that we have received payment from the United Way of \$6750 to the YMCA's Building Strong Communities Capital Campaign.

Again, thank you for your pledge payment to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Your commitment will make a difference to the hundreds of children, families and individuals served every day by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

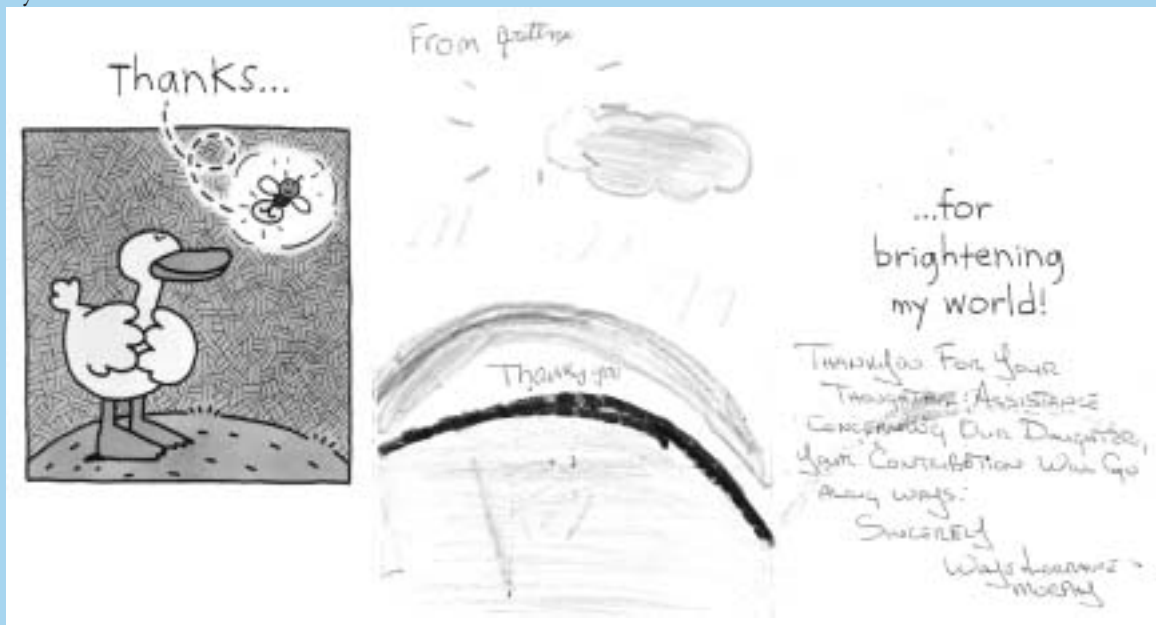
Yours sincerely
Ken Waterman
VP Development
YMCA



Dear Doug McKay,
The annual West Coast Herbert, Sask. Fun Spiel was held on Sunday, March 30, 2003. Once again it was a huge success with in excess of 100 people in attendance.

Several of the people that attend this annual hometown reunion are active or retired union members. Co-organizer of the event is Harry Klassen. As you well know, Harry is a retired Business Agent from IBEW Local 258. There are also retired union officials from IWA, BCTF & ILWU that attend this event on an annual basis.

Because this is a hometown reunion function, the mer-



chants of Herbert supply the majority of the prizes and souvenirs. But because of the strong union tie that prevails, union gifts and prizes have a significant sentimental value as well. Without question, some of the first gifts to be selected by the winning curlers are the IBEW items.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this home town/union friendly event. The role you play is one of the reasons the Fun Spiel is such a great success.

Yours truly
Ches Jantzen
New Westminster, BC
Co-organizer, Herbert Fun Spiel



Dear Friends,
The Cranbrook Food Bank Society would like to express their sincere appreciation for your participation in the BC Hydro Charity Golf Tournament resulting in a collective donation to our Food Bank in the amount of \$1,750.00.

Food banks across Canada are seeing a steady increase in the number of individuals and families seeking emergency food. Your donation will be used for the purchase of groceries for our shelves.

Thank you for your generous consideration and for helping us to help others.

Yours truly
Gordon Van Ochten
President, Cranbrook Food Bank Society



Dear Ms. Laurie,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and families at the Child Development Centre I want to thank you for your donation of \$200.00 in support of the 2003 Silly Boat Regatta in Nanaimo, BC on Sunday, July 20, 2003.

It is with your generous donations that we were able to raise close to \$43,000.00 – we could not have done this without your help.

All the proceeds raised at the Silly



Dear IBEW Local 258,
Thank you for sponsoring me for Camp Jubilee. I had a great time. I made lots of new friends. The food was great. I would highly recommend this camp to other youth! In closing, here are some pictures of Camp Jubilee and again thank you very much for this great opportunity.

Sincerely
Joe Naabye

Boat Regatta go directly back into the community by assisting the Child Development Centre in providing individualized services for children and their families. Last year we were able to assist over 25 families and children in our community.

Once again, thank you for making a difference in the lives of children and their families.

Yours truly
Renee Bohun
Resource Development Officer
Child Development Centre
Nanaimo, BC



Dear Ms. Laurie
On behalf of the members of the BC Hydro Power Pioneers Golf Club, I would like to thank you for the Golf Shirts, Golf Hats and the Book, "Gaslights to Gigawatts" that you donated through Mike O'Connor to our annual closing tournament and banquet.

Your generosity to the Club is very much appreciated as we are all retired and our Club is self-supporting.

IBEW Local 258 was acknowledged during the presentations made at the Banquet.

Sincerely
Malvine Dotto
Secretary Treasurer
BC Hydro Power Pioneers Golf Club



UNIT REPORTS

Unit 5

by Mark Davison, Unit Chair

I have spent the last three months visiting retired "A" members. As IBEW pensioners, they are active members and continue to accumulate years of service long after they retire. It has been one of the most fulfilling experiences I have had as a Unit Chair and has also been a real pleasure. Many of these members started their working careers in the 1930's and have received 50, 55 or 60 years of service awards. They have seen many hard fought issues won and lost for the Labour Movement. Many are concerned that the young workers of today are not aware of the battles fought to get the many benefits that we now enjoy. I would therefore like to offer a short review of the history of IBEW Local 258.

History of IBEW Local 258

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is as old as the commercial use of electricity itself. It is the oldest, as well as the largest, electrical union in the world. It was founded in 1891 as the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The NBEW became the IBEW in 1893 when the jurisdiction was extended to include Canada (District 1). In 1961, BC

Electric and the BC Power Commission amalgamated into the BC Hydro and Power Authority and five IBEW Local Unions represented employees of these two companies: Local 213 in the Lower Mainland, Local 230 on Vancouver Island, Local 344 in the North Coast, Local 993 in Kamloops and Central interior and Local 821 in Vernon.

To speak to BC Hydro with one voice, the various Locals formed a Utility System Council No. 27 (known as U 27) in 1963. In 1967, the Utility System Council was disbanded and the members employed with BC Hydro throughout the province were transferred from the various Locals into the newly created Local Union 258. As all members of Local 821 were employed at BC Hydro it ceased to exist. All the other Local Unions continued to serve their members not employed by Hydro. IBEW 258 continued to grow as Hydro took over the East Kootenay Power & Light Company, Northern Light & Power Company, and the Municipal or City Utilities of Kimberly, Cranbrook and Revelstoke. Utility Arborists became members of our local in the mid 1980's, as we were best equipped to represent them throughout the province. In the late eighties, we also took over jurisdiction for Traffic

Control people, again because we could organize and represent across the province. In 1987, the International Vice President assigned the outside line jurisdiction in the province of BC to Local Union 258, and our local began an aggressive organizing campaign that resulted in all of the Line Contractor companies that are from BC being signed with Local 258. On August 1, 1990, members of Local 264 merged with Local 258, bringing members from the manufacturing sector into our Local as well.

The size and variety of our Local has grown through the years and we must all strive to learn about our brothers and sisters working in sectors that are different from our own. When times are difficult in one workplace or one community, we need to be sure we understand each other's concerns, so that we can speak with one voice. I believe this goes beyond our Local, as well – and should include the other IBEW Locals in our province, and other working people that can benefit from the strength of one clear and powerful voice. That's how we force the winds of change, and that's what being a Union brother or sister is all about.

On behalf of the Unit 5 executive; Mark Davison, Ross White, Burke Lundy, Cathy Tagseth and Karen Porter, we would like to wish all the members of Local 258 IBEW a very rewarding and safe Holiday Season. Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year! ❧



The Petersen Group, 1955

UNIT REPORTS



Brother Page (10 year) and Brother White (30 year) receive long term service awards.



Brother Seabrook receives his 10 year service pin from Unit Chair Mark Davison.



Brother Ben Dill receives his 10 year service pin from Unit Chair Mark Davison.



Can you guess when this article was written?

Don't Wait Too Long

A man who has long been prominent in the labour movement, made a sad commentary recently. He said, "Soon there will be no real union members left – the ones who know and understand what was involved in building this labour movement are dying off."


There is a great deal of truth, regretful truth, in that statement. Too many union members of today are only card-carrying members. They don't attend meetings. They won't serve on committees. Sometimes they aren't even sure of the name of the union to which they belong.

Unionism and its benefits have come easy to them. They've never walked a picket line or lost a job because they believed in labour unions and what they could accomplish.

Well, there's an old saying "Easy come, easy go." We hope our young members and those other AFL-CIO unions will wake up before it is too late – or they will have to go through it all again – all the struggles, all the hardships of 40, 50 or 60 years ago.

There are a few bright spots of encouragement on the horizon. More and more locals are setting up labour education programs, and more and more members are attending – not enough by a long shot, but it is a real source of encouragement and hope.

We urge all our locals and all our members to alert themselves to the problems and dangers which beset unions today and resolve to do something about it – now – while there is still time.

Electrical Workers Journal
The article "Don't Wait Too Long" was reprinted from a Jan/Feb edition of the *Live Wire* in 1959. It rings as true today as when it was first printed. 

UNIT REPORTS

Unit 6

by Robert Abernethy, Unit Chair

I've had a couple of phone calls from members telling me too much printing in the Hotline and not enough pictures. Under the circumstances right now, of just going back to work after my contact accident in June of this year, I'll have to say that not writing a story this time around would make my life a little easier. Swinging back into the saddle again I need everything I have psychologically to keep on an even keel, so pictures it is.

But before I cut out, I'd like to thank all the people who supported me during

the last few months of my being off - the phone calls, the cards and the visits.

As to the IBEW Social that Unit 5&6 put on in September at the Semiahmoo Fish & Game Club, I'd like to thank all of you who volunteered your time to make it happen. What a tremendous effort! The bucket trucks were a great attraction. Apparently the hall received many calls from people saying what a nice afternoon they had at the Social. We were lucky with the weather. What a beautiful day to have a get together!

The schedule for next year's unit meetings is made and please note the meetings may be held on different dates and be at different locations from

last year. READ the unit meeting schedule for this coming year 2004. It will not necessarily be the second Tuesday of each month.

Remember to come to the Dec. 16 Surrey unit meeting and the Dec. 17 Chilliwack meeting, as we will be having our usual cake, goodies, and the Christmas present draw.

I wish all of you & our families, a Merry Christmas and the very best of health in the New Year. ☑



Face painter/Clown Lady putting the finishing touches on the little people at the social. This is pretty serious business. Unit 5 & 6 Social, September, 2003.



Patricia Patterson-Corsie (Lineperson LMS) is one tough gal - she single handedly cooked 200 hamburgers and 120 hot dogs at the IBEW Social in September, 2003.



A future PLT has a scowl on his face from his morning talk with the supervisor! Unit 5 & 6 Social, September, 2003.

UNIT REPORTS



Bucket truck follies at the Unit 5 & 6 Social held in September.



The future strong men and women of Canada! Having fun at the September Social put on by Units 5 & 6.



Sack race in action at the Social.

Living in a Liberal Wonderland

(sung to the tune of Winter Wonderland)

Families cry, are you listening?
In their eyes, tears are glistening.
After two years in five
Your welfare's denied,
Hopeless in a Liberal Wonderland.
Gone away is compassion,
Now that Scrooge is the fashion.
How you'll live on much less
Is anyone's guess,
Hungry in a Liberal Wonderland.
At the carpark we can build a shelter,
Wrapped in cardboard we'll sleep
on the ground.
Hope we're moving up the hous-
ing wait list,
'Cause in 2010 they'll tear it
down.

There are jobs, just believe me,
Murray says, grab a squeegee,
Work at 12 years of age
You're on minimum wage,
Or jobless in a Liberal
Wonderland.

City councils ask "what is the
impact?"

Murray says: the numbers are
unknown.

We say there'll be thousands on
the doorsteps,
But you can do the math when
you're in town.

Later on, we'll conspire,
Warm our hands by the fire,
But we're begging tonight, it just
isn't right,
Homeless in a Liberal
Wonderland.




So, you would like to retire early?

by **Brother Murray MacDonald, Labour Member, EI Board of Referees**

As a delegate from the New Westminster & District Labour Council to a Seniors' Health Conference, I was presented with and discussed the following statistics of a growing list of 30+ benefits taken from seniors and others by the Liberal provincial government.

I recommend that you study these before deciding to retire early and give up many of the fought-for benefits our Union has obtained for you. The list is as follows:

- Provincial Senior's Advisory Council disbanded
- Office for Seniors closed on March 31, 2002
- Senior's Supportive Housing Projects frozen
- One-half percent increase in sales tax
- Property taxes increased due to municipalities making up cuts from province
- B.C. Seniors' Supplements to be phased out
- User fees for Senior's medications - increase from \$10.00 per prescription to income testing for Pharmacare benefits
- Medical deductibles have been increased and more medications have been de-listed
- Senior Support Services, which serve the frail elderly, are cut by 30% this year - proposed that all funding be eliminated in next two years
- Retired provincial employees losing their dental plan as a result of provincial government action
- Diabetics charged now approximately \$1.00 per strip
- Everyone (including seniors) must pay for podiatrist, massage therapy, physiotherapy, chiropractic services and naturopathy unless on Premium Assistance
- Seniors Citizens Counselors Program eliminated as of March 31, 2002
- Cuts to Income Assistance for ages 50 to 64 to \$185.00 per month and couples to \$307.22
- Further cuts to Home Support/Care Services
- MSP premiums increased 50% as of April 1, 2002
- Placements on waiting lists for long term care no longer available.
- Seniors being moved out of long term care with no place to go and a loss of 3,116 beds
- Closure of thousands of residential subsidized care facility beds
- New rules for assessing the needs of the frail and the disabled - fewer needy elderly will be able to access the kind of care they need
- Federal money dedicated to housing is being used for Assisted Living "facilities" which replace long term care beds
- Funding for the BC Human Rights Office cut and chairperson terminated
- Landlord and Tenants Offices in Vancouver and Nanaimo closed
- Proposed changes to the Residential Tenancy Act which may eliminate Rent Review and require one month's rent as a damage deposit
- Ombudsman's office funding cut by 35%
- Thirty-eight percent cut to Legal Aid
- Funding for Hearing Aids cut
- Talking Books and Hearing Aid Programs only partially restored
- Closures of hospitals, emergency rooms and residential facility beds
- Proposals to privatize crown assets such as BC Hydro, ICBC and BC Rail
- Increases for seniors in long term and medium term care facilities 



*Brother Murray MacDonald
Former VP IBEW 258*

Retirement and Employment Insurance

by Brother Murray MacDonald, Labour Member, EI Board of Referees

I was asked as an Employee Rep member of the EI Board of Referees to report to the New Westminster and District Labour Council to report the correct procedures under Employment Insurance Regulations to qualify for EI benefits, if required, after retirement. Also, how unions can help prepare by advocacy the correct methods for their members. These requirements will apply to most IBEW 258 members and I thought you might benefit from reading them in our Hotline. M.MacDonald

Murray MacDonald reported with all the legislated downsizing in the public sector, corporate amalgamation and cost cutting at the expense of the employees in the private sector, considerable fear and concern is rightfully felt by all employees. Some of this fear is founded and compounded by the fact that many of those affected are disqualified from the protection of Employment Insurance by not knowing their Rights and Obligations. They often focus their downsizing on the senior employee whose benefits are maximum, and projected. Time to serve the company or Government is limited.

Early Retirement: Many employees are encouraged to take advantage of early retirement incentives offered by their employers. In these situations, both availability and voluntary leaving must be considered, as well as earnings on separation including pensions. Generally, when this person retires, availability for work is suspect. Claimants who have retired from their job and the labour force generally can't be considered available. However, they may be considered for other work depending on the type of work wanted, health and physical condition and the labour market situation. The claimant's intention and attitude toward re-employment are crucial in determining availability. The onus is on the claimant to prove availability.

It is critical that you notify the EI

Commission within thirty days of leaving employment (don't wait for Record of Employment but request it). This is even if you are told you must wait until all severance pay, holiday pay, scheduled vacations, compensatory leave, sick and vacation overtime banks, even if earned in years prior is allocated on a weekly basis, delaying qualifying period until all this is expired. Plus an additional two weeks even if all above did not apply.

Subsection 44 (W.1) of the Act exempts a claimant who has left voluntarily due to a work force reduction process, while (56.1) of the Regulations outlines conditions as follows: Evidence must confirm:

- 1) it was initiated by the employer
- 2) documented by the employer
- 3) has as its objective to reduce the overall number of employees
- 4) it must be voluntary to accept
- 5) it must in turn save a co-workers job

Unions involved in a voluntary reduction program should encourage the employer to register the program with the Commission. If the company is on the list, laid off employees should be able to collect benefits without any hassle.

If you have finally passed the test to qualify, you may under Section 41(8) of the Act prove you have made reasonable efforts to obtain employment. This means recording a job search through the normal process pertaining to type of work, location and time of year, etc. This can be accomplished by making contacts through newspapers, letters and resumes, telephone, employment agencies or hiring halls. N.B. If your Union has a hiring hall it must be registered with the Commission to qualify as a job search. You also must fill out the proper and correct forms for entitlement subject to audit for up to three years and penalties to 300% for misrepresentation.

These are but a few of the EI Act and Regulations that make the Encyclopedia Britannica look like the Reader's Digest in comparison. This complicated legislation is why I believe the Board of Referees is essential to help protect an appellant's right to receive natural justice and not be penalized for an honest mistake in interpreting the rules of this complicated process. ☑

Over the hill

Rubber Report/ CAW 4451/CALM

You know you are over the hill when:
Your back goes out but you stay home.

You try to straighten out the wrinkles in your socks and discover you're not wearing any.

It takes two tries to get up from the couch.

Your idea of a night out is sitting on the patio.

Happy hour is a nap.

You're on vacation and your energy runs out before your money does

It takes longer to rest than it did to get tired.

You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going.

The pharmacist has become your new best friend.

Getting lucky means you found your car in the parking lot.

It takes twice as long to look half as good.

Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work.

You look for your glasses for half an hour and they were on your head the whole time.

You get two invitations to go out on the same night and you pick the one that gets you home the earliest.

PIPA takes effect January 1, 2004

On January 1, 2004 your right to access and protect your own personal information will be enhanced through the introduction of the Personal Information Protection Act, S.B.C. 2003. That Act will enable you to access your personal information wherever it exists with your private sector employer or your union, Local 258 IBEW.

With a parallel piece of legislation coming into effect in the federal regime at the same time you will even be able to make an access request to your bank.

PIPA is different than the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act which has been in place for many years. That legislation only covers private information held by a public institution such as ICBC or the Workers Compensation Board.

Every institution, including Local

258, must have a designated Compliance Officer appointed by January 1, 2004 to handle requests or complaints. The duties can be delegated to any person, but the Compliance Officer is ultimately responsible. Doug McKay, Local 258's elected Business Manager and Financial Secretary, is the designated Compliance Officer. He can be reached through Local 258's main switchboard at 604-520-3305.

I am in the process of drafting Local 258's PIPA Guideline which sets out the policies and procedures regarding the collection, use and release of every member's information. To a great extent, the Guideline reduces to writing the practices that have always been carried out by the Local. For example, upon request, a member can have a copy of his or her own grievance file. As well, membership rosters will not be sold or released to any person.



*Rebecca Murdock
Local 258's Staff Lawyer*

To read the full text of PIPA, go to www.legis.gov.bc.ca and click "Documents and Proceedings", then click "Bills", then click "List of Bills with Hansard Debates", then scroll to Bill 38 or to go there directly, click on: http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/37th4th/1st_read/gov38-1.htm#section1

Happy Holidays! ☄

Westray bill gets royal assent

USWA/CALM

Legislation that unions have promoted for nearly 12 years became law when Bill C-45, the Westray Bill, received royal assent.

The law holds corporations, their directors and executives accountable for criminally negligent acts in the workplace.

"Critics have tried to claim that this legislation was rushed through too quickly," said Lawrence McBrearty, national director of the United Steelworkers. "Nothing could be further from the truth. Our activists have lobbied federal politicians over many years, promoted changes to the Criminal Code through a series of private members' bills, and met with the all-party Justice Committee, which eventually recommended that the Liberal government bring forward its

own legislation on corporate responsibility. I would hardly call all of that 'rushing.'"

The law is known as the Westray Bill after the 1992 explosion that killed 26 miners at the Westray Coal Mine in Stellarton, N.S.

The inquiry after the disaster put forward a recommendation calling for changes to the Criminal Code. The Steelworkers' union kept up pressure on federal politicians with rank-and-file lobbyists meeting every Member of Parliament to get their support.

McBrearty said the campaign really started before the mine blew up, in an organizing drive in which workers signed union cards in the hope that the union would force Westray's owners to operate a safe mine.

"Most of the men who died in the

early hours of May 9, 1992 were already Steelworker members," he said, adding that representatives of the Westray families were on hand, as guests of the union, for the reading into law by Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson.



Members ask about Unit Structure

by Michelle Laurie
President, Local 258

In October and November I travelled to Vancouver Island and then to northern BC where I had the privilege of meeting many of our members in Units 4 and 2 and discussing the Unit Structure issue. I want to thank each of you for taking the time to speak with me, and for having the patience to listen to me on my soapbox!

Many members I spoke with voiced their concerns that a change in Unit Structure could lead to less communication between the business office and membership. These proposed changes to our Unit Structure are intended to increase communication and, regardless of whether we opt for these changes or not, membership meetings will continue to take place throughout the province to pass on information from the business office and to hear from members about issues in their workplace. By adding more Units to our current structure, we will enhance our ability to do "official" union business in each Unit, for example, members would be able to make or vote on motions affecting the entire membership, or nominate candidates during elections.

On the other hand, a look back through the years will show that very few real motions come out of membership meetings. The majority of the issues raised at these meetings have had to do with matters affecting collective agreements, and as such, are seen as

recommendations for the Business Manager, who has the final authority on collective agreement issues. With or without the Unit Structure changes,

Brother McKay has committed that he and his staff will continue to travel to workplaces and headquarters as they currently do, and will be able to hold meetings to discuss any issues that are important to the members.

This means that input from the members around the province would still be directed to the Business Manager respecting concerns about collective agreement issues. Furthermore, travel of the Executive Board members will not be affected, as the message coming from the members is that they strongly value seeing and being able to talk to their elected representatives as well.

If we add Units to our structure, the question arises as to where we add them. As mentioned in the spring 2003 issue of Hotline, I did a demographic breakdown to identify the geographic locations of the largest concentrations of our members throughout British Columbia. At one of the meetings in November, it was suggested

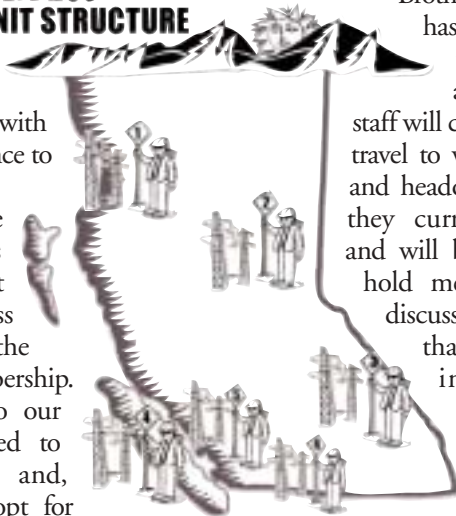
that I circulate that information so that you can see how our members are distributed around the province. As a result, I will ensure that the Executive has that information for the January (and subsequent) meetings, for your review. Also, if we do add Units, I believe we should take instruction from each area as to where they feel it is important to have a Unit in place, and I will ensure that any change I propose will allow for Units to be formed based on the desire of the members in that area or sector. Remember, when any issues are voted on by the membership, they are tabulated on a "one-member-one-vote" basis, so the number of Units does not affect your voting power.

Until I have had the opportunity to meet face to face with as many members as I can, I will not be sending out any motion to amend our current bylaws. You will see in the meeting schedule that is included in this issue of Hotline, that one meeting in each unit each month has been designated as the "official" meeting; otherwise, the meeting schedules remain essentially unchanged. My sense is that these proposed changes will not pose any appreciable difference, and if it does impact you in any way, please contact me.

Starting early next year, I will be visiting Units 3 & 1 to continue discussions about Unit Structure, and am looking forward hearing your opinions and to discussing the issues with you.



**IBEW 258
UNIT STRUCTURE**



Opinion

Benefits are not a frill

by Louis Erlichman/IAMAW/CALM

A hundred years ago, Canadian workers earned wages and that was about it. In general, they didn't get paid time off for holidays and vacations, they paid all their own medical expenses, and they had to provide for themselves if they were laid off, disabled or wanted to retire.

Over the course of the last century, because of the demands of workers and unions, there has been a steady growth in non-wage benefits—paid time off, pensions, insurance coverage and other things like child care and employee assistance programs. Some are provided through the government (Old Age Security, the Canada or Quebec Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, Workers Compensation,

medicare and welfare), and employers provide some.

These benefits are not a frill. They are essential to the survival and dignity of working families.

In recent years, the workplace focus has been on group life and disability coverage, dental and extended health plans (including drugs), which fill in some of the gaps of our medicare system. According to the most recent Statistics Canada survey, as of 2000, half of the Canadian workforce has medical, dental and life or disability coverage, 12 per cent have one or two of these, and 38 per cent have none.

Coverage is probably somewhat higher than this, since, in families with more than one earner, some uncovered

workers will be covered as dependents. Full-time permanent workers are more likely to have benefit coverage than part-time or casual employees.

Unionized workers have the advantage

As with wages, unionized workers have a big benefit advantage. Seventy-nine per cent of unionized workers are members of pension plans, compared to 30 per cent of non-unionized workers. Seventy per cent of unionized workers have medical, dental and group life or disability coverage, compared to only 40 per cent of non-unionized workers.

Benefits are a big part of the cost of labour. In the last 50 years, the cost of benefits (including payroll taxes for CPP or QPP, EI and Workers Compensation) has risen from around 15 per cent to more than 35 per cent of total labour costs in Canada. In the last few years, costs have been rising rapidly, particularly for drug and supplementary medical plans.

Drug companies in particular have been very successful in building their profits through aggressive promotion to increase the use of expensive drugs and by pushing governments to extend patent protection that limits low-cost generic alternatives.

Big cost advantage over the U.S.

Our medicare system still gives us a big cost advantage over the U.S., where barely adequate medical insurance coverage adds thousands of dollars per worker to an employer's labour cost. The cost of health insurance coverage is the root of many strikes in the U.S.

With costs increasing in Canada, employers are pressing to reduce benefit coverage and shift costs to workers through deductibles and caps.

Unions have led the way in expanding benefits for workers, in workplace negotiations and by working politically to create our public programs. Now the struggle is mainly about holding onto our past gains, both in the public sphere and at the bargaining table.

Louis Erlichman is Research Director for IAMAW Canada.



Unit 6 Chair Bob Abernethy with Brother Tom Murray at his recent retirement luncheon.



From left, Brent Mockford, Doug Hughes, Bruce Jane, Tom Greenwell.

Congratulations Retirees!



IBEW 258 retired members John Churchill (55 years), Tom Whitelaw (50 years) and Art Beadle(55 years) receiving their "Years of Service Awards". Congratulations!



Tom Greenwell and Michelle Laurie present a 50 year Service Award to Brother Dick Villers. Congratulations!



Eleanor Routh, with her retirement plaque, presented in October 2003.

Best headlines of 2003

Internet/CALM

Crack found on governor's daughter
Something went wrong in jet crash, expert says

Police begin campaign to run down jaywalkers

Iraqi head seeks arms

Is there a ring of debris around Uranus?

Prostitutes appeal to pope

Panda mating fails; veterinarian takes over

Teacher strikes idle kids

Miners refuse to work after death

Juvenile court to try shooting defendant

War dims hope for peace

If strike isn't settled quickly, it may last awhile

Cold wave linked to temperatures

Couple slain; police suspect homicide

Red tape holds up new bridges

Typhoon rips through cemetery; hundreds dead

Man struck by lightning faces battery charge

New study on obesity looks for larger test group

Astronaut takes blame for gas in spacecraft

Kids make nutritious snacks

Local high school dropouts cut in half

Hospitals are sued by seven foot doctors



Congratulations



Congratulations to Dennis Sorenson on receipt of his 20 year service pin by Brother Abernethy. Dennis's last day of work will be in December and then he's off to Mexico!



Chad Bentley receives his Journeyman Lineman Certificate from Business Manager Doug McKay.



Brother Wade Watson of Twin River Power being presented with his Journeyman Lineman Certificate from Unit 1 Chair Klaus Kraft.



Brother Roger Chernekoff, Williams Lake, receives his 25 year service pin from 258 President Michelle Laurie.



Curtis Matthews receives his 30 year service pin from 258 President Laurie.



Brother Gord McKinnon receives his 15 year service pin from Michelle Laurie.

IBEW members!



Herb Butters receives his 15 year service pin from Local 258 President Michelle Laurie.



Recent retiree Tom Murray receives his 30 year member pin from Unit 6 Chair Bob Abernethy. Tom was the Mechanic Subforeman at Ruskin.



Ryan Gunson receives his Journeyman Lineman Certificate from Business Manager Doug McKay.



Steve Martin of Arctic Power receives his Journeyman Lineman Certificate from Business Manager Doug McKay

From the archives



Do you recognize any of the IBEW members “on the line” at Sapperton in the above photo? Looks like it’s a photo from the 1960’s from the fashions - check out the striped pants! If you can identify the above photo, we’ll award you an IBEW t-shirt and your name in the next issue of HOTLINE.



The photo in the last issue of HOTLINE was correctly identified by Brothers John Koslab and Terry Buckoll. The two members who received their journeyman certificates from JS Grutschnig were Bob Hutchinson and Dave Devitt at Whatshan Generating Station.

IBEW 258 Photo Op



Happy Holidays from the IBEW 258 office in Burnaby. From top left, Doug McKay, Brady Prentice, front row from left is Greg Fanning, Brian Haugen, Gwen Saunders, Dan Klassen, Judith Phillips, Rebecca Murdock, Lesli McBratney, Jim Greenwell, Michelle Laurie and Susan Longva. Absent are Ann Cusson and Geri Watson.



Unit 3 Chair Leon Arishenkoff and 258 president Michelle Laurie braved the elements to support their union brother and sisters on the line at the recent BC Ferries dispute.



Business Manager Doug McKay congratulates Brother Brad Nelson on receipt of his Journeyman Lineman Certificate.



Ruminations of a Retiree

by Ken McEwen
Editor, **HOTLINE**

One of the things that happen upon retirement is the tendency to tell the same story over and over. Actually I'm not sure if that is caused by retirement or advancing age. It may be related to the memory thing that I've discussed before. Usually, retirees are very tolerant of one another when this redundant story telling occurs. Perhaps that's because they recognize that they all do the same thing. Or, perhaps it's because they don't remember hearing the story before. There we are, back to the memory thing again. Anyway, the reason I embarked upon this discussion is to ask your indulgence if you've heard some of these ruminations before.

As it is now winter, we are in southern California and therefore out of touch with the news from home. However, I'm sure both governments are still governing and the universe is unfolding as it should. We had a very enjoyable wander down here in October. The weather was good and the roads were good. Catherine Dear is somewhat geographically challenged and is convinced that the towns of Reno and Pahrump in Nevada are on a straight line between New Westminster, British Columbia and Indio, California. You see, Catherine Dear likes to contribute to the economy of Nevada by making donations to casinos, especially in the above named places. As a matter of fact, at the time of this writing, Catherine Dear, filled with the spirit of Christmas giving, is in Laughlin, Nevada making further donations. I am home with Sesame the dog. The consolation for being home alone is that I have unfettered access to the TV remote control for three nights. And the bed doesn't have to be made daily and the dishes can wait for a day or two as well.



I was kind of ruminating around the other day and got to thinking about the old saying, "Time flies when you're having fun." You've probably heard old guys say that time goes faster as you get older. In my experience, old guys say that a lot. It's kind of like retirees saying they don't know how they found time to work. Well, I'll tell you what makes time go even faster. Separating your life into six month increments will do it. Like six months at our northern home and wandering around in the camper and six months at our southern home poodling about in the desert sure makes time go by in a hurry. I'd kind of like to slow it down a bit but I'm having too much fun.

I was also ruminating on the few occasions I've had to make phone calls here. You might ask, what's so remarkable about phone calls to require rumination? Seven digit dialing is what's remarkable. Not ten digit dialing like at home. Not only here but in Los Angeles too. Now, I think everyone will agree that Los Angeles is a fairly large place. They can get by with seven digit dialing. New Westminster is not as large as Los Angeles. In New Westminster I have to dial ten digits. I forget to do that a lot. Then that lady

talks to me and says that my call can't be completed as dialed. That sort of makes one pause to ponder on just how the universe is unfolding.

Speaking of ten digit dialing, I also got to ruminating about Air Care. See, when I'm walking in the desert with Sesame and she stops to dig out some kind of critter, I get to thinking about all kinds of things. Not only do I think about what kind of critter might be underfoot but also some of the imponderables, like Air Care. Like, if you have an old vehicle you get to go to the test place every year for \$24.00 a time. If you have a newer vehicle you only get to go every two years and you pay \$48.00 a time.

That's sort of like paying \$24.00 for something you didn't get. If you say you'll come every year to get your money's worth they say you can't do that. And the camper, because it's classed as a motor home, doesn't have to get tested at all. No doubt there is some rational reason behind this. I just can't think of what it might be. I expect only the folks who reside in the Lower Mainland will ruminate on this. Those living in that new territory called the Heartland will have other issues.

Where did that come from? That Heartland business. When I left home, the local TV station was doing reports from the Heartland. They were in Kamloops and Prince George and Prince Rupert and Kelowna and Fort St. John, reporting from the Heartland. Cranbrook too, I think. That's a pretty big heart.

Along with Catherine Dear and Sesame, I wish you a peaceful and happy holiday season and good health and happiness in the year to come.

Please continue to work and play safely because, even though time goes by in a big hurry, retirement is great. ☑

IBEW LOCAL 258 UNIT MEETING SCHEDULES, 2004

Unit 1 Meeting Schedule

* Note: *Smithers meeting starts at 5:30 pm, all others start at 4:30 pm.*

Smithers (Hilltop Inn)Feb. 9; June 7; Dec. 15, 2004
Terrace (Legion)**Feb. 10; Apr. 14; June 8; Oct. 12; Dec. 14, 2004.**
Prince Rupert (Lineroom).....Feb. 11; June 9; Oct. 13, 2004
Masset (Lineroom)Feb. 12; Oct. 14, 2004
Queen Charlotte City (Lineroom) June 10, 2004.

Unit 2 Meeting Schedule

* Note: *Quesnel & Hudson's Hope meetings start at 4:30 pm, all others start at 7:00 pm.*

Prince George (Legion).....**Jan. 13; Feb. 10; Mar. 9; Apr. 13; May 11; June 8; July 13; Aug. 10; Sept. 7; Oct. 12; Nov. 9; Dec. 14, 2004.**
Dawson Creek (Labour Temple)Jan. 21; May 19, 2004.
Hudson's Hope (Peace Glen).....Jan. 22; Mar. 23; May 20; Sept. 21; Nov. 17, 2004.
Fort St. John (Northern Grand).....Mar. 25; Sept. 23; Nov. 16, 2004.
Fort Nelson (TBA)Mar. 24; Sept. 22, 2004.
Williams Lake (Elks Hall)Jan. 14; Mar. 10; May 12; June 16; Sept. 8; Nov. 8, 2004.
Quesnel (Line Room)Jan. 15; Mar. 11; May 13; Sept. 9, 2004.
Bella Coola (TBA)June 17, 2004.

Unit 3 Meeting Schedule

Bridge River (Lunch Room)**Jan. 13;** May 11; Sept. 7; Nov. 9, 2004.
Kamloops (IBEW 993)Jan. 14; **Mar. 10;** May 12; July 15; Sept. 8; Nov. 10, 2004.
Vernon (Army & Navy)Jan. 15; Mar. 11; May 13; July 15; Sept. 9; Nov. 10, 2004.
Mica (Curling Rink)Jan. 19; May 17; Sept. 13; Nov. 15, 2004.
Revelstoke (Regent Hotel).....Jan. 20; May 18; Sept. 14; Nov. 16, 2004.
Castlegar (Fireside Inn).....Feb. 10; Apr. 13; June 8; Oct. 12, 2004.
Cranbrook (Labour Temple)Feb. 11; Apr. 14; June 9; Oct. 13, 2004.
Invermere (legion).....Feb. 12; Apr. 15; June 10; Oct. 14, 2004.



IBEW LOCAL 258 UNIT MEETING SCHEDULES, 2004

Unit 4 Meeting Schedule

** Note: Meetings with an asterisk start at 4:00 pm; all others start at 7:00 pm, except Nanaimo's February and November meetings start at 6:30 pm.*

- Victoria (Line Room)***Jan. 13**; *Apr. 13; *July 13; *Oct. 12, 2004.
- Ganges (Line Room)*Feb. 11; *Apr. 14; *Oct. 13, 2004.
- Duncan (Cowichan Valley Inn).....Jan. 13; **Apr. 13**; **Oct. 12**, 2004.
- Qualicum (Line Room)*Jan. 14; *June 9; *Dec. 15, 2004.
- Port Alberni(Clutesi Valley Inn)Jan. 14; June 9; Dec. 15, 2004.
- Nanaimo (Howard Johnson).....**Feb. 11**; ***May 12**; ***Aug. 11**; **Nov. 9, 2004**.
- Port Hardy (Line Room).....*Mar. 10; Sept. 15, 2004.
- Courtenay (Line Room)*Mar. 9; ***June 8**; *Sept. 14; ***Dec. 14, 2004**.
- Campbell River (Haida Inn).....Mar. 9; June 8; Sept. 14; **Dec. 14, 2004**.

Unit 5 Meeting Schedule

Note: Meetings with an asterisk start at 5:00 pm, all others start at 7:00 pm.

- Burnaby (Union Hall).....**Jan. 15**; *Feb. 12; **Mar. 11**; ***Apr. 15**; May 13; ***June 10**; **July 15**;
*Aug. 12; Sept. 9; ***Oct. 14**; **Nov. 4**; **Dec. 16, 2004**.
- Powell River (Beach Gardens Resort) Feb. 10; May 11; Sept. 7, 2004.
- Sechelt (Bella Beach Hotel).....***Feb. 11**; ***May 12**; *Sept. 8, 2004.
- Squamish (Sea to Sky Hotel)Mar. 16; June 15; Oct. 19, 2004.

Unit 6 Meeting Schedule

Note: Change to Surrey location, Millwright's Hall is at #202 - 14625 108th Ave., 2nd Floor. All meetings start at 7:00 pm.

- Maple Ridge (Legion).....Feb. 11; May 12; Nov. 10, 2004.
- Surrey (Millwright's Hall)**Jan. 13**; **Feb. 10**; Mar. 10; **Apr. 13**; **May 11**; June 9; **July 13**; **Sept. 15**;
Oct. 12; **Nov. 9**; Dec. 15, 2004.
- Abbotsford (OAP Hall).....Jan. 14; Apr. 14; Oct. 13, 2004.
- Chillwack (Rainbow Country Inn)..Mar. 9; June 8; Sept. 14; **Dec. 14, 2004**.



From the Back Corner

Last month labour activists from around the province gathered in Vancouver for the BC Federation of Labour Policy Convention. Tension is high amongst organized labour, faced with lay-offs and job loss, an apparently hostile Labour Relations Board, calls for concessions from employers, contracting out that has become rampant in some sectors, selling of publicly owned businesses in the province, and on top of it all, cuts to services in communities that make coping more difficult for all, and impossible for some.

One of the guests at the convention was Carolyn Leckie, a member of the Scottish Parliament, who spoke to us about events in her country since the election of Margaret Thatcher's right wing government. Carolyn offered us the advantage of hindsight respecting her own country's situation, and cautioned us that the current government activities in British Columbia are far more draconian and dangerous for working people. She outlined what appears to have been a conscious effort to break the strongest union in Britain at the time, the Mine Workers Union, and the failure of the entire labour movement to see what was happening, and to act in solidarity. A frightening message, to be sure, especially when held up against what is currently happening in BC to the health sector unions, and of course, most recently, treatment of the Ferry Workers.


We also heard from union members in Saskatchewan who mounted a campaign over the past couple of years to raise people's awareness about the issues in their province. This was not a campaign from a political party, it was a

working peoples' campaign, formed to address the issues that faced workers and average people in Saskatchewan. The success of the campaign was that it forced people to think about what was most important to them in their province, and that, naturally, forces people to think about being politically active.

Our cover picture and many of the articles in this issue reflect on the positive aspects of 'brotherhood' – our ability to contribute in a positive way in our communities, our ability to look out for and educate one another on issues of common interest, our ability to get together to celebrate our achievements and our sense of community with one another. In each of our communities this holiday season, I know that many of you are contributing to make sure that others have a joyful holiday, and I applaud you for that. It reminds



**IBEW 258 President
Michelle Laurie**

me of why I am so proud to be a member of this Union, and why I believe that we can overcome whatever obstacles government or employers place before us. I hope that each of you has a Christmas full of love, laughter and brotherhood, and I look forward to a new year of challenges and accomplishments for us all. 



IBEW 258 President Michelle Laurie attended this year's BC Federation of Labour Convention. She is shown here with IBEW's delegation, including Lou Boulliane, Business Manager, Local 1003, Len Rousseau, President, Local 230, Phil Venoit, Business Manager Local 230, Harry Van Beest, Bus. Rep, Local 213.

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