



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

# Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter

Since 1902



## WATT's Up!

### The Future of IBEW-BC Trades Training

Our Western Joint Electrical Training Society's (W-JETS) work with the Federal Labour Ministry over the last two years has finally come to fruition with the launch of our Workplace Alternative Trades Training (WATT) Program. This three-week applied skills course, funded in part by the Government of Canada's Skilled Trades Awareness and Readiness program, offers an exciting new route to enter the Electrical Trade as an apprentice with IBEW Locals 230, 993 & 1003, and IBEW Signatory Contractors. The objective of the program is to strengthen the apprenticeship training system to better support a skilled, inclusive, certified and productive electrical trades workforce by improving the efficiency and safety of training provided. The condensed curriculum focuses just on the development of key skills and attitudes most required of apprentices at the Pre-App level.

Earlier this year, contractors across the province were surveyed and had an opportunity to tell W-JETS and IBEW Business Managers exactly what they needed in their future apprentices. In

April, the first class of ten WATT program graduates were dispatched with five safety tickets (OFA1, WHMIS, CSTS-09, Fall Protection and Elevated Work Platform), creating a safer apprentice with good practical hands on, work ready training. For successful completion of the program, they are evaluated on their technical ability, hands-on skill level, attitude and motivation. Participants receive various federal government financial supports to reduce barriers to entry. They are also provided with wrap-around coaching and mentorship support to ensure their success and advancement. Upon completion of the instructional portion of the program, graduates are registered with the ITA and their local college for levels 1-4. A program advisor tracks their success and provides guidance throughout their first six-months as a Pre-Apprentice. Western JETS provides each graduate with an Individual Learning Plan, access to online Essential Skills upgrading and tutoring to ensure they are being trained in the skills they need and prepared for their formal education to help shape the future of the IBEW in BC.

## Volume 2: 2019

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## News & Notes

### Upcoming Training

#### Victoria

Fire Alarm: .....	Nov. 16 & 17
Arc Flash & High Voltage Safety: .....	Nov. 23
High Voltage Splicing & Terminations: ...	Nov 24
Fibre Optic: .....	Sept. 13, 14 & 15
Conduit Level 1: .....	Sept. 28
Front Line Foreman 1: .....	Sept. 28 & 29
Frontline Foreman 2: .....	Nov 16

#### Nanaimo

Fire Alarm: .....	Dec. 14 & 15
Fibre Optic: .....	Oct 18, 19 & 20

#### Campbell River

Arc Flash: .....	Nov. 30
High Voltage Splicing: .....	Dec. 1

#### Port Alberni Info Meeting

August 20th 7:00 PM  
Tye Motel 4151 Redford St.



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# Business Manager's Report



Phil Venoit Business Manager/  
Financial Secretary

The majority of my time over the last five months was spent in Construction Bargaining, which is the single largest set of private-sector negotiations in British Columbia. Without going into detail, this task is no simple one, it is unlike any other set of bargaining. First, the BC Building Trades has by legislation and been legally required to negotiate together as a council with the Construction Labour Relations Association (CLRA) of BC since 1978, and because we negotiate Provincially, we must vet our proposals and consider those amongst the four IBEW construction local unions, (Local 213, 230, 993, 1003). So, before we even begin with our contractors, we essentially negotiate with ourselves to see what proposals will make it to the bargaining tables. Then, there are the two tables, the Main Table where all construction unions negotiate a number of items together. These items may be defined by the BC Labour Relations Board, which is the quasi-judicial court of law overseeing Provincial Bargaining, and has more recently taken a different approach to construction bargaining in BC through a "Protocol Agreement". In other words, we negotiate how we will negotiate in the current round. While a protocol is nothing new, it is new to construction, and this one

is quite different to those Local 230 has agreed to in the past. Protocols usually describe how both parties would approach bargaining essentially setting out the rules of engagement. This Protocol was negotiated with the Labour Board and the CLRA and really defines an exit strategy from bargaining in the event the parties cannot conclude on their own. Often these items are hotly debated and peppered by judicial case law.

Our second typical set of negotiations are internal (again), with the other construction unions, which of course their interests and ours do not always line up. That process is taken

who have worked a majority of the hours over the previous year).

Once those items have been decided, the Main Table Negotiating Committee meets with the CLRA and several of BC's large general and sub-trade contractors.

While this is going on, the 16 Trade Tables meet to negotiate 48 different collective agreements, specific to each union and trade. This is where the four (4) IBEW construction locals sit down with typically a dozen or so of the electrical contractors to negotiate IBEW issues only.

In this round of bargaining the CLRA proposed a "Favoured Nations"



Long-time union advocate Wayne Peppard (L) is presented with a plaque of appreciation upon his retirement by Allied Hydro Council President Chris Feller.

Prior to Wayne taking on the role of Council Executive Director he served for almost a decade as the Executive Director to BC's Building Trades.

upon under the umbrella of the BC Bargaining Council of Building Trades Unions (BCBCBTU), where we discuss, debate, and decide democratically how we proceed and with which main table proposals. That is done under their Constitution/ Bylaws and requires a double majority vote, (a simple majority of the unions, and a majority of those

clause which would seek to reduce every and any provision in our collective agreement to the lowest common denominator. If we had an agreement that paid less, or that had weaker language, that wage rate or language by notice from CLRA, would become the new wage rate or language in our construction agreement. This move

## Business Manager's Report (Continued...)

was so disruptive that the BCBCBTU moved towards taking a strike vote of our membership, which hasn't been a direction we have taken since 1985. The contractors wanted a 5-year term, and were hell-bent on reducing overtime for weekends and Holidays, reducing Holidays to Statutory Holidays only, reducing Retirement, Health and Welfare and Industry Funds to hours worked from hours earned, a freeze to LOA & meal allowance, with a roll back to O.T. meals allowance (due to CRA rules allowing up to \$17 un-taxed), and more.

On February 15th the BC Labour relations Board ordered the CLRA and BCBCBTU to continue bargaining at the Labour Relations Board with the continued oversight of the Board ordered Mediator. On June 3rd, after a month of moving essentially the same document back and forth, and two weeks working without precedence or prejudice with our proposals we agreed to we were at impasse, and the Board ordered the Settlement as proposed by the Mediator who had been overseeing this round of bargaining over the previous couple of months.

The term is four years, with a seventy-five-cent (\$0.75) increase (with 12% Vac/ Hol. on top of that) May 1st of each of the four years. (The first wage increase occurred on June 17th). Saturday overtime has been sunsetted (again) to time and half for the first ten hours this time for all ICI construction trades. This move is the direct result of our competition whether that be non-union, convenience unions like the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), even our friends within the labour movement that represent trades at mills and plants around BC have moved to time and a half on Saturday's to allow their employer to be more competitive, and regardless how pissed-off I am about this change it is now with us for the next four years.

At our Trade table the Labour Board also mandated that only items that were mutually agreed to would make-up the settlement. The IBEW signed off on several common-sense changes, like a new Security Technician Addendum. This new classification of worker in our construction agreement, as that market continues to expand, will increase our membership in an area that is clearly electrical work, and we need the qualified workforce. I believe our timing is placed well to increase our market share, and our ability to represent workers in this low-voltage security installation market. Locals 230, 993 & 1003 have new Pension Language in our Agreement to require all new members to move into our Pension Plan and to allow our existing members to opt in as well. There will be information on this in the next Newsletter.

We added "grandchild" to our Bereavement Leave, and ironically expanded our Industrial Definition by including work on marine vessels (Local 230 only).

Like previous rounds of bargaining this round had its challenges, but I don't recall walking away from any previous round being so frustrated. I've served as the chief negotiator for the IBEW over the past five rounds of construction bargaining. It's not the 1970's anymore, in that it isn't the heaviest fist on the table or loudest voice in the room that gets the attention, it's the professionalism, safety, attitude and skill level of our IBEW membership working day-in-day-out that a negotiator gets to sell. It's the market-share we command, it's the innovation of our membership and business office resulting in more fluid and efficient job sites. Then, good open honest communications, logic, empathy, passion and tenacity that rule the bargaining table today. To that point we have done everything to help our contractors win work to employ our Local 230 membership, we were simply

collateral damage in the legislated bargaining relationship we have.

Our construction work picture continues to look positive for 2019, with the sewage treatment finally coming out of the ground, continuing multi-purpose residential build-outs, and government infrastructure, the increase in pulp prices could fair-well for work in the Pulp and Paper Mills, including a possible re-start in Port Alice (although this looks to be held up politically at this point), and an expansion in Port Alberni for tertiary manufacturing of wood products, while continuing an incredibly busy work-schedule in the marine section as well. As usual, this is great news for our members and Local Union.

Lastly, I would like to welcome KVAMM Electric, Island Technical Installations and Oceanside Electric as our newest electrical signatory contractors to the construction collective agreement.



# BC Federation of Labour Convention Elects Local 230 Brother Laird Cronk as President

Late last year, the Local 230 Staff and 3 of our Shop Stewards Ray Perlstrom from Victoria Shipyard, Mark Peters who served as Steward on the John Hart Dam and the Courtenay Hospital, and Collin Heuman from the City of Victoria joined over 1100 labour leaders throughout our Province to attend the BC Federation of Labour Convention. I sat on the Constitution Committee, reviewing 21 proposed (mostly housekeeping) changes to the Constitution. Only one of those Resolutions was opposed by the Committee and that was to allow for smaller local unions an extra delegate to attend the Convention, that resolution was defeated after a standing vote (head count) was conducted. Business Rep. McGregor, served as a Sargent of Arms throughout the Convention.

We received several reports on all the good work the BC Fed has been conducting on our behalf on Health and Safety, Human Rights, Community and Social Action, Political Action, Apprenticeship and Training, Education, Young Workers and Women's Rights.

Local 230 Submitted four (4) Resolutions; providing Asbestos Awareness Training within the B.C. Apprenticeship Training system, opening up a dialogue with the Provincial and Federal



Local 230 Brother Laird Cronk at Convention accepting his nomination surrounded by Officers of the BC Federation of Labour

Governments on resolving the Underground Construction Economy, the move towards Compulsory Certification for several trades and to have our Provincial Government halt the use of the Self-help Kits used in resolving conflict under the Employment Standards Act, which had a clear objective to put workers who stand up for their rights in the crosshairs of their unscrupulous non-union employers who take advantage of their workers, and commit payroll fraud.

We had speakers like Labour Minister Harry Bains commit to abolishing the Self-Help Kits, which will help with our Organizing efforts by helping to ensure non-Union electricians get their minimum standards without reprisal.

Premier John Horgan spoke to us for an hour highlighting the NDP's accomplishments in their first year and half as B.C.'s Government, repealing the Bill the B.C. Liberals used to cut Health Care workers jobs, moving MSP on to the shoulders of employers through taxes, and Community Benefit Agreements.

In an incredible display of Unity & Solidarity, our Local 230 Brother and International Representative Laird, Cronk was elected, unchallenged as the new President of the B.C. Federation of Labour. As was Sussanne Skidmore to the position of Secretary-Treasurer, Susanne was a Court Clerk and a Training Analyst for the Ministry of Justice.

They will make a great team in representing Labour in BC.



Local 230 Construction Representative Cory McGregor gets Challenge Coin burned by Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, Mitzi Dean.

Ms. Dean joined Local 230 members for our NextGen/ Youth Conference and received our IBEW Challenge Coin after speaking to them about the importance of being politically engaged.