

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE UNION OF CONSTRUCTION MAINTENANCE AND ALLIED WORKERS

FALL 2008

THE WRITE

ANGLE

VOLUME 1 - ISSUE 3

CMAW WINS RIGHT TO WORK ON \$2.5 BILLION ALCAN RIO TINTO PROJECT

More than 50 years ago, about 500 B.C. carpenters joined 2,000-plus construction workers to build the Alcan aluminum smelter in Kitimat. Canadian union workers not only built the smelter, but also a reputation for B.C. union labour. When Rio Tinto Alcan recently announced a \$2.5 billion smelter expansion, the American headquartered International Building Trades tried to have our union excluded from the project, but CMAW fought back and we won the right to work.

Early this summer, CMAW learned that Bechtel Canada – the engineering, construction management company awarded the expansion contract – had entered into a project labour agreement with the Building



LEFT: CARPENTERS AT WORK DURING 1950S CONSTRUCTION OF ALCAN.
ABOVE: ARIAL VIEW OF KITIMAT.

Trade Unions and that we were going to be excluded from the project.

Our CMAW officers moved quickly to apprise Bechtel of the problems they would face if they chose to deal solely with UBCJA, a union bankrupt of

members. We argued that it was unjust to exclude CMAW, a local Canadian union capable of not only supplying the qualified carpenters needed for the job, but that also holds certifications for contractors Bechtel planned to use.

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CHANGES TO IMPROVE TRAINING

As we mentioned in an earlier edition of our newsletter, CMAW is committed to ensuring members are offered the right kind of training in order to help ensure we maintain and further enhance our quality union standards.

Our CMAW Executive Board recently decided to conduct a review and assessment of the training programs locals currently offer. We'd like to know how many members have attended and completed CMAW courses. We'd also like to know how valuable participants found the courses, if there are any changes and enhancements that could be made. If you were a recent course participant and have feedback you'd like to share, please advise your local rep who will send it to our executive.

Once this review has been completed, all future course participants will be given a course feedback form so that we can continue to make improvements.



PAT HAGGARTY

FAIR DISPATCH AND HIRING POLICY ON THE WAY

Our CMAW Executive Board has struck a committee to develop a province-wide hiring, dispatch and local transfer policy, as well as any other relevant issues construction locals have in common with a view to standardizing fair procedures for everyone. Brothers Ken Lippett, Fred Kuhn, Ron Kneller and Chris Polanski will review current procedures and draft a policy for our executive's approval.

NEW CRITERIA FOR TEMPORARY FUNDING REQUESTS

Our finance committee will be developing criteria to follow when locals wish to apply for temporary funding. Locals will be advised of the details once this criteria has been established.

Our 30 per cent fund which is mostly used for training and special organizing drives, also provides financial assistance when locals need it. In future, locals will be asked to supply detailed information regarding financial status and how the money being requested will be used.

TRUSTEES UP FOR RE-ELECTION AT CONVENTION

This year's convention takes place at the Holiday Inn in Downtown Vancouver, Sept. 30 to Oct. 2. Ninety-four delegates will represent the 17 CMAW locals.

While this is not an election year for CMAW officers, it is an election year for our Carpentry Workers' Benefit and Pension

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Plan Trustees. Three trustees who represent the following regions are up for re-election: Lower Mainland (John Davies); Vancouver Island (Fred Kuhn); Thompson-Okanagan (Olaf Duemler).

Only delegates from each of these respective areas will be entitled to vote for a trustee to represent their region.

UBCJA SETTLEMENT PAYMENTS

Members are reminded that it has always been CMAW's intention to spread the cost of our UBCJA settlement across all our locals.

The money used to pay the settlement has been drawn from our strike fund and training fund.

Locals that have contributed to only one fund, or to neither fund, have been billed for their share of the cost. These locals are: Local 506, 1928, Local 2511, all school board locals, as well as construction locals with industrial members.

I appreciate members' concerns about the need for all locals to be treated fairly and equally, and I hope that this information puts some of these concerns to rest.

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CMAW WINS RIGHT TO WORK

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Bechtel acknowledged our concerns and recognized them by drafting a memorandum of understanding in which they indicated that they would welcome CMAW members employed by CMAW carpentry contractors. But UBCJA opposed Bechtel's decision to include CMAW and the issue was forced to go before the Labour Relations Board (LRB) where fairness prevailed.

In its final report, the LRB ruled that it is obvious to them that Bechtel Canada wants CMAW on the project, also highlighting that the project is of significant importance to the local economy and local citizens.

The LRB also stated that because UBCJA has no existing collective bargaining relationships with local carpenter contractors, stability concerns could arise and that CMAW does have bargaining relationships with local contractors.

The LRB made it clear that contractors who work on the project need to honor their collective agreements with CMAW.

"It's good news," says CMAW president, brother Jan Noster.

"We are now part of this mega project which could keep 200 plus members employed for three years.

"We are a first-class Canadian union, we are committed to doing a top-notch job for Bechtel, and we will fight any further attempts from UBCJA to take work away from CMAW." Noster also said that while we will do what we need to do to prevent the American union from doing us harm, we will keep our UBCJA differences off the Rio Tinto Alcan job site.

At this time, several Kitimat Local 1081 members are already at work on the project.

President's Post

Many of you will be reading this newsletter on day one of our 2008 convention here in Vancouver. I want to thank our members and our CMAW Executive Board who took the time to attend the convention as delegates and to vote on resolutions affecting, and written by, our members.

There is no doubt that CMAW has faced many challenges in the last year, including UBCJA attempts to raid our union and building trade attempts to exclude us from the Allied Hydro Council.

Over the last few months the UBCJA and some of their building allies also attempted to exclude CMAW from a \$2.5 billion smelter project in Kitimat. Well, sometimes it's tough to be the new kids on the block, but we showed them we weren't prepared to be kicked around.

CMAW made a strong statement by showing everyone that when it comes to defending our members, and our contractors, we fight for our rights.

I am happy to report that on Aug. 29 the BCLRB ruled that CMAW members and CMAW contractors would have access to the job site. It's good news to know that we've won a piece of



JAN NOSTER

the pie. Unfortunately, UBCJA was also permitted a small piece of the pie as they are also permitted to participate in the project.

It makes me angry to know that the UBCJA can arrogantly show up in a town like Kitimat, knowing that this town has always overwhelmingly supported Canadian autonomy. Kitimat was there when the Canadian Auto Workers Union, and its predecessors, kicked out an international union that represented workers at the very smelter our members will now be working on – the Alcan Rio Tinto modernization project.

Decades ago, Kitimat CEP members also fought a bid for

Canadian Autonomy at the Eurocan pulp mill.

And, to this day our union is upholding a proud tradition of independence in Kitimat and its surrounding communities.

Our union goals and hopes for this Kitimat project are simple and clear:

- We want local members and contractors to obtain the most economic benefit out of this project.
- We want B.C. workers and B.C. contractors to obtain the most economic benefit out of this project.
- We want Canadian workers and Canadian-based contractors to get the most economic benefit out of this project.

And, it's my job as president of our union to ensure the powers that be recognize that CMAW has all of the qualified tradesman and contractors necessary to successfully build the Alcan smelter expansion. Rest assured that I will continue to make sure that everyone knows that we are the right union for this job.

EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO BUILD UPON OUR STRONG, UNITED FRONT

Our next challenge is to make every effort to ensure CMAW is a united front against any external threat.

Guided by member concerns, I will be addressing any issues at the local level. Know that I am prepared to take any necessary action to help our union move forward as a democratic, strong, skilled union that is every member and every contractor's first choice.

I will do whatever is necessary to make sure we have our troops lined up and ready to fight the real threats.

RAIDING PERIOD: SO YOU THINK CARPENTERS ARE DUMB, MR. SMITH?

This November and December we'll again be in the 2-month annual raiding period. No doubt many of you will be approached by some international union asking you to trade your independence for empty promises from an American-based trade union. If you are approached, do not sign anything before checking with your local union and your Business Representative.

The International still can't

stomach the fact that a small group of independent Canadian members had the audacity to break away from and stop sending their money to an archaic union based in a foreign country. They just can't stand the fact that we've made it to this point and have further growth ahead. That's what this is about and it's up to us to uphold our Canadian Autonomy.

I was recently contacted by Brother and Sister members in Alberta who told me about a letter to UBCJA members in Alberta in which Jim Smith, vice-president of Canada, explained that despite the fact that Edmonton Local 1325 members voted against a recent project agreement, he was going to use his status to override the democratic wishes of Alberta members.

Alberta UBCJA members had been presented with a proposed agreement for a major construction project. They voted it down and some guy who also does not reside in Alberta thought he knew better than Alberta members who would be sent to work to build the project.

I'd like to know if Jim thinks he has some kind of psychic powers that enable him to predict whether the agreement would be accepted or rejected by

members when he wasn't even at the ratification vote. That's incredible, Jim!

One of the ironies of this is that while CMAW spent many years in court trying to break away from the UBCJA, they vehemently denied that they would ever sign a collective agreement overruling the democratic rights of their members – which in this case, is exactly what they have done to their Alberta members.

The choice has always been clear: you can have a union that puts you, the member, in charge, or you can have some guy in Washington, DC overrule your right to negotiate the best terms and conditions for you and your local.

If you would like to read Jim Smith's letter in its entirety, visit www.cmaw.blogspot.com. In the meantime, keep this in mind when you're approached by an International organizer during the raiding period this winter.

KITIMAT HAS A PROUD HISTORY OF FIGHTING FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

While Kitimat Local 1081, has had its share of tough times, it also has a proud union history that includes stories of standing up to the UBCJA, fighting big business to prevent them from destroying the environment, and helping First Nations people fight to protect their land.

In the early 1950s Kitimat was a thriving place with about 4,000 construction workers, about 500 of which were carpenters, busy working on literally carving a new town out of the bushes, as well as B.C. landmark project, Alcan.

But while the work was plentiful and welcome, even then many Local 1081 members were also hunters and fisherman who enjoyed living in Kitimat because of the wildlife.

Members weren't prepared to let big business destroy the

environment they loved and respected, and with fearless former president, brother John Jensen, at the helm they weren't shy to speak up for their rights and the rights of this province.

Jensen reports that long before there was talk about protecting the environment, this local took their concerns to the BC Fed convention where they struggled to get delegates to fully understand the scope of their fears.

But they kept at it until their concerns about their harbor being polluted were addressed.

"Looking back I have no regrets," says Jensen. Members wanted to work but not at the cost of being destructive. He says members would not be a part of destroying the environment just for jobs and that these ethics still form the backbone of Local 1081.

In fact, this local is also respected to this day for standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Nisga'a Nation (first nations people of the Nass River Valley) in their fight to protect the environment, and their land back in 1975.

Fighting for what's right was also reflected in the local's ability to stand up to our former international American union who Jensen says he sent a letter to more than 40 years ago asking them to release our members. He says an American union representative only ever paid them one visit in the four decades he served as president. "The guy merely called our office from the airport." Perhaps he knew better than to actually show up.

"I'm so glad we're now finally free from UBCJA. I would have been willing to pay double the money," says Jensen.

While few members currently



KITMAT HARBOUR



ABOVE: WORKERS LINED UP OUTSIDE MESS HALL. RIGHT: WORKERS ENJOYING A MEAL AFTER LONG DAY AT WORK.



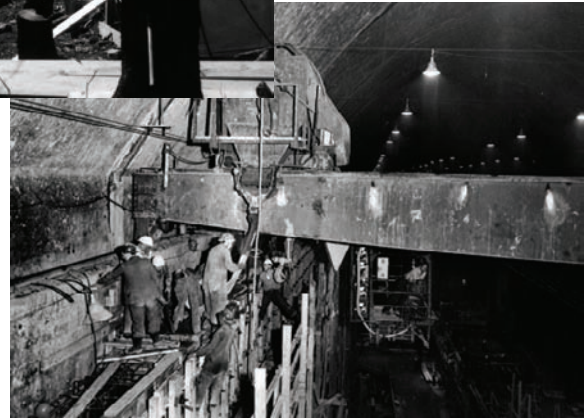
KITIMAT . . . CONTINUED

make up this satellite office, that shares all administrative expenses with Prince Rupert's Local 1735, including the business agent services of brother Ken Lippett, the community has some of the most well-rounded carpenters in our union.



LEFT: WORKERS INSTALLING ALCAN POWER LINES LIVED IN TENTS IN KEMANO

BELOW: WORKERS BUILDING 10 KM ALCAN TUNNEL WATER CONDUIT TO TURBINES



The local's current president, brother Steve Brady says, "When you're from a small place, you learn to do everything yourself." In fact he says it was his exposure to doing a little of everything as a youngster that led him to be a carpenter.

Local 1081 members currently mostly work on maintenance jobs within existing industrial plants, drawing on members from our local in Terrace when more workers are needed.

Brady says members are happy to be busy with the first phase of the Rio Tinto Alcan modernization project that could potentially employ more than 200 CMAW members.

Several Local 1081 members are already on the job working on the preliminary stage of the project.

Build a stronger union with us.

With over 400 unionized workers across Vancity, we understand the unique banking needs of labour unions and your members. So we've created specialized products tailored to help you build a stronger union.

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- Green business programs to help your union address climate change
- Programs to help existing or newly disabled members start their own businesses
- Cash management products to help manage your union's daily and discretionary accounts

Find out how we can work together to build a stronger organization. Call **Kathy Wutke, Manager, Labour Strategy** at **604.787.0809** or email **kathy_wutke@vancity.com**

Vancity

CEP PRESIDENT AT RALLY TO DEMAND NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

Our CEP Union president, Dave Coles, visited Downtown Vancouver on Labour Day, where he addressed a BC Fed-organized rally on the concerns behind the absence of a national energy strategy for Canada.

Standing on the steps of the Vancouver Art Gallery, brother Coles shamed our current government's lack of concern for Canadians and jobs. "I'll tell you about Stephen Harper and the Federal Liberals' energy strategy," he said. "It's simple. (Their strategy is to) pump as much unprocessed tar sands oil to the U.S. in the shortest possible time. That's their strategy."

Coles reminded the crowd that there are no pipelines from Western Canada to the refineries in Sarnia, Ontario or Montreal, Quebec. "In fact, there are no pipelines from Western Canada to the centre of Canada. At this time, unprocessed oil goes directly to the U.S. Canada gets the pollution, the U.S. gets the jobs, and the board rooms take the profits."

As we move towards yet another federal election, Coles encouraged Canadians to begin a debate about the right to own our Canadian resources.

Coles ended his speech with this fact: "At this time, 80 per cent of the world's processed oil is from countries where it's owned by the citizens of those countries." Why not Canada?

Following Coles speech outside the art gallery, he visited the BC Fed Labour Day picnic in Burnaby's Confederation Park.

Contact prime minister Stephen Harper and demand a National Energy Strategy that puts people and the environment ahead of corporate interests.

DEMAND A NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

WRITE PRIME MINISTER HARPER

Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa K1A 0A2

E-mail:
pm@pm.gc.ca Fax: 613-941-6900

Five reasons why Canada needs a national energy strategy:

- 1) To give Canadians security of supply
- 2) To protect our environment
- 3) To help our economy
- 4) To protect our health and future
- 5) To put people in control, not corporations

For more information, visit:

The Council of Canadians
at www.canadians.org





POLANSKI READY TO HAMMER AWAY AT NEW JOB



NEW BUSINESS AGENT CHRIS POLANSKI SPENDS SPARE TIME ON THE BALL FIELD

He decided to hang up the tools, after a 10-year stint as a carpenter, in order to try something new. Today, Chris Polanski is hammering away at his new job as business agent for Local 1346, Thompson-Okanagan.

Up until shortly before he assumed his new job as a union representative, Chris was a carpenter on the Campbell Road Interchange on the west side of Kelowna's floating bridge.

While assuming an office job for the union might seem like more than just a new experience to most carpenters, Chris was exposed to many aspects of union business as a youngster. His father, Tim, worked for the same local, as recording secretary, back in the mid-80s and perhaps gave Chris an early preview of what might be in store.

Chris says he felt comfortable taking the leap into this new job and reassured that he had many mentors around him. "In addition to Tony, I have my dad as a mentor," says Chris, who at this early stage says he has many questions for them. He says he's learned to tap into all resources and isn't shy to call upon any member of our CMAW Executive Board for information.

With less than three months on the job, Chris is on a steep learning curve. He is reading a lot and is also currently preparing to take the job steward course offered through our union as well as courses offered through the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB).

Readers may recall recently retired business agent, brother Tony Heisterkamp's wish to

hand over the reins to someone younger who he hoped would bring the local new energy and fresh ideas.

While it's too early to ask Chris about what he thinks he might do differently, we did ask the 31 year old about his observations so far.

"I believe that carpenters are some of the most satisfied workers out there. Perhaps it's the nature of the business. You get to start a job and have the satisfaction of seeing it get completed, and then you're on to something brand new," he says.

Chris was born and raised in Vernon and followed in the footsteps of his dad and uncle, who were also carpenters. "I worked with them in the summers and the idea to become a carpenter naturally progressed," he says.

When not working, Chris enjoys fishing, slow-pitch baseball, skiing and spending time with his two young daughters.

NEW CMAW MANUAL AND APPRENTICESHIP BROCHURES AVAILABLE ONLINE

Choose carpentry as your career

Good wages

Steady work

Great benefits

A good career track

CMAW

CMAW is growing through organizing and attracting new apprentices

CMAW recently released two new information brochures focused on organizing in the non-union sector and our carpentry apprenticeship program.

The brochures are designed to support our plans to grow our union by informing workers of the benefits of working under a union collective agreement, and to encourage more youth to consider the carpentry trade.

Beginning this fall, business agents from locals around the province will be using the brochures on job sites and, in discussions with potential union apprentices.

Members are encouraged to review the brochures on our cmaw website at www.cmaw.ca (Click on Organizing and Apprenticeship.)

DISPLAY WORKERS PROUDLY ACCEPT SERVICE PINS

Earlier this year, Local 1928 presented length-of-service pins to members who achieved milestone anniversaries with our union.

Local 1928 president, Don Pengilly made the presentation and posed for a picture with each member.

On behalf of CMAW, congratulations go out all pin recipients with many thanks for your work and for your years of support.



25 years of service

From left: Louis Acker, 1928 secretary-treasurer is congratulated by 1928 president, Don Pengilly



35 years of service

- Ted Meynert



40 years of service

- John Renstrom (conductor)



30 years of service

- Bob Acker (centre)
- Frank Nagal (left)



20 years of service

- Dennis LeClerc (left)
- Michel Daigneault (recording secretary)

CANADIANS ENTITLED TIME TO VOTE

All workers in Canada are entitled to a minimum two-hour window to leave work, in order to vote, on election days. Check with your local union to find out more. (visit www.elections.ca)

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GET OUT AND VOTE

On Oct. 14, Canadians will be heading to the polls for our next federal election which will be followed shortly thereafter by municipal elections. Make a conscious effort to get out and vote

In the last federal election voter turnout was less than 60 per cent and only 20 per cent voted at the municipal elections. Let's make CMAW's voter turnout 100 per cent!

To help members make an informed choice, you will find a link to each major political party website at www.cmaw.ca

Let's make CMAW's voter turnout 100 per cent.

CMAW has provided links to all major political parties' websites on our Links page found at cmaw.ca. Make an informed choice.

No matter how you choose to vote, consider the following:

Does the candidate you're voting for represent your interests? Do they care about you, your job, your family, your school, your health care, your shop and the local economy? What are their specific policies that will help you and your loved ones pay your bills?

Remember, that if you choose not to vote, you permit others to make decisions for you, and those decisions may not be in your best interests.



This newsletter is published quarterly for the 6,000 members of the Construction, Maintenance & Allied Workers Bargaining Council.

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