

# SEASON'S GREETINGS

and best wishes for a Merry Christmas  
and a happy, peaceful  
New Year

Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a peaceful New Year from the officers and staff of the British Columbia Carpenters Union and its affiliated Local Unions and District Councils.

We wish you peace in the world, sovereignty and freedom in Canada and unity in the house of labour. Please have a safe and happy holiday season and thank you for your support over the past years.



03/12/12

# ON THE LEVEL



Vol 39 No 4

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December 2003

## BC Carpenters vote for freedom

# Affiliation ballot decisive win

# 82.9

British Columbia Carpenters Union members have voted decisively to sever ties with their International parent in Washington DC.

In a referendum ballot in November, members voted overwhelmingly to cease their affiliation with the Washington dominated United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and seek an alliance with a Canadian Union.

"Our members are clearly demanding freedom from American control," said BC Carpenters Union president Len Embree in a statement issued after the ballot result was released by the accounting firm of BDO Dunwoody.

The ballot mailed to members asked "Do you wish to transfer the affiliation of the British Columbia Provincial Council of Carpenters and its affiliated Local Unions from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America to a Canadian Union?" The membership voted 82.9 per cent in favour.

Embree said, "This is the clearest demonstration

yet that the members of the BC Carpenters Union are determined to control their own destiny. They demand the right to elect their own officers and representatives and to vote on decisions that affect their livelihoods."

Reacting to numerous American takeover attempts, BC Carpenters have indicated in several referenda that they will not tolerate American interference in their elections of officers and business representatives or the merging of Local Unions or negotiating collective agreements.

Embree said that those collective rights have been fought for over generations and "We are not going to hand that over now, or ever."

Embree continued, "Only as a free and autonomous organization will we be able to make the changes necessary to grow and properly represent Canadian workers."

## Joint bargaining council formed by Carpenters and Paperworkers

Vancouver — The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters recently announced the formation of a joint council between the two unions.

The announcement follows the decision by BC carpenters in a referendum vote to sever relations with their former international union.

"This Council represents the solidarity between CEP and BC Carpenters. It is the beginning of a new relationship that will fulfill the long-held aspiration of carpenters in BC for a progressive, Canadian union," said CEP President Brian Payne.

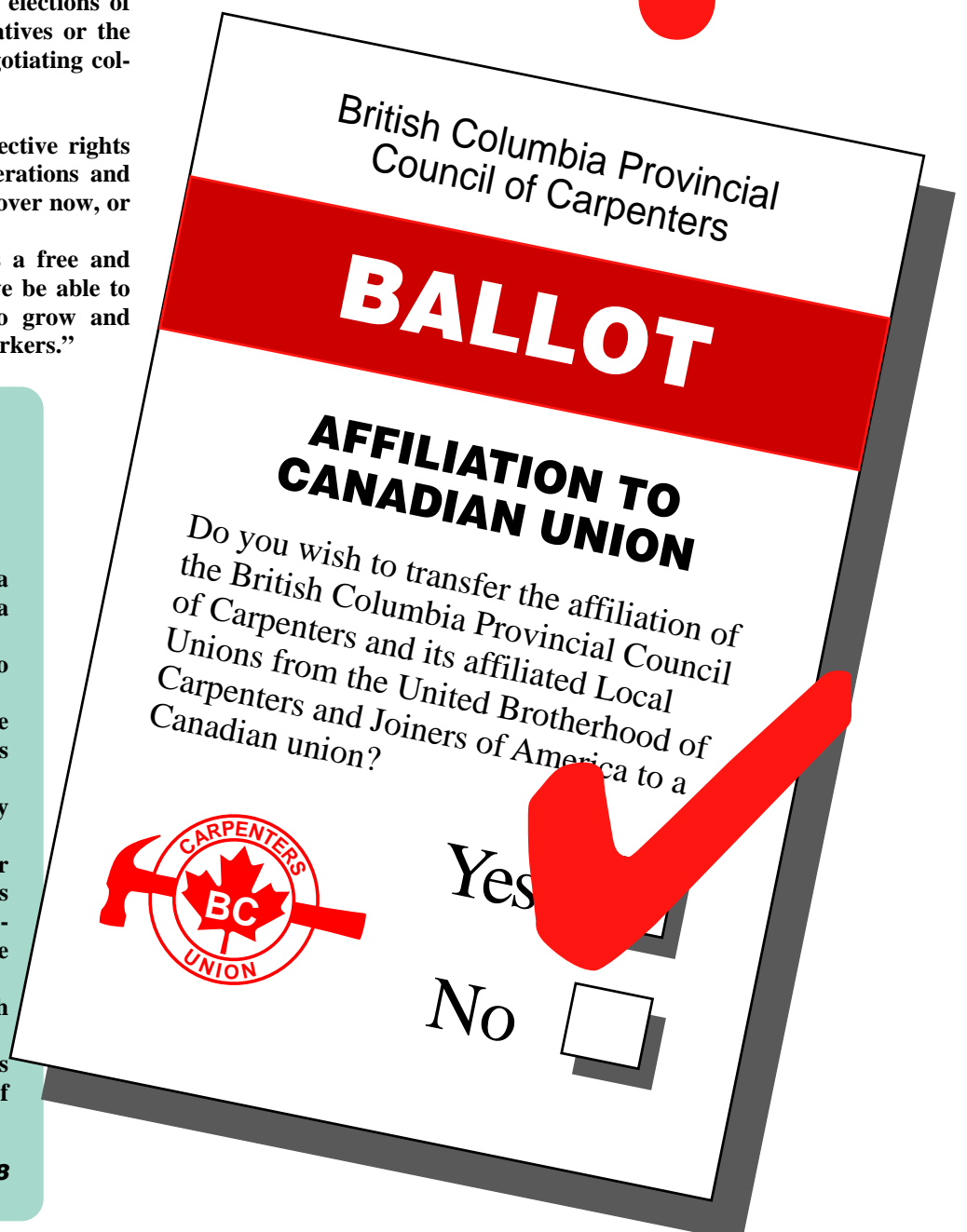
"BC Carpenters have now voted democratically and without any involvement by CEP or others to chart a new course for their membership," said Payne.

"This partnership can mean more job security and employment opportunities for our members, said BC Carpenters Union president Len Embree. "It will help us address the growing problem of non-union contractors and gate hires doing construction and maintenance work in large industrial plants. It will also promote more solidarity and co-operation between our Industrial and School Board sectors."

"It's a win-win for both unions," said Embree. "This alliance makes both unions stronger."

The council will be known as the Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Bargaining Council (CMAW) and is mandated to represent workers in all aspects of construction, maintenance, industrial, shipbuilding and public sector employment.

See: CMAW APPLIES page 8



## BC Carpenters Union Bursary Winner

This bursary winning essay by John Shaw of Local 1995 is very slightly abridged for publication. It is a story Shaw collected while gathering material for an article on the history of the IWA in the BC forest industry during the 1940s that he published a number of years ago.

# H.R. MacMillan's Missing Bull

by John Alexander Shaw

Labour unions in BC during the 1930's and 1940's were very militant and united organisations. In those days, workers knew they had to stick together and fight the big forestry bosses or starve. Unions were essential to their survival.

A major centre for union militancy in the 1940's was at the H.R. MacMillan Export Company's camp at Iron River on Vancouver Island. The owner, H.R. MacMillan, was getting extremely rich from his lucrative wartime contracts with the federal government to provide wood for the defence industry. MacMillan, however, was not very interested in sharing his wealth with his workers at Iron River and, as a result, many labour strikes broke out.

In the early days of the IWA, most strikes were very short because workers didn't have many resources to survive a long one. Eventually, the union became strong enough to enable workers to hold out longer and, during one long strike, the union had developed a very organized method of securing enough food to feed the strikers and their families for several weeks.

After two months of striking, even the union's resources were running out. The strike committee met and tried to decide whether or not they could go on any longer. They were about to vote to end the strike and go back to work when someone at the meeting came up with a plan to keep the strikers and their families fed for at least another week. He spoke of a stump ranch near Coombs, BC, where MacMillan kept a small herd of cattle. Coombs lay a few hours drive to the south from Iron River. According to the man with the plan, a small delegation of strikers could drive to Coombs in a truck, sneak onto MacMillan's property, shoot one of cattle and bring the carcass back to Iron River where it could be butchered and shared with all the strikers. He claimed that nobody would suspect them of poaching since cougar attacks were frequent in those days and the loss of one animal in a herd was a common occurrence.

Late in the afternoon of the next day a small group of men drove down to Coombs, equipped with a rifle and ammunition. It was almost nightfall when they arrived at H.R. MacMillan's ranch. Fortunately, the cattle were still grazing in a grassy patch near the treeline. One of the men shone a lamp on the herd. A large animal lifted its head. A shot cut through the twilight silence. The beast fell.

Quickly, the men seized the downed carcass after the herd had dispersed and dragged it into the truck. They jumped into the vehicle and sped away. The animal was larger than expected and, after it had been butchered, each striker's family received a sizeable portion of meat. Still, it wasn't enough to carry the strike on much longer and, eventually, the strikers at Iron River voted reluctantly to go back to work.

The defeat of their strike was only momentary, though. In 1946, the IWA launched one of the largest and most successful strikes in the history of BC. The strike brought out loggers all over the province in a massive display of union solidarity. The government and forest industry were forced to make major concessions that resulted in a 40-hour week, higher wages, and changes to labour legislation that guaranteed union recognition. A new era of labour relations began in BC that saw great advances in the earning power and labour rights of all workers, both union and nonunion. Much has been written about this era which was to last for over three decades.

Unfortunately, not much has been written about H.R. MacMillan's missing bull. A short time after the shooting, a few brief reports appeared in the local press about a prize stud bull worth \$18,000 that went missing from a ranch owned by MacMillan near Coombs. Persons knowing anything about the disappearance of the animal were advised to contact local authorities. After that, not much was said. Fortune was smiling on H.R. MacMillan and he quickly recouped his losses elsewhere, moving on to build one of the world's biggest transnational corporations, MacMillanBloedel. MacMillan was a shrewd businessman.

But how shrewd was he? In the 1940's, the sum of \$18,000 was a large fortune. How much could MacMillan have saved if he had just given the loggers at Iron River a raise? A little math would reveal that MacMillan's bull could have paid for a 10 per cent raise over a two-year contract with more than two hundred loggers who, on average, earned the meager wage of \$3.00 per 10-hour day at the time. No time would have been lost in a long, costly strike. Profits many times larger than the value of his prize bull could have been made. But the great magnates of capital don't think along such lines.



"I have no problem with them joining a union. It's just that the next thing is they'll be wanting a living wage... safety equipment... toilets that work... God knows what!"

## Winners 2003

# Carpenter Bursaries awarded to nine students

The BC Provincial Council of Carpenters Education Committee is pleased to report that nine post secondary students have been selected to receive \$500 Carpenters Union bursaries for the 2003-2004 study year. The students were required to submit short essays on some aspect of trade unionism in relations to politics, economics, social reform, history or personal experience.

Two students are eligible to win from each participating District Council area. A total of 20 applications were considered this year. Two were submitted from the Kootenay District, with Brad Carter from Castlegar taking his second in a row. The Okanagan had only one candidate this year, while the Lower Mainland had six as did the Northwest while Vancouver Island had five applicants. There were no applications from the Central District again this year.

Congratulations to those who won and thanks for the tremendous efforts of all who applied. Cheques were distributed by the winners' Local Union office.

Any member, or spouse, son, daughter or grandchild of a BC member, who is registered to attend most types of post-secondary education may enter the annual bursary contest. Bursary application forms will be available at Local Union offices in May, 2004. The deadline for applications is usually the last working day of August before Labour Day.

Previously, the BC Carpenters Provincial Convention decided to close down the Bursary Fund and transfer the assets to the Provincial Council to use in the defence of the union in our trying times. Enough was left in the account to cover anticipated bursaries for another year after this one. The program will be reviewed after that time to see if it will be possible to continue offering bursaries.

On the Level has reprinted a bursary essay on this page as the subject is particularly appropriate given the situation in the woods of British Columbia at this time. The Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers-Canada (IWA) has over 10,000 coastal forest and mill workers out on strike at this time with no end in sight. The union is not expecting a quick resumption of negotiations any time soon.

## Carpenters Union Bursary Winners for the year 2003

### Kootenay District Council

Brad Carter Local 2300  
Rob Graham Local 1719

### Lower Mainland District Council

Racam Souiedan Local 506  
John Shaw Local 1995

### Northwest District Council

Mette Liz Berg Local 1735  
Christie Slanina Local 1081

### Okanagan District Council

Chloé Frere Local 2511

### Vancouver Island District Council

Karter Geeraert Local 527  
Svea Vikander Local 1598

## ON THE LEVEL

Is dedicated to representing Carpenters Union members' views and news and reporting on social issues of interest to working people in British Columbia.

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Editorial board members: Len Embree, David Flynn, John Davies and Brian Zdrilic.

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## Make the Internet connection

### Other sites of interest include:

Carpentry Workers Pension & Benefit Plans of BC	<a href="http://www.cwbp.ca/">www.cwbp.ca/</a>
BC Federation of Labour	<a href="http://www.bcfed.com">www.bcfed.com</a>
CLC home page	<a href="http://www.clc-ctc.ca">www.clc-ctc.ca</a>
CEP home page	<a href="http://www.cep.ca">www.cep.ca</a>
Canadian Autoworkers	<a href="http://www.caw.ca/index.asp">www.caw.ca/index.asp</a>
CUPE BC	<a href="http://www.cupe.bc.ca">www.cupe.bc.ca</a>
Labour Start (labour news)	<a href="http://www.labourstart.org/canada/">www.labourstart.org/canada/</a>
Straight Goods (news)	<a href="http://www.straightgoods.com/">www.straightgoods.com/</a>
Working TV	<a href="http://www.workingtv.com/index.html">www.workingtv.com/index.html</a>
David Shreck (analysis)	<a href="http://www.StrategicThoughts.com/">www.StrategicThoughts.com/</a>
Parenting with Dignity	<a href="http://www.parentingwithdignity.com">www.parentingwithdignity.com</a>
Third World Development	<a href="http://www.heifer.org">www.heifer.org</a>

Internet news and views of interest to Carpenter Union members can be reached through the union friendly website run by Local 2300 member Dave Livingston at:

<http://www.carpentersunionbc.com>



### Twenty years in the making

## Shop Local wins control of Benefit Plan

Industrial Local 1928 has cleared the final hurdle to taking control of its own Benefit and Pension Plans. The BC Supreme Court recently granted the Local's application to amend the Trust Agreement, allowing the Local Union to take over exclusive control of its own Benefit Plan. Local President Pat Haggarty said it has been twenty years coming and they are now proceeding with finalizing the paperwork.

"We can be proud that our members' Health & Welfare and Pension Plans are in their own hands now," he said.

The members voted in 2002 to increase their benefits but ran into opposition from employer representatives on the board of trustees.

"Hurdles were put up by Fleming Door in Richmond that blocked the Union from going ahead with the increases," said Haggarty. "Finally, after very lengthy negotiations, we have concluded an agreement."

During this period the Plan contributions increased by 20¢ per hour, impacting some members directly as they had to pay for that increase out of their own pocket, said Haggarty.

"It became apparent that an additional local-wide meeting was necessary to reaffirm purchasing the new additional benefits or to phase them in over time," he explained.

At a Special Called meeting on November 24, 2003 the members amended their decision to phase in the additional benefits as follows:

January 1, 2003 — implement eyeglass coverage to \$500	@ 8¢
Six months later — implement eye examination coverage	@ 2¢
Six months later — implement dental coverage to \$2500	@ 4¢
Six months later — implement 52 week Weekly Indemnity	@ 12¢
Total 26¢	

The trustees have been given a general direction in which to proceed with the implementation of these benefits. However, any unexpected downloading of government medical coverage or exorbitant cost increases to the plan may cause some delay in phasing in benefits. Haggarty said it's rumoured that the provincial Liberals plan to increase Medical payments AGAIN next year.

### BCFL convention report

## Our BC — Not for Sale

by Robbi Bowden

Nine hundred forty-one delegates attending the BC Federation of Labour's 47th Convention, held at the Vancouver Trade & Convention Centre on November 24 to 26, roundly condemned Premier Gordon Campbell's plans to sell off the public assets of British Columbia. Chanting "Our BC — Not for Sale" they marched to the Art Gallery on Georgia street where speaker after speaker roasted Campbell for the just announced privatization of BC Rail which will cost several thousand BC workers their jobs.

A major thrust of the convention was the implementation of an Action Plan to intensify the fightback against the BC Liberal government's relentless actions in pursuing their agenda of handing over our assets to private interests, often multi-national corporations, at the expense of unionized workers' fair-paying jobs, health and safety issues, social programs, and other benefits. While a substantial number of delegates expressed a strong sentiment for a general strike, others stressed the importance of first building alliances with community groups and undertaking a massive campaign to promote public awareness of the issues before undertaking so serious a course. After extensive

debate, delegates reaffirmed the Action Plan endorsed at the 2002 convention, and instructed the Fed officers to develop a more detailed strategy to build solidarity between unions and with the community over the next year. As was stated many times during the convention, if we lose this battle, it will be a precursor to losing the entire war and much of what we have long held dear.

Another contentious issue involved an IWA local union that had signed a voluntary agreement with a private firm awarded contracted-out work formerly done by members of the Hospital Employees Union. Hundreds of HEU members formerly employed in a number of public facilities have lost their jobs to this privatization of their work. Delegates adopted a resolution supporting incumbent healthcare unions to continue to represent workers whose jobs have been contracted out, pledging solidarity with workers facing wage cuts and job loss, and asserting determination to unite labour to defend workers' rights. While severely critical of this IWA local's actions, delegates also expressed support for IWA-Canada in its current dispute with BC forestry companies.

In keeping with policy adopted several years ago, a full five-day convention of the Fed now is held biennially, rather than annually. A three-day "policy convention" such as this, is held in the alternating years. The format for these conventions is more condensed than a full convention, with just two days — not five — of plenary sessions devoted to resolutions and guest speakers, and the other day spent in workshop sessions. During that day, delegates are divided into groups that stay in one room, while members of three panels rotate amongst the rooms to make presentations on their respective topics. This way, every delegate has an opportunity to participate in each of the three workshop discussions.

All of the workshops featured panels of very-well versed individuals whose excellent presentations were very favourably received. Topics were:

Alternatives that Work: Organizing in the Workplace and the Community — Panelists Lee Strieb of HERE International Union in the U.S. and Charlotte Yates of McMaster University discussed the challenges facing the labour movement in maintaining and expanding their



*Dane Mortensen, Local 2545, preparing to march for BC workers*

**See PANELISTS page 7**

### School Board Local Unions Report

## Vancouver School Board negotiations underway

by Doug McCorquodale

Although the collective agreements among the School Boards expired on June 30, 2003, bargaining units are slow to commence bargaining. It is obviously a difficult situation. This government has imposed wage controls on the public sector. In health care, the government is privatizing jobs.

One group that has commenced collective bargaining is the Bargaining Council of the Vancouver School Board Construction and Maintenance Skilled Trades Unions. This organization, made up of the trades people, bargains with the Vancouver School Board.

Commonly called the "Bargaining Council" it consists of the following unions: Heat and Frost Insulators, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Electricians, Painters, Cement Masons, Plumbers, Sheet Metal, and Machinists.

On December 4, 2003, the Vancouver School Board met with the Bargaining Council to exchange proposals. Leading negotiations for the School Board is Brian Bannon, a veteran negotiator. He recently retired but has returned on contract to negotiate the next agreement. The lead ne-

gotiator for the Bargaining Council is Stan Pickthall, a very experienced and competent negotiator.

The employer's initial proposal was a roll-over three-year agreement with no changes and no concessions. The Bargaining Council rejected this offer. After the Bargaining Council submitted their proposals, the employer presented a new proposal with cuts and concessions. All this was done in the first hour of negotiations.

This could be typical of what will be faced with all the School Boards in negotiations. The concept that we can successfully move forward on school board by school board negotiations is naïve at best. CUPE has not united their own school district locals into a common front. The labour movement in British Columbia seems unable or unwilling to confront the provincial government. This is not a good time for labour.

The Bargaining Council and the Vancouver School Board agreed not to negotiate in the press so there will be no further information released on these negotiations unless it is approved by the Bargaining Council.



*Recognition for years of service—Carpenter Union members get their pins at the annual Retired Members Christmas party in New Westminster, December 4, 2003*

## Retiree Benefit Coverage

Many of our retired members have called to ask what coverage they now get for their \$39 per month. The coverage is called Extended Health Benefits and is offered through Pacific Blue Cross. Here are some highlights of what is covered:

- Eligible prescription drugs purchased from a pharmacy, including oral contraceptives. Prescription drugs and supplies for quitting smoking are covered to a maximum of \$300 per person per two-year period. Erectile dysfunction drugs are covered to a maximum of \$1,000 per person per year.
- Ambulance service in an emergency.
- Professional services of the following Practitioners to the maximum amounts indicated per calendar year, but excluding X-rays, appliances and tray fees. Only the services of a private duty nurse require referral by a Physician.
 

a) acupuncturist	\$100
b) chiropractor	\$200
c) massage practitioner	– no calendar year limit
d) naturopath	\$200
e) physiotherapist	– no calendar year limit
f) podiatrist	\$200
g) speech language pathologist	\$100
h) private duty care by a registered nurse for a person with an acute condition in the person's home or in a hospital in the patient's province of residence.	
- Out-of-Province Emergencies: Reasonable charges for physician's services and total hospital room charges (including private or semi-private rooms), minus any amounts payable by the basic medical plan and B.C. hospital programs. Your out-of-province claims count toward your lifetime maximum of \$100,000. For that reason, some members like to buy other out-of-province coverage when they travel. **If you are retired** (or are a dependent of a retired member), you face a few restrictions when travelling outside the country. You have 30 days of coverage. And if you require treatment for a condition that was diagnosed or treated within the 90 days before you left Canada, those expenses will not be covered.
- Charges for oxygen, blood or blood plasma, ostomy or ileostomy supplies, artificial limbs or eyes, crutches, splints, casts, trusses, braces or orthopedic shoes.
- Rental, or where more economical, purchase of durable equipment for therapeutic treatment and including wheelchairs and hospital beds. Please call Pacific Blue Cross to be sure you are aware of any restrictions before making a major purchase.
- Hospital charges at an approved acute general hospital in B.C. for private or semi-private room (but not including rental of telephone, TV, etc.).
- Wigs or hairpieces required because of medical treatment or injury (not illness). The maximum benefit payable during the lifetime of the person being supplied is \$500.

You may call the Benefit Plan office to request claim forms, or you can find them on our website at [www.cwbp.ca](http://www.cwbp.ca)

After you die, your spouse can remain on the CWBP Extended Health Plan for as long as he or she is receiving a pension from the Carpentry Workers' Pension Plan.

### CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

In our previous issue there was a typographical error in the Pension Fund Returns article. The amount shown in the table on page 4 as returns for the year ending June 2001 should have read 2.1%

Please turn to page six for further information on Pension Funding Policy and Q&A on pension issues.

## Eligible but not enrolled

Carpenter Union members listed below have not enrolled in the Carpentry Workers Plan and as a result may not be earning pension or Benefit coverage. They should contact their Local Union and complete the necessary Enrollment Form. Once the proper Enrollment Form has been completed and filed with the Carpentry Workers Benefit and Pension Plans office, in accordance with the Plan rules and Trust Deed, the enrollment date can be back-dated a maximum of six months.

#### No Local assigned

Allgaier, R N  
Alliston, B N  
Borge, P Borge N  
Bourassa, Jonathan  
Braulin, K N  
Cook, Niki N  
Darvault, B N  
Higgins, B N  
Horvers, E N  
Jamieson, Doug N  
Johnson, T N  
Knight, D N  
Machado, A N  
Porter, G N  
Powell, J N  
Robertson, J N  
Sales, J N  
Soares, N N  
Storey, J N  
Worth, D N  
**Local 27**  
Rody, Ryan N  
**Local 513**  
Hamilton, Randy  
Poirier, Mike J  
**Local 527**  
Amson, Charles  
Bishop, Brian G  
Brawner, Brad D  
Dilworth, S N  
Doyle, Kevin N  
Kenny, Gavin N  
Mccurdy, Daren  
**Local 1237**  
Davies, Chris R

#### Local 1325

Cayer, Alex P  
Poirier, Bradley N  
Torfs, Dennis N  
**Local 1346**  
Baker, E W  
Burk, Duane K  
Clayton, Chris J  
Finlayson, G S  
George, Philip N  
Gilbert, Byron M  
Gileff, Paul N  
Menard, Lucien  
Nelson, Richard N  
Poplawski, David N  
Prohoroff, Anatoly  
Ratcliffe, Douglas J  
Rivet, Kevin N  
Seager, Stanley G  
Sundstrom, Fred N  
Tolborg, Arne N  
**Local 1460**  
Fast, Malcolm A  
**Local 1598**  
Aldinger, Christopher  
Barry, Jay N  
Bell, Robert G  
Cain, Douglas J  
Carr, Greggor B  
Coulson, Craig N  
Docherty, Keith N  
Fisher, Arthur N  
Gardner, A N  
Hooper, Jay D  
Keddie, Mike T

Kilgour, Blair R  
Manifold, S N  
Mchenry, Mark W  
Patterson, Rocky N  
Poulsen, B N  
Scroggs, Ben N  
Shacter, J N  
**Local 1719**  
Babiak, John N  
Bogaard, Gary O  
Grant, B N  
Hubli, Alan N  
Johnston, Brian N  
Leeson, D H  
Mousseau, Robert N  
Robinson, Craig E  
Smith, Dwight N  
**Local 1735**  
Belina, Clayton L  
Dunn, Edward A  
Kroetsch, Harvey C  
Le Blanc, J N  
Martin, Bruce N  
Rudderham, Polly M  
Schibli, John F  
Spencer, Mathew N  
**Local 1812**  
Baldwyn, Mike C  
Mitchell, Jerry N  
Carr, Clifford A  
**Local 1907**  
Hammond, Robert A  
Fisher, Thomas M  
Lockman, David N  
Maki, Ronald E  
Nelmes, O. Brad B

Schoeffel, Rainer N  
Sinclair, Dave C  
Siskopoulos, Alex N  
Swain, Rob L  
Turner, Bruce N  
**Local 1989**  
Couper, Raymond G  
Dennis, T N  
Fisher, James V  
Huebchen, Chris N  
Oakman, Dennis N  
Pickering, Fredric D  
Strachan, Michael W  
**Local 1995**  
Agalou, Evangelos N  
Almeida, Belmiro N  
Anderson, Ken S  
Angelucci, Brennan W  
Anutooshkin, Harry A  
Boake, Kenneth L  
Calvert, Jeremiah  
Capuani, Peter N  
Carroll, Andre J  
Chatt, Kyle N  
Cressman, Josh N  
Dagenais, Eric R  
Derodra, Rahul J  
Desautels, Denis P  
Erickson, Wayne B  
Gawle, Darren N  
Gladue, Doug J  
Grant, Chris N  
Hansen, Steven R  
Harris, Bruce N  
Haslam, Timothy M  
Hoffman, Cyrille D

Hunt, Robert D  
Keating, Craig N  
Komaromy, Ray K  
Kyne, Patrick N  
Lamarre, John N  
Lanci, Vincenzo N  
Lyons, David G  
Magnuson, Ronald N  
Moore, Melvin D  
Nagla, Hamir R  
Ng, Michael S  
Pausche, James E  
Peppard, Darren M  
Reidegeld, Frank N  
Ringoldus, Cory N  
Rovers, John G  
Scott, James F  
Sihota, Terry N  
Singh, Gurudav N  
Skare, Dan F  
Stermshnig, Michael N  
Suarez, Pierre P  
Sweeney, John N  
Thomas, Jessica J  
Valade, Tommy H  
Webster, Kim C  
White, Craig S  
Wrightson, Allan D  
Ynestroza, Luis N  
**Local 1998**  
Blair, Crystal N  
Booth, Kristofer K  
Callahan, J N  
Chabot, Roger L  
Eyford, Roy E

Fahl, Pete N  
Foisly, Ken N  
Garcia, M N  
Geensen, Jos N  
Johnson, Kevin N  
Lachapelle, Martin P  
Quick, Tim N  
Russman, Gordon N  
Soderena, Kevin E  
Strachan, Willard N  
Sturt, Rae N  
Taron, Diana D  
**Local 2068**  
Bowes, Don N  
Lange, Allen D  
**Local 2300**  
Andrews, D C  
Gustavsson, Tom G  
Kabatoff, Andrew B  
Kozler, Lyle N  
Murdoch, Edward N  
Roy, France J  
Scobie, Darcy N  
Shippit, Chuck N  
Waneck, Douglas E  
**Local 2736**  
Bourcier, John M  
Ferrier, Max D  
Gouthro, John N  
Kucko, M N  
Mercier, Joseph C  
Wrobel, Edward N

## Benefit and Pension Plan Office Christmas hours

Wed, Dec 24	8:30 - noon
Thurs, Dec 25	Closed
Fri, Dec 26	Closed
Wed, Dec 31	8:30 - noon
Thurs, Jan 1	Closed

## Fair

PharmaCa  
PharmaC  
It is not  
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## Benefit and Pens

Every year, an independent accounting firm of financial statements. The accounting firm of The audit works like a financial checkup you how much money was in the Pension and Be came in, how much went out and finally, the run from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> and each is rep

## Benefit Plan Financial Statement Summary

The net assets available for benefits decreased during the years. The assets decreased from \$11,343,879 to \$7,963,911 \$3.38 million higher than our income, that's even higher than

For a number of years we offered benefits which cost far more than we were receiving in income. In the past couple of years the average cost of the packages offered was twice that of the income received to pay for them. The changes in the benefit plan coverage we made in May, 2003, will stop this slide and start the rebuilding of a minimal surplus.

Unlike pension plans, a benefit plan is largely funded by the ongoing contributions with some additional resources coming from investments. Benefit plans are not allowed to build up large "surpluses" which could be used to generate more investment income. Canada Customs and Revenue expects a surplus to be equivalent to the cost of providing one year's benefit. We are still below that target at the end of the 2002/2003 year even with the changes we made in May but without them we would have been in the red by now.

### THE DETAILS: Contributions

Contributions went down a little during the past year while the costs of providing the benefits continued to increase. The benefit of the negotiated raise in contribution rates for jobs tendered after April 30<sup>th</sup> will not be seen until well into the 2003/2004 year when new jobs are started and the new rate applies.

### Medical Inflation

BC Medical premiums were the largest single benefit cost, nearly 45 per cent of the total, so we took a huge hit when the BC government increased rates to 1.5 times what they had been. The May Benefit changes ended

MSP coverage. Had made the change until the June, our shortfall would increase by about \$7 million. We would have had a deficit more than \$4 million. The cost of extended benefits is another major which is increasing by amounts each year. New are very expensive and the government is continuing back on what it will cover (physiotherapy). In 2003 the increase in the cost of health care was 10 per cent. For 2003/2004 we are expecting increases of another 20 per cent.

### Overall costs

The overall cost of providing benefits ran around \$2 million per month per member. Net contributions for each month was \$119.50 with a small

## Carpentry Workers Financial Statement Summary

Assets at start of year  
Increase in assets  
Investment income  
Employer contributions  
Employee contributions  
Life insurance expenses  
**Total increase in assets**  
Decrease in assets  
Dental, optical, extended wage indemnity and BC Medical premiums  
**Total benefit costs**

Administrative expenses  
Capital assets  
**Total decrease in assets**  
**Assets at end of year**  
**Allocation of assets at end of year**  
Provision for future years  
Unallocated assets at

# PharmaCare Reminder

Registration is no longer automatic. You must register for Fair Care to be eligible for benefits.

It is too late to register, even though the effective date for the program has passed. If you or your family do not register, their amounts will default to a deductible of \$100 per year.

Since PharmaCare is going to reimburse less than it used to overall, our Benefit Plan is going to go up. To keep that increase as small as possible, it is important that you pay every dollar it should, so that those unclaimed costs don't get passed on to our Benefit Plan. While fewer than one-quarter of BC residents will actually benefit through PharmaCare, it is very important that all of our benefit members who might receive a Pharmacare benefit register promptly.

# Annual Plan Reports

Audits the Carpentry Workers' Pension and Benefit Plan. BDO Dunwoody has completed the 2003 audit.

The auditor looks at how you might do on your family finances. The auditor looks at the benefit funds at the beginning of the Plan year, how much money is at the bottom line at the end of the Plan year. The Plan years are reported separately.



# Financial Summary

This year, as they have for the past number of years, by the end of the year. Our expenses were \$2.73 million shortfall in 2001/2002.

We note that the investment amount coming from investment income. The rest came directly from the sale of investments.

### Looking ahead:

The restructuring of the benefit coverage has given the plan the ongoing ability to provide benefits for all members. Benefit packages have been reworked to make sure we are not offering benefits that cost more than the plan can earn through contributions and investment income.

In the past year we moved the plan into a sustainable position and we have introduced options which allow you to make a decision on what coverage best suits your situation. We will continue to work to ensure we make the best possible use of our resources.

## What does it mean?

Definitions of some of the terms used in this article

### Provision for future premiums and benefits versus the unallocated net assets:

We calculate the total cost of providing benefits and apply that to the hour bank balance at the end of the year. This is the amount we "put aside" so we are sure we can deliver benefits to everyone with an hour bank. The rest of the assets are called the "unallocated assets", we can think of this as the "surplus."

### Administrative expenses:

These are the expenses related to running the benefit plan. For the last two years the costs related to running the pension plan have been charged to the pension plan, before that the benefit plan paid all the costs and charged only a token amount. We made this change so that the financial statements of each plan would reflect the real cost of running it.

### Medical inflation:

This is the annual inflation associated with health care and drug costs. These types of costs increase at a far higher rate than the overall inflation rate. The new procedures and drugs that enhance the quality of our lives are increasingly more expensive.

## Carpentry Workers Benefit Plan

Statement	Year Ended June 30	
	2003	2002
Assets at start of year	11,343,879	14,070,627
Investment income	575,050	731,717
Contributions	3,406,048	3,522,899
Benefit payments	1,568,908	1,715,442
Administrative expenses	188,507	86,997
Capital taxes and interest	5,738,513	6,057,055
Assets at end of year	7,963,911	11,343,879
Investment income	3,384,100	5,969,681
Contributions	4,579,811	5,374,198

## Plan Financial Statements available

The Carpentry Workers Pension and Benefit Plan financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2003 are now available. You can get a copy of the complete statements by writing to us or view a copy by dropping into the Plan Office.

Suite 300 - 2806 Kingsway  
Vancouver, BC, V5R 5V1  
604 438-2434



# Pension Plan Financial Statement Summary

The Plan's assets on June 30, 2003 were \$175,254,286, down from \$184,839,326 on June 30, 2002. This table highlights the change in assets for 2002/2003 compared to 2001/2002:

Is this bad news? First, it's important to remember that a pension plan's financial health is measured by the balance between its assets and its obligations. It's not just how much money is in the pot — it's also how much you have to support out of that pot that matters. So, when both sides of the equation (assets and obligations) go down, it is not necessarily a bad thing. Second, while generally we would like to see the assets go up instead of down, we expect that assets will grow more slowly than in the past and go down in years of poor investment returns. When the Plan first started, there was more money coming in (contributions for working members) than going out (to retired members in benefits). The "pot of money" grew quickly. Now money going out in pension benefits is much more than money coming in through contributions. In the year ending June 30, 2003, over \$21 million was paid out in benefits and about \$6 million came in through contributions.

In order for the assets to grow, investment income has to make up the difference. The good news is that the Plan earned positive investment returns in the last two Plan years in spite of poor investment markets. In fact, the Plan has done better than most other pension plans in this time. However, the investment return wasn't enough to stop the asset value from going down.

### Looking ahead

The benefit reductions made in July 2003 will affect the 2003/2004 financial results. Benefit

payments will still be more than contributions, but the difference will be cut in about half. So, unless there is a major downturn in the investment markets, the money "in the pot" — the Plan assets — should increase in this Plan year.

In the last two Plan years, administrative expenses have been high. A lot of work had to be done to fix our financial prob-

lems and reorganize our entire operation. More work remains to be done. Administrative expenses will go down in 2003/2004 but probably won't return to a normal level until the following year.

We'll continue to keep you updated on the Plan's progress in future editions of *On the Level*.

### In the last two Plan years, the Pension fund assets went down primarily because:

1. Investment income was low due to the poor investment markets; and
2. In 2001/2002, a large amount was paid to Plan members who elected the portability option — an option that should have been offered to members previously but wasn't. Although this reduced the Plan's assets, the Plan also gained by losing its obligation (liability) for these members.

## Carpentry Workers Pension Plan

### Financial Statement

Summary	Year Ended June 30	
	2003	2002
Assets at start of year	184,839,326	209,106,601
<b>Increase in assets</b>		
Investment income	7,318,701	8,213,617
Contributions	6,062,496	6,591,252
<b>Total increase in assets</b>	13,381,197	14,804,869
<b>Decrease in assets</b>		
Pension benefits	18,825,995	18,206,075
Portability and termination payouts	2,534,629	18,585,235
<b>Total benefit payments</b>	21,360,624	36,791,310
Administrative expenses	1,605,613	1,850,798
Capital taxes and interest	—	430,036
<b>Total decrease in assets</b>	(9,585,040)	(24,267,275)
<b>Assets at end of year</b>	175,254,286	184,839,601

## Understanding Pension Plan Financial Statements

### Assets:

This is money "in the pot" that is, money set aside and available for benefits.

### Increases to assets:

The pot gets bigger by the investments earned by the Plan and contributions made to the Plan.

### Decreases to assets:

The pot gets smaller by paying benefits, expenses and taxes.

## Questions about the Carpenters Pension Plan

# Q&A

The following question has been frequently asked of the Carpentry Workers staff lately. To further the understanding of the rights and benefits available to union members, *ON THE LEVEL* will publish selected questions and answers about the Plans on a regular basis. Please feel free to write to *ON THE LEVEL* if you have a question you would like to see in print, or call the Carpentry Workers Benefit and Pension Plans for further information

**Q.** Does the reduction in my pension make any difference to the Pension Adjustment reported on my T4? Will I get RRSP contribution room back?

**A.** *No. Because you are a member of a multi-employer pension plan, your Pension Adjustment (PA) is the amount your employer(s) contributed to the Pension Plan on your behalf. The contribution your employer makes to the Plan is still \$2.34 per hour worked (\$1.17 for apprentices) and so if you worked the same hours as you did last year, your Pension Adjustment would be the same.*

This may not seem fair but actually, those in multi-employer plans have favourable treatment in general under the existing CCRA calculation rules. Your PA is a better deal than that of someone earning the same pension in a single-employer plan.

In single-employer plans, the PA calculation is based on the value of the pension earned in the year. In

this type of Plan, a reduction in pension would mean a reduction in PA. A person in a single employer pension plan with a pension of \$112.50 earned in the year would have a PA of \$11,550. For a pension of \$73.15, the PA would be \$7300. A member who had 1800 contributory hours in our Plan would have a PA of \$4212 even though his or her earned pension dropped from \$112.50 to \$73.15 – almost 75% less than the PA from a single employer plan.

As a reminder, the PA reduces your RRSP contribution room. The lower the PA, the more RRSP contribution room you have. You can see from the above calculations that our member has more RRSP contribution room for the same amount of earned pension than does someone in a single employer plan.

Pension Adjustments provide a rough justice between those who are in registered pension plans and those who save for retirement on their own. They can't and don't provide a precise equality from person to person or from year to year. There is a calculation called a Pension Adjustment Reversal (PAR) to return RRSP room to individuals in certain circumstances. However, multi-employer plans may not issue PARs. It is a way of equalizing the special treatment that a member of a multi-employer plan gets.

### Funding Policy

## Pension Funding Policy Approved

The Pension Plan Trustees have recently developed and implemented a funding policy, which has been posted to the website [cwbp.ca](http://cwbp.ca).

The funding policy sets out the Trustees' objectives for managing the Pension Plan's financial position. First, the pension fund needs to have enough money to:

- be able to pay the promised benefits, and
- provide a cushion against a rainy day (for example, poor investment markets).

Once the fund has reached a certain level, the funding policy allows the Trustees to use some money to improve the Plan's pension benefits. How much is enough? *Going Concern* and *Solvency Ratios* are two measures used by pension regulators to determine the financial health of a pension plan. At our last valuation, the going concern ratio was 104.1 per cent and the solvency ratio was 97.1 per cent, after taking the July 1, 2003 reductions into account. The funding policy states that both measures must be over 110 per cent before benefit improvements could be made. Essentially, a measure of 100 per cent means the fund has enough money (assets) to pay its pension obligations (liabilities) but no cushion. There are also other tests of financial health set out in the funding policy to ensure the Plan is properly funded.

Over time, **when there is enough money in the fund**, the priorities for improvements are:

- First - some of the 2003 "across-the-board" pension reductions will be restored for older retired members and beneficiaries.
- Second - the full amount of the 2003 "across-the-board" pension reductions will be restored gradually over time for all members.
- Third - funds that become available after satisfying the first two priorities will be used to provide increases in benefits so that, over the longer term, benefit amounts keep closer pace with inflation.

The Trustees want to be sure that future improvements to the pension benefits are done prudently. They would hate to improve pensions just to find they had to cut them again! This funding policy is a major step in making sure that the Plan is managed properly. We strongly urge you to read the full policy on the website [www.cwbp.ca](http://www.cwbp.ca).

## Retired members

The following BC Carpenter Union members have recently taken normal, early or disability retirement and are eligible to receive a Carpentry Workers Pension.

Lotridge, John	Otterstein, Martin
Moser, Morris	Sedlak, Nikola
Nielsen, Ron	Welsh, James
Olsen, Earl	White, Ronald



Millwrights and other trades protesting importation of cheap labour to take Canadian jobs in Gold River

— photo by Frank Nolan, Local 2736 Millwrights

### HRDC approves hiring workers from India to take BC jobs

## Trades protest temporary foreign workers taking jobs

Millwrights and other trades are furious over a federal government rule that allows foreign workers to take their jobs in one of the most depressed areas of British Columbia.

Millwrights and Building Trades workers gathered outside Human Resources offices in Vancouver on December 10 to protest the use of a dozen workers imported from India to dismantle the Gold River pulp mill on Vancouver Island. More than 500 workers lost their jobs when the mill was closed in 1999 and subsequently sold to a company operating in Thailand. This in a town of only 2000 people.

Brian Zdrilic, Millwrights Local 2736 business manager, said he was "astounded" that Mema International could bring in foreign workers from New Delhi to take apart the mill machinery and reassemble it in Thailand. "They are living six to a room in Gold River and just getting paid their board until they return home to India where they will probably be paid local Indian rates," he said.

"We have at least a dozen workers locally who could do that job."

The excuse given by HRDC's Foreign Workers Unit which granted the permits to import the workers was that Mema International wanted the same workers involved throughout to ensure they know how to reassemble the equipment.

Wayne Pierce, a local tradesman who worked in the mill for over 14 years and is currently unemployed, told *ON THE LEVEL* that there are dozens of local tradespeople qualified and willing to do the job.

"It's a very simple deconstruction," he said. "It doesn't have to be put back by the same people who took it apart as it won't be in the same configuration anyway."

John Duncan the Canadian Alliance MP for Vancouver Island North said it appears to be more of a cost saving venture. "Conventional wisdom is that no more than one person would be required to do this (reassembly supervision) task with the type of equipment in Gold River," he said.

In the spring, bids were requested of Canadian companies to do the work. When the price was deemed "too high," it appears the company simply went elsewhere for labour.

"This should not be happening since the test prior to issuing permits is supposed to be whether or not there are Canadians available to do the work. There are laid off British Columbia workers ready, willing and able to do this work," said Duncan.

He called on HRDC to terminate the visas for the foreign workers in Gold River and asked for a review of other foreign workers visa requests in the works that will put Canadians off the job.

Zdrilic said he is concerned that the Powell River Kraft mill sale to China may also involve an application to use foreign workers. At this time there is no proof an application has been made, according to Zdrilic.

"Why would anyone hire locally if they could just temporarily import cheap labour from overseas," he queried.

### Pre-Authorization of Major Health Expenses

**We remind you that before you make a major purchase that you are depending on Pacific Blue Cross' reimbursement for, it is a good idea to call them first for pre-authorization and an explanation of exactly what the restrictions on that item are. Many items are listed in the brochure as eligible, but there could be restrictions on the health reason for the purchase or who you purchase the item from. So that there are no nasty surprises when you make your claim, please call Pacific Blue Cross directly before you make the purchase.**

Telephone: 604 419-2600  
Toll-free: 1 888 275-4672

Please have your group and ID number ready so that they can look up the exact terms of our Plan.

## Carpenters forge alliance with CEP

# New Joint Council formed for bargaining

*The new council now can apply for certification and enter into collective agreements on behalf of its affiliated unions*



### COUNCIL COMMENT

by  
*Dave Flynn*

In terms of our struggle with the International, the last few months have been very exciting times for the Carpenters Union in BC. Throughout the month of October, the Provincial Council resident officers toured the province, visiting every Local Union that extended an invitation, to discuss with the members all of the issues associated with our referendum vote.

In order to address any concerns about the integrity of the vote, the accounting firm BDO Dunwoody conducted the mailing out, collection, and counting of the referendum ballots. The ballots were mailed out at the end of October, and were to be returned by November 14. On November 17, BDO Dunwoody reported the referendum results to the Provincial Council. Over 3,000 ballots were returned, with 83 percent supporting the proposal that we

transfer our affiliation from the International to a Canadian union. Although most had expected that the referendum would pass, only the most optimistic of us thought the level of support would be that high. It was very reassuring for the Provincial Council officers and rest of the Executive Board, as the results clearly validate the positions we have taken on behalf of the membership for the past seven years in resisting the International's attempts to restructure your union.

In anticipation of a positive result in the referendum, the Provincial Council also entered into negotiations this autumn with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, to create a new joint council, which could be used as the vehicle for our two unions to enter into an affiliation agreement. The draft constitution for the new "Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Bargaining Council" was presented to the Provincial Council Executive Board immediately after the referendum results were known. At a meeting held November 21, the Executive Board approved the proposed CMAW Bargaining Council constitution and, by a unani-

mously supported motion, instructed the Provincial Council to affiliate to the new council. The constitution of this new council was signed by the officers of both the BC Carpenters Union and the CEP, and filed with the Labour Relations

Board on November 24. The new council now can apply for certification and enter into collective agreements on behalf of its affiliated unions.

It has been widely known for some time that the leaders of a few Local Unions around the province support the International, and that, with total disregard for the wishes of the majority of members in BC, they have been actively working against the Provincial Council. A classic example of this unwavering International support is the reaction of the leadership of Local Union 1598 Victoria to the referendum re-

move has labour relations officers scratching their heads, wondering what exactly the Victoria leadership is hoping to accomplish. As an affiliate of the Provincial Council, Local Union 1598 already is party to the certifications of these employers. They apparently are raiding themselves.

If these applications are allowed to proceed, it would mean that the Victoria local union could take advantage of local members hired under the terms of a province-wide agreement to expand their bargaining rights, to the detriment of all the other Carpenter local unions in the province. Taken to the extreme, if every local union were able to raid itself out of the Provincial Council, there could be sixteen different competing collective agreements around the province. Simply put, it would be a recipe for chaos.

The Provincial Council cannot stand by and allow the "tail to wag the dog." We will be opposing the raid applications filed by Local Union 1598 Victoria. In a democratic structure, after all, the majority should rule, and 83 percent is a pretty significant mandate.

*The accounting firm of BDO Dunwoody conducted the mailing out, collection, and counting of the referendum ballots*

ously supported motion, instructed the Provincial Council to affiliate to the new council. The constitution of this new council was signed by the officers of both the BC Carpenters Union and the CEP, and filed with the Labour Relations

sults. In a desperate attempt to block the Provincial Council, Local 1598 union officials have signed their members to representation cards and applied to the LRB to raid nine employers away from Provincial Council certifications. This bizarre

## Panelists challenged delegates to work for democracy

# Privatization compromises health care

*Cont'd from page 3*

membership, and the importance of involving the rank-and-file membership in the process.

Political Action: Today, Tomorrow and 2005 – Panelists Danny Mallett and Lily Olsen of the CLC and Vic Fingerhut, a U.S. political strategist, outlined the recent election campaign in Saskatchewan, which saw the NDP re-elected after overcoming the right-wing Saskatchewan Party's significant lead in the polls prior to the election. The labour movement mounted a very intensive and effective campaign that did not recommend any political party, but rather emphasized the crucial role of the crown corporations and the importance of maintaining them.

Solidarity and Bargaining – Panelists J.J. Fuser of Yale University and Carolyn Leckie, a sitting member of the Scottish Socialist Party in Scotland's Parliament, talked about the need for involving the broader community in labour struggles. Ms. Fuser outlined a strike for recognition by workers at Yale, which involved varied tactics to put pressure on management and generated student support and even saw some bussed-in replacement workers persuaded to join the picket line. Ms. Leckie,

who also was one of the speakers at the lunch-time rally, summarized the decimation of Britain's labour movement during the Thatcher era, making an analogy between their miners, whose union was the first to be virtually destroyed by vicious government-initiated or supported tactics, and BC's healthcare workers. She also referred to secondary effects of privatization and deregulation, which have led to compromised health and safety for both workers and consumers of services; for example, salmonella outbreaks in hospitals and not-infrequent railway accidents. The British labour movement is regrouping, however, and recently have had some victories in the healthcare field.

This year's convention was historic in being the first at which the newly affiliated BC Teachers Federation seated delegates. At the conclusion of the workshops, several of them were overheard saying that while initially having some reservations about the BCTF's affiliation to the BC Fed, they were overwhelmingly impressed by the convention and hoped that many more of their colleagues would have an opportunity to participate next year.

Guest speakers addressing the main convention sessions were Canadian Labour Congress president Ken Georgetti, federal NDP leader Jack Layton, MLA and former BC NDP leader Joy McPhail, new party leader Carole James, and Saskatchewan premier Lorne Calvert. Delegates gave a warm expression of thanks to Joy for her tireless efforts in a Legislature of 77 government and only two NDP members and for all of her past service to the party and the people of BC.

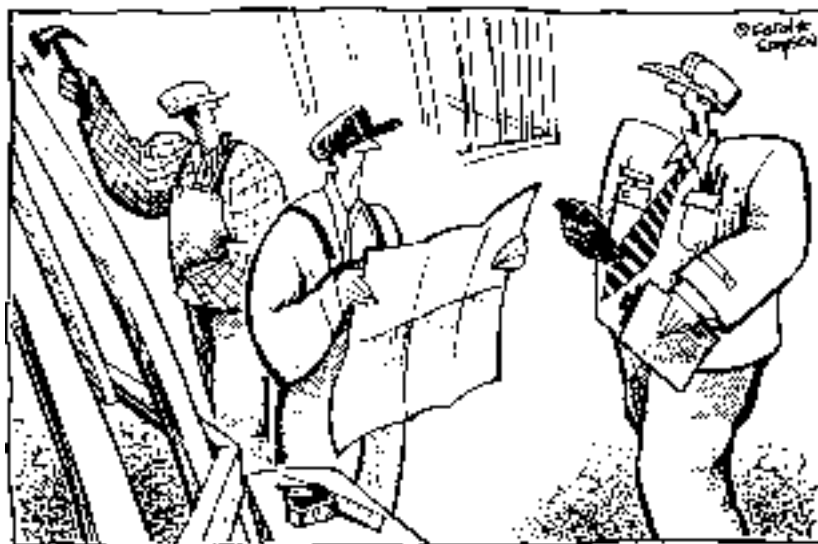
## 10-b settlement reached

# International to pay legal costs on constitutional challenge

After several weeks of negotiations with the International's legal counsel Randall Hordo, the UBCJA has agreed to pay costs of \$60,000 to the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters for the court case they lost attempting to seize the council books.

This fall, the BC Provincial Council applied to the courts for its costs and expects to receive the cheque in the very near future.

In Madame Justice Brown's judgement on the International's attempt to enforce Section 10B of the UBCJA constitution and take over the Provincial Council books in June of 2000, she characterized General President McCarron's actions as being in bad faith and the British Columbia membership as being "adamantly opposed to McCarron's plans for restructuring." This opposition was clearly reinforced with the recent referendum result of 83 per cent in favour of transferring affiliation to a Canadian body.



*"We have very strict rules about inappropriate language in the workplace. '4 = 5%' is fine. But I distinctly heard you say the word 'union'!"*

## 82.9% approve referendum on affiliation

# Time to build a new, vibrant organization

*I can't help but be invigorated by the involvement of the members and the clear direction they have given to the leadership.*



**PRESIDENT'S  
CORNER**  
by  
*Len Embree*

Not 60 per cent, not 70 per cent, but 82.9 per cent of the BC membership have voted yes to transfer our affiliation from the International to a Canadian union.

If nothing else, this result puts to rest the International's silly assertion that this struggle for autonomy was being driven by a "small number of the leadership in BC." Quite the contrary; as the President of the Provincial Council of Carpenters, I can't help but be invigorated by the involvement of the members and the clear direction they have given to the leadership.

It does, of course, beg the question of how the small minority of leaders who support

the International can justify their actions in ignoring what clearly the majority of our membership have supported by this vote.

Of course, they may see no contradiction, considering that they support the International's position of disenfranchising the members. It really has taken an effort to differentiate between fact and fiction emanating from the International gang. One more glaring example has come to light with the agreement by the International to pay us \$60,000 in costs incurred in the Section 10B lawsuit. Now, let's see; I thought their position was that they had won the 10B lawsuit. Oh, well! Who can keep up?

The position of the Provincial Council is abundantly clear. The membership has strongly expressed their position, and the Executive Board is obligated to carry it out. Not complicated, in my opinion.

*The membership has strongly expressed their position, and the Executive Board is obligated to carry it out.*

The members have instructed us to get on with the job. They want us to help them build a new and vibrant organization.

At the time of this writing, we are seeing more machinations out of the International

gang regarding certification of contractors, and challenges from Wayne Cox of Victoria as to who has bargaining rights. One of the more refreshing results of this nonsense is the decision by at least the leadership of Local Unions 527 Nanaimo, 1907 Chilliwack-Mission, 1370 Kelowna, and 2397 Fort St. John (School Board) to come out into the light of day supporting plaintiffs Cox and Autzen in an LRB action against the Provincial Council. Refreshing, because at an 82.9 per cent result, simple arithmetic

as well.

Over the next period of time, the task will be to work closely with the CEP to determine what form the new council that we have affiliated to will take. Coupled with CLRA bargaining, this should be challenging, to say the least.

Unfortunately, some of the other building trades – not all, by the way – have decided to align themselves with the International in this struggle. While this is not surprising, this could prove to extend the time it takes to resolve all of the issues.

Once again, it has been a very busy year. And a very positive one. Everyone, in my opinion, has risen to the occasion.

It has taken a collective effort to reach this point in our struggle, and I am extremely proud to be part of that effort.

On behalf of the Provincial Council, I would like to wish all of our members and their families the best of the festive season and a peaceful and happy New Year.

## Locals will not be required to pay

### International settles pension lawsuit

The International has settled with most of the Locals and District Councils of British Columbia on their suit claiming past and future contributions to the International's Officer Pension Plan.

In the settlement, those Locals and Councils that were not paying for officers and representatives as of November 1, 2003 will not be required to pay past or future pension contributions for those employed before that date but would be required to pay on behalf of any eligible officers and representatives hired or newly elected after that date.

Those officers and representatives who did not have International Pension Plan contributions made on their behalf will be required to sign waivers and release forms ensuring that they will not sue the International for pension benefits at a later date.

Vancouver Local 1995 has been unable to reach a settlement because former officers Brent Mayne and Rick Klyne want to have contributions made on their behalf to the International Plan in addition to the contributions already made to the BC Plan.

When BC Carpenters are successful in severing ties

with the International, as they voted to do in November, the issue of the International pension becomes academic, according to Provincial Council President Len Embree.

"The only Locals required to make contributions will be those that remain affiliated to the UBCJA," he said. "Most Locals take the position that officers and representatives should have the same pension entitlement as the membership and will not pay for an extra golden handcuff to ensure their loyalty to the International."

#### International Pension cost increase

In a related issue, it is interesting to note that the General Executive Board of the UBCJA has arbitrarily increased the contribution rate paid by the Regional Councils in the United States to the International's US Officers Pension Plan by over 20 per cent.

Citing the poor performance by the US economy, the GEB raised the contribution rate from 13 per cent of earnings to 16 per cent in May to protect the representatives' pensions. There was no opportunity provided for members or delegates to vote on this use of their dues money.

## Victoria carpenters vote on breakaway

### Island local raiding BC certifications

Victoria area carpenters are being asked to leave their brothers and sisters in the rest of British Columbia and strike out on their own by raiding their own union.

The leadership of Local 1598, in an obvious attempt to carve out the Local from the rest of the BC Carpenters Union after the successful affiliation referendum, has asked members working for nine local contractors for representation cards and applied for certification at the Labour Board. These contractors are presently signed with the BC Carpenters Union.

The ramifications of this move are huge, says BC Secretary-treasurer Dave Flynn. "The membership in Victoria should

understand that if they break away, when the current collective agreement expires the Local would have to negotiate new agreements and establish new pension and benefit plans, which can be quite expensive for a small group," he said. "The Pensions Standards Branch could also require a new two-year vesting period," he added.

Josh Coles, the Provincial Organizer, said this move could jeopardize local work with larger provincially certified companies like Concert Properties, PCL, Dominion and Perma Construction, as well as all the various scaffolding contractors who do work on the Island.

Coles said he went to Victoria to talk to members and try to get

a sense of why they would be voting to separate from the rest of the carpenters in British Columbia. He claimed there is evidence of employer collusion and misinformation, with many members not clear on what the issue is they are voting on. "The Local leadership has not explained to the members that they are trying to raid themselves out of an agreement that they are already signatory to as an affiliate of the BC Carpenters," he said.

These raids will be opposed by the BC Carpenters Union at the Labour Relations Board, added Flynn. For further analysis, see Council Comment on page 7 of this issue.

## Joint Council set to represent flooring contractor

### CMAW applies for first certification

An application for certification under the new Construction Maintenance & Allied Workers Bargaining Council has stirred a hornet's nest at the Labour Relations Board.

When the BC Carpenters Union applied to certify Above Grade Flooring under the new joint council, a large contingent of Building Trades and International Union supporters applied for intervenor status to what should be a straight forward certification application.

Lawyers and representatives for the BC & Yukon Building Trades, the Ironworkers, the Construction Labour Relations Association, the UBCJA (through those Locals that continue to support them: Locals 527 Nanaimo, 1370 Kelowna, 1541 Floorlayers, 1598 Victoria, 1907 Mission, 2397 Fort St. John School Board) all applied to be represented or have a watching brief at any possible hearing.

The LRB vice-chair Greg Mullaly dismissed most of their claims for intervenor status, accepting only the construction carpenter locals affiliated to the BC provincial council.

The vice-chair will accept submissions from the eligible parties prior to determining whether a hearing will be required.

**See JOINT BARGAINING page 1**