

Members can have confidence in the Plan — Davies

Pension Plan outlook brightening

Carpentry Workers Pension Plan Chair John Davies says “The future looks bright,” for the Pension Plan.

“We are through the worst and have put the Plan well on its path to recovery,” he told *ON THE LEVEL* in a recent interview.

Davies was commenting on an article on page 4 of this issue from the actuarial firm of Hewitt Associates that shows the Carpenters Plan well ahead of the pack in protecting its assets during the tough investment markets of the past three years. He went on to say that “We are now beginning to see the positive impact of the investment and funding poli-

cies established by the Trustees.”

Davies had some reassuring comments for members concerned about the security of their benefits. “With the financial disciplines we have put in place as well as the protections for vested pensions under the provincial pension legislation, members can now have confidence in the Plan’s ability to deliver on its promises.” On the same point, he mentioned that it is important for members to know that the Plan assets are held in a trust that is separate from the Local Unions or International Union. “The assets are for the exclusive benefit of the Plan members – nobody else can touch them,” he said.



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ON THE LEVEL



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Ballot to settle affiliation question

BC Carpenters to vote on autonomy in November

“British Columbia Carpenters Union members will get to cast the most important ballot in the history of the organization in November,” says BC Provincial Council of Carpenters president Len Embree. In an interview announcing a letter going out to the membership, Embree outlined the importance of a strong YES vote in the upcoming referendum.

“Although some members may be asking ‘Why have another vote? Just get on with it!’ we must send a strong message to Canadian unions (and the International) that the majority of members in BC clearly support autonomy,” said Embree.

The ballot, which asks if members wish to transfer their affiliation away from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America to a Canadian union, is necessary at this time, said Embree, because the International has clearly demonstrated that it is unwilling to abide by the membership’s wishes.

“We need to be able to show the Canadian labour movement, including the Canadian Labour Congress, that our members are determined to protect their democratic rights to determine their own destiny,” he said. “We must transfer our affiliation away from the International in order to become a Canadian union or to affiliate with one.”

Embree said this referendum “will allow us to achieve our autonomy and continue to participate in the Canadian house of labour as a Canadian union.”

The International, according to Embree, has made it clear under its restructuring edict that they will not allow democratic votes or officer elections. They intend, he said, “to decimate Local Union autonomy by transferring your assets to a gang of Washington appointees.”

A number of Canadian unions have pledged support for an autonomous BC Carpenters Union, offering financial and political backing “including the possibility of mergers if it comes to that,” said Embree.

Embree is convinced that no effective organizing can take place until we can tell Canadian workers that their dues will remain in their own country to be used for issues that they support and decide on by a vote.

“Whether that be electing officers, hiring organizers and representatives or negotiating collective agreements,” he said. “The right to vote on these decisions belongs to the members paying for them out of their dues.”

Embree said that those collective rights have been fought for over the generations and “We are not going to hand that over now, or ever.” He explained that in no other country in the world do workers send per capita taxes to a foreign power. He said that workers in Great Britain, Germany, France or even Mexico would never pay per capita tax to the USA.

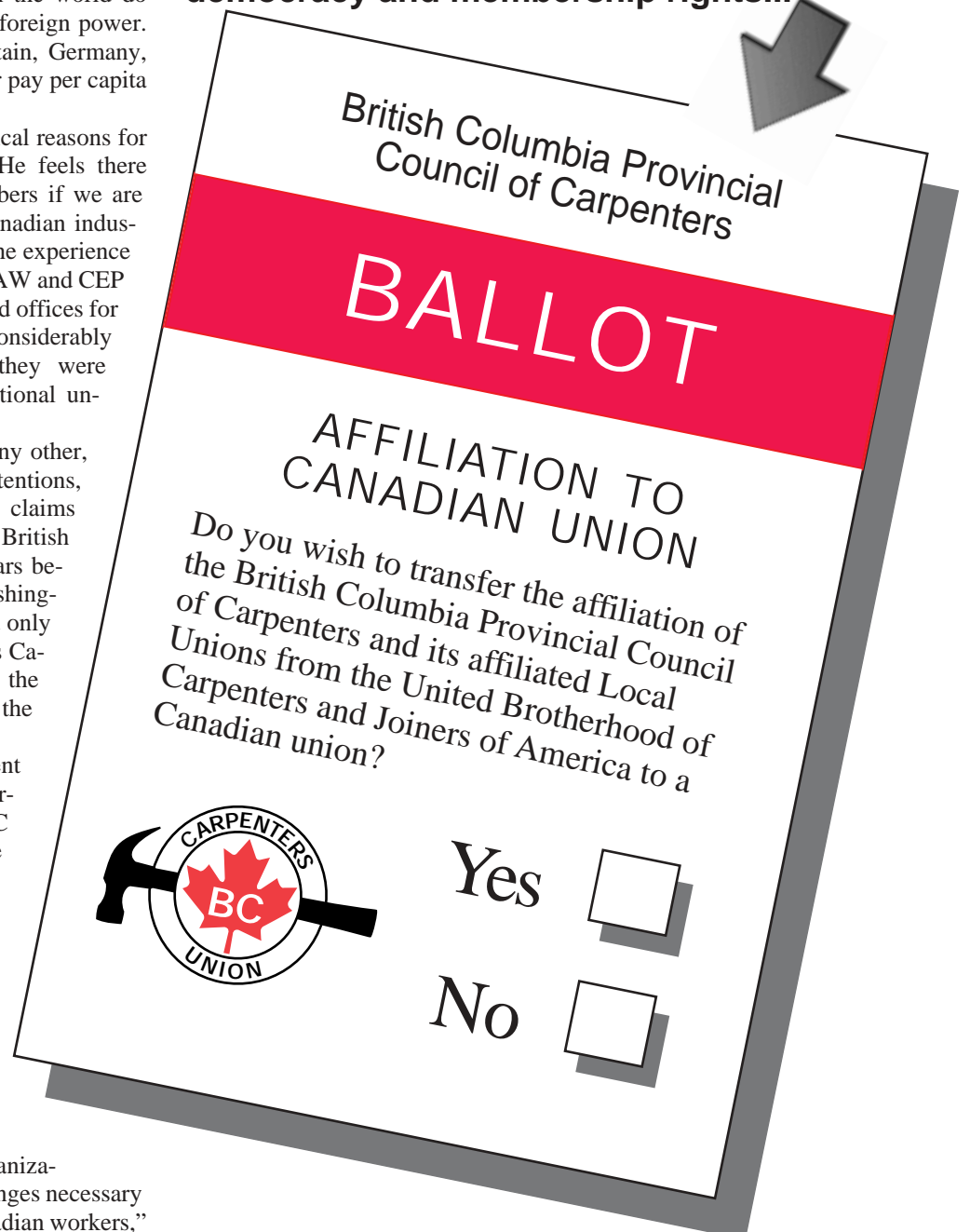
Embree also said there are practical reasons for maintaining Canadian autonomy. He feels there can be more work for union members if we are aligned with some of the larger Canadian industrial unions. “I say this because of the experience of large industrial unions like the CAW and CEP who had to fight their American head offices for their independence. Now they are considerably larger and stronger than when they were branch plants of American international unions.”

The issue of assets, more than any other, exposes the International’s true intentions, stated Embree. “The International claims that all the assets built up by the British Columbia membership over the years belongs not to the members but to Washington!” he said. “We consider this not only wrong, but immoral. In autonomous Canadian unions assets are held in the name of Local Unions in trust for the membership.”

If the number of past and current court cases are any criteria, the International will probably drag the BC membership through many more months of litigation before letting go, he said. “The International’s behaviour indicates a long fight. So be it. Their continuing legal attacks are more justification for autonomy.”

Embree claimed the ballot is long overdue. “Staying with the International will not solve any of our problems here in Canada. Only as a free and autonomous organization will we be able to make the changes necessary to grow and properly represent Canadian workers,” he said.

This is a copy of the ballot that BC Carpenters Union members will use to finally determine the direction the organization will take for the future — This is the vote that counts. When it comes in the mail mark it YES for Canadian democracy and membership rights...



For more information, please see President's Corner page 8 and Council Comment page 7

Vancouver Island District Council elections

Dysfunctional District Council?

By Jim Senior

Depending on your point of view one can ask if the Vancouver Island District Council was ever a functional council.

There is no clear date when you can say the dysfunction started. Having said that, in recent history there have been specific incidents that have certainly divided the District Council.

In July 1997, Local 2068 delegates from Powell River attended the DC meeting bringing their per capita cheque with them. Local 2068 had been following this practice for a number of years and the cheque and the delegates were always accepted with welcome by all present. In 1997, Wayne Cox from Victoria Local 1598 challenged this practice and the president at the time, Nanaimo Local 527's Jack McLellan, ruled the delegates from 2068 could not be seated. This would certainly have affected the elections that were slated to take place that day. The delegates from locals 513 Port Alberni, 1812 Duncan, 1989 North Island and 2068 walked out of the meeting, informing the remaining delegates present that according to the bylaws of the DC there was no longer a quorum present and the meeting could no longer proceed. Eventually everyone went home. Shortly afterwards Local 2068 received a letter from General President Douglas McCarron in Washington that stated Local 2068 could pay their per capita at a DC meeting and the delegates would be seated with voice and vote.

In October 1997 the DC was going to try the election process once again. This time Locals 1812 and 1989 had one delegate each challenged by Wayne Cox and president Jack McLellan supported the challenge — four locals left that meeting prior to the elections taking place. But McCarron had sent a letter to the DC stating only seven people were required to conduct the business of the DC. In light of McCarron's letter, elections took place. At the next DC meeting in, I believe February 1998, when Wayne Cox was asked to review the Head Office reports that he based his delegate challenge on, he had two August 1997 reports for Local 1989 with differing figures, one had 245 members listed (the one he used to bar the Campbell River delegate) and another had over 265 which would have allowed the extra delegate.

Another incident that caused an additional rift in the DC was McCarron's attempted forced mergers on Vancouver Island. This was about the same time that the 33 bylaws and the Regional Councils were being rammed down our throat. I believe the Port Alberni meeting where the members turned out the lights on McCarron can still be found on the Internet.

This past April, the delegates to the BCPCC annual convention voted to have the British Columbia Carpenters Union Constitution and Laws take effect. With the new constitution, which the members adopted by province-wide referendum in 2001, now governing the members in BC, locals 513, 1812, 1989 and 2068 requested and were granted dispensation to attend the DC meetings with voice and vote from BCPCC President Len Embree.

The DC elections were then scheduled for July 19, 2003. For some locals this would be the first DC meeting in over five years. (During the International's consultation process, Jack McLellan and Wayne Cox "conferred" and cancelled the DC meetings)

At the July meeting, Shan O'Hara, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at the appointed time. Locals 513, 1812, 1989 and 2068 presented the letters naming their delegates and letters of dispensation to the meeting. The dispensation letters were challenged by Wayne Cox and in a long and rambling explanation Shan O'Hara supported the challenge. As his explanation was confusing, delegates asked him to repeat it several times, but it was still no clearer. When O'Hara was asked to put his reasons in writing that day he refused and stated the locals would get a written explanation the following week.

There was a great deal of discussion around the acting chair's decision not to allow all delegates to be seated, and finally Wayne Cox told O'Hara to put on his glasses, read what Wayne had written, and "tell them what it says." O'Hara repeated that the delegates could not be seated and directed the delegates from locals 513, 1812, 1989 and 2068 to leave the building or he would be forced to call security to remove us. (I can't imagine who "security" would be). Fred Brown was overheard telling O'Hara he would not call the RCMP.

O'Hara then proceeded to "suspend" the meeting and left the building. In short order, all the delegates from local 1598 left the building. Suspending the meeting was an interesting move but where in Roberts Rules is it allowed? O'Hara then called Fred Brown out of the meeting and when Brown returned he told the delegates they could stay as long as they liked. Eleven delegates remained while seven delegates left the meeting.

Fred brown was asked to partake in the election but he refused. The meeting was reconvened, the dispensations were accepted, the delegates were seated with voice and vote, and the election results are as follows:

President:	Jim Senior, Local 1989;
Vice President:	Mike Lang, Local 513;
Secretary-Treasurer:	Fred Kuhn, Local 1812;
Warden:	Norm Bailey, Local 2068;
Trustee:	Bill Smith, Local 1812;
BCPCC Vice President:	Mike Lang, Local 513;
BCPCC E-Board Member:	John Starkey, Local 1812.

Brother Kuhn has written to Wayne Cox and requested all books and property of the Vancouver Island District Council. As of October 11, 2003, there had been no reply.

Under the BC Carpenters Union constitution and laws, elections need to take place within six months of when a term of office or committee expires. As there has been no representation to any committee of the Provincial Council from the VIDC for a number of years, elections were held on October 11, 2003. Notice was sent out to the home address of all delegates from all locals on Vancouver Island informing them of the upcoming elections. On that date delegates from locals 513, 1812, 1989 and 2068 met to conduct the regular business and elections. The elections results are as follows—

Carpentry Apprenticeship and Training Committee and Carpenter Lather Joint Advisory and Apprenticeship Committee:	Norm Bailey.
Carpentry Workers Benefit and Pension Plan:	Jim Senior.
Dues Supplement Fund:	Fred Kuhn.
Education Committee:	John Starkey.
Trustee:	Dave Murray, Local 513
Trustee:	Dan Prain, Local 1989.

In solidarity: Jim Senior Local 1989

LEVEL LETTERS



In memory Past Local 1598 President passes

Heinz Korn
1933 — 2003

Taken too soon from us, sadly we report the passing of Brother Heinz Korn, past President of Local 1598 Victoria. Heinz served as President of Local 1598 from 1983-1994.

Heinz immigrated to Canada after apprenticing in the trade in Germany. He joined the Brotherhood August 17, 1964 and soon became involved in the Local. The Executive of Local 1598 recognized his potential and hired Heinz as an organizer in 1976. Heinz understood the Union's mission to organize and he continued to pursue that goal after becoming a Business Representative in 1977 and President in 1983.

Heinz was a dedicated delegate to the Vancouver Island District Council of Carpenters, the Vancouver Island Building and Construction Trades Council, the Victoria and District Metal Trades Council, the Federal Dockyard Trades Council and the Victoria Labour Council plus a host of committee meetings that took up much of his family time.

Respected by members and employers alike, Heinz earned their respect as he didn't shy away from representing the membership with employers or as Vice-President on the B.C. Provincial Council Executive Board on which he served from 1982 to 1994. Servicing floorlayers and Local 1598 apprentices is where Heinz excelled as he recognized the future of our Union depended on the next well-trained generation of carpenters.

Heinz was a role model for the Union. He was a class act - dedicated to working hard for the Union and to doing the right thing for the members. His commitment to Union principles never diminished - his pride in the Brotherhood and the trade was continually expressed.

Heinz retired in 1994 and he moved to Parksville with his loving wife Helga. Heinz will be fondly remembered and the respect he earned as a representative for Victoria Union Carpenters will live on in our memories of this fine man and brother.

ON THE LEVEL

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Make the Internet connection

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>

Other sites of interest include:

Carpentry Workers Pension & Benefit Plans of BC	www.cwbp.ca/
BC Federation of Labour	www.bcfed.com
CLC home page	www.clc-ctc.ca
CEP home page	www.cep.ca
Canadian Autoworkers	www.caw.ca/index.asp
CUPE BC	www.cupe.bc.ca
Labour Start (labour news)	www.labourstart.org/canada/
Straight Goods (news)	www.straightgoods.com/
Working TV	www.workingtv.com/index.html
David Shreck (analysis)	www.StrategicThoughts.com/



WCB

Eligible Workers don't file

Forty per cent of workers who are eligible for Workers Compensation claims do not submit a claim, says a recent survey sponsored by the Canadian Policy Research Networks.

The survey asked 2,500 Canadian workers if they had been injured in the past year and if the injury required medical aid or time off work, and whether they had filed a compensation claim.

Just over 10 per cent of the respondents had been injured, but 40 per cent of those workers did not file a claim. Those with a more severe claim were more apt to file, and that was more likely to be those who required time off work or needed to change job descriptions.

You can learn more about this study and access a great deal more interesting material from the Institute for Work and Health home page at www.iwh.on.ca or the Canadian Policy Research Networks site at www.CPRN.com. Also look at the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety at www.CCOHS.ca for more information.

It is important that we encourage our members to file claims when they are injured as a delay can mean loss of coverage.

If you are injured on the job report the injury to the employer, in

writing if practicable, even if the injury seems trivial.

Get required medical care. Let your doctor know that you will be making a claim with WCB.

Report the injury even if you don't intend to seek medical treatment or claim compensation in case the accident bothers you in the future.



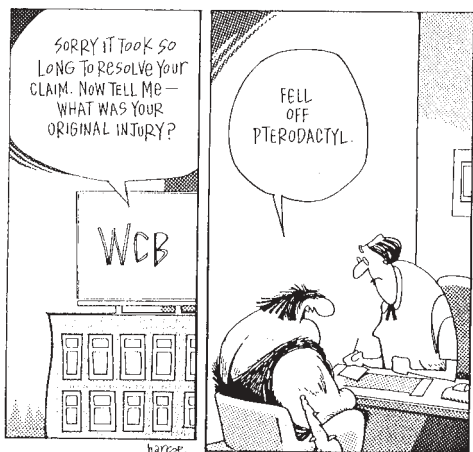
Vernon Local 1346 member Terry Lindquist receives her Red Seal Certificate from OKDC Business Representative Tony Heisterkamp as daughter Taylor looks on.



Tony Heisterkamp congratulates Gilles LaCroix of Vernon Local 1346 for completing 35 years as a Carpenter Union member

IWA seeks merger

Industrial, Wood and Allied (IWA) Workers members voted at their National Convention in Kelowna last month to aggressively seek mergers with a compatible, larger union. The delegates, representing 55,000 members, agreed that labour organizations are facing increased pressure from multinational corporations in a globalized economy and that they, therefore, need to build bigger, stronger unions



School Board Report

School Board Locals at bargaining crossroads

The School Board Local Unions of the BC Carpenters Union are at the same crossroads as the rest of the Carpenters Locals: anticipating the results of the upcoming referendum.

It is clear that we can no longer obtain good collective agreements on a district-by-district level in negotiations. Instead, we should consider what other unions are doing — a sectoral approach to collective bargaining. This means bargaining with the largest group possible.

In the past, collective bargaining on a district-by-district level for most Locals was done mainly with the assistance of the Provincial Council of Carpenters. An International Representative services one School Board Local and the rest are assisted by the Provincial Council.

In the last round of collective bargaining, CUPE, which represents the vast majority of School Board support staff, has taken a global view and approached bargaining on a collective province-wide basis. All their agreements negotiated this way expired this year at the end of June.

In the Carpenters Union, the Quesnel, Dawson Creek and Hope-Agassiz School Board Local Unions also bargained for a common expiry date of June 30, 2003. In addition, the Vancouver School Board, which is in a polyparty agreement with other construction unions, also has the same expiry date. They have renewed their collective agreement recently.

CUPE holds about 70 per cent of all the support staff workers' collective agreements in the public school system. The remaining 30 per cent is divided between the Carpenters Union, which holds 10 per cent of the total, and the last 20 per cent is made up of various unions such as the BCGEU, Teamsters, IWA, Operating Engineers and assorted associations. With 10 per cent of the agreements for support workers in the public school system, the Carpenters Union occupies a very small second place behind CUPE.

CUPE has not commenced bargaining in the education sector even though their agreements

have expired. This is understandable. The attacks of the Campbell government on the public sector unions in health care and the ferry workers is just the beginning of the overall efforts to privatize everything and smash or weaken the trade union movement in the public sector. These attacks by the government have been much more extensive in health care than in education — so far.

The government has imposed a 0-0-0 per cent mandate for wage increases for public sector bargaining. CUPE has not yet announced whether they are going to pursue province-wide or regional bargaining strategies in the next round of negotiations.

Most of the Carpenters School Board Locals whose agreements have expired have yet to commence bargaining. The wage freeze, the jacking up of MSP premiums by the government, the rising cost of other benefits, and the BC Liberals' readiness to declare education an essential service, have all made public sector workers reluctant to enter into collective bargaining where there is seemingly little to achieve. Carpenters School Board Local Unions must somehow work out a strategy of mutual support and solidarity between themselves and others for the next round of negotiations to make any significant gains.

But presently, at least, the Carpenters School Board members still have the opportunity to decide for themselves how they want to go about doing their own collective bargaining. If the referendum is not successful, those members in the school board units can unfortunately look forward to having their local autonomy removed, their assets plundered, and their issues decided for them by a new body restructured out of Washington. The opportunity here is to vote yes on the referendum and decide their own future, maintain their local autonomy, and plan their own strategy for collective bargaining in this province. Otherwise it will be done to us by Washington without membership approval.

Concert Properties report Pension funds benefit from developer's growth

A strength of the Carpentry Workers' Pension Plan is its investment in Concert Properties Ltd., the Vancouver-based company that has been creating jobs for unionized construction workers for some 14 years.

Owned exclusively by BC-based union and management pension funds, Concert was established in 1989 with an initial capitalization of \$27.3 million and a mandate to build affordable rental housing in the City of Vancouver.

Today it has assets in excess of \$600 million, shareholders' equity of approximately \$260 million, and an income-producing portfolio that includes more than 1.5 million square feet of rental housing and 3.0 million square feet of industrial and commercial properties in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Concert's many awards include being named Best Home Builder in British Columbia by the Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC in 2002 and 2000, and receiving the Award of Excellence - Liveable Region from the Urban Development Institute of BC for Collingwood Village, the master planned community in east Vancouver that has won numerous awards in the past 10 years.

For the 21 pension funds representing more than 200,000 British Columbians that invest in Concert, the "returns on investment" are numerous.

According to the recently published Money on the Line: Workers' Capital in Canada (published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives), "The benefit of social investment for the Carpenters' is in the union jobs created for carpentry workers and the increased contributions to health and welfare and pension to the fund."

Tables included in the book demonstrate that, from 1990 to 1999, the construction value of Concert projects was \$360 million. This translates into the creation of 4.91 million hours of on-site labour. Considering that carpenters represent about 37 per cent of the trades sub-contracted to work on Concert projects, 1.82 million hours of employment were created for carpenters in this 10-year period. The total carpenter benefits, including wages, vacation, health and welfare, and pension contributions was \$50.42 million.

For members of the Carpentry Workers' Pension Plan — one of the original pension plans to invest in Concert Properties — there are other "priceless" benefits that result from the company's commitment to the community.

For example, Concert champions the need for skilled tradespeople, and takes a lead role in helping to solve BC's construction industry's growing skills shortage by providing bursaries, grants and entrance awards to students enrolled in trades programs at BCIT.

Concert was a "Community Contributor" to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Bid Committee, lending a team headed by president and chief executive officer David Podmore that was responsible for preliminary planning of more than \$600 million in new infrastructure. In addition, Concert's chair Jack Poole served as chief executive officer of the Olympic Bid Corporation, while Podmore chaired the successful Vote Yes Campaign that urged Vancouver voters to support the Bid in the plebiscite held in February this year.

We'll be telling you more about Concert Properties in future issues of *On The Level*. In the meantime, if you would like more information visit www.concertproperties.com.

Pension Statements to be issued later in November

The Trustees are reviewing two features of the pension plan design at their meeting during the week of October 20 which could have an impact on both the Annual Statements and the Portability Statements. Rather than go to the expense of sending out statements twice, we have decided to send statements based on the final rules as soon as we can practically arrange it after the decision is made. We will also be mailing a new Pension Plan booklet with the statements that will include all the up-to-date rules.

Self-payments will be slightly less expensive this year to reflect the changes to the Plan earlier this year. Because the statements will be issued later than usual, the deadline for self-payments will be extended to December 31, 2003. Those who are eligible for Portability will have their reply deadline extended to 60 days after the statements are issued.

Life Event Change

When we sent out information about the new benefit plan options (Regular Option or MSP Plus Option), we talked about Life Event Changes. We didn't include the information that you have **31 days** after the life event happens to make the option change.

Here is a review of how it works.

If you change between the Regular and the MSP Plus options because of a life event change, you are locked-in to that new option for 4 years. There is an exception to this. If you have another life event change in the meantime, you can apply to switch options after 2 years.

In other words, even if you had a life event change every 18 months, you couldn't change options any more often than every 2 years. And if you had no life event changes, you couldn't change options any more often than every 4 years.

A life event is defined as when...

- you get married, separated or divorced
- you gain a dependent through birth or adoption
- your dependent is no longer eligible for coverage
- a dependent dies
- your spouse loses benefit coverage

Under the rules of the plan, there is a 1-year waiting period for common law relationships. You must have been living with your partner for 1 year before you can add them as a dependent to your coverage, or before you can declare that you have had a life event change. Again, you have 31 days after the life event happens to make the option change.

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Abraham, Eldon | Hynninen, Markus |
| Aere, Mario | Johnson, Ervin |
| Belicic, Peter | Johnston, Doran |
| Bhoparai, Makhan | Lacroix, Gilles |
| Briggs, Arthur | Mark, Steve |
| Ducharme, Fredrick | Matsuda, Thomas |
| Dyck, Henry | Medeiros, Paulo |
| Eriksen, Erik | Mikkelsen, Knud |
| Falzon, Joe | Murphy, Dennis |
| Fercho, Leo | Pereira, Domingos |
| Gargiulo, Giuseppe | Saunderson, Robert |
| Gerhan, Daniel | Serrambana, Jose |
| Goncalves, Diamantino | Valmorbida, Bruno |
| Harach, Basil | Vipond, Lorne |
| Hawkes, Ray | Webber, Richard |

Long-term bonds performed well for Pension Plan

Investment returns favor

The last three years have proved to be a very challenging environment for pension plans. Equity markets have declined significantly and have been beset by a host of concerns, including the slowing economy, terrorism, fraud and SARS. In this environment, any investor who sought higher returns experienced the "risk" side of the risk-reward relationship, in a painful way.

Our Plan has had some exposure to the equity markets and this portion of the assets has not fared well over the last three years. Fortunately, the amount we have had invested in the equity markets has been relatively limited (to about 30 per cent). In addition, several moves that we made have turned out to be successful. The bond portfolio, which makes up a bigger portion of our assets, was restructured so that it more accurately matches the obligations of the Plan. These longer dated bonds have significantly outperformed the shorter dated bonds that were sold off. The mortgage investments held by the Plan have also done very well.

In addition, a few of the Plan's real estate investments have produced good returns in the last year or so.

So what does this mean for the Plan?

The combination of:

1. our relatively low exposure to the equity markets, and
2. the very good returns from other portions of the Plan's assets means that our **overall returns compare favourably with other pension plans.**

The following table shows how our returns stack up against the average plan during this difficult period:

Year ending June	Carpentry Workers' Pension Plan return	Average Pension Plan Return
2001	2.1%	1.6%
2002	4.2%	0.7%
2003	4.1%	0.8%

Which parties are involved with the investment portfolio?

The following table serves as an outline of the roles of the parties that are involved with the management of the Plan's assets:

Party	Role / Responsibility
Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set investment policy with consultant's assistance • select / fire investment managers • monitor investment results against objectives • give direction to other parties
Actuary/Investment Consultant – Hewitt Associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advise Trustees on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – matching of Plan's assets to its liabilities – risks/rewards of different investment options • assist Trustees in establishing investment policy, determine investment performance and report to the Trustees
Investment Managers – Connor, Clark and Lunn (Bonds) – Mclean Budden (Canadian Equity) – Putnam (Global Equity) – ACM Advisors (Mortgages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invest assets in accordance with mandate set by Trustees • report to Trustees on performance and investment strategy
Legal Counsel – Davis & Co.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review contracts between Trustees and service providers • advise Trustees regarding direct investments in real estate and mortgages
Custodian – Royal Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain records of assets held in the fund • issue monthly reports to Trustees detailing assets and transactions

Durable overall

What has recently been worked on?

The Trustees met recently with their actuary/investment consultant to explore alternative investments and agreed to commit 10 per cent of the fund to higher yielding corporate bonds and more defensive equities that respond better to the liabilities of the plan in changing economic environments. The strategy for this will come from the existing equity portion of the portfolio, which will scale down the equity commitment. A new investment manager, Hager and North, will be hired to implement this. In addition, the Trustees are exploring whether to invest a small portion of the fund in a real estate fund to increase and broaden the commitment to this asset class. Finally, the commitment to mortgages will be reduced to 5 per cent of the portfolio, to maintain a reasonable, but not too sizeable, commitment to that asset class.

What does the future look like?

We wish we had a crystal ball! Even our advisors tell us that they can't see the future with much precision, and some of them are actuaries! While we can't forecast what will happen, we can still take steps to protect ourselves. In order to provide the opportunity to continue to earn returns in the "risk-free" position, namely a portfolio of bonds that matches the liabilities, the fund will continue to take carefully managed risks. As discussed in the prior section, the Trustees have explored ways to add other components to the fund, to provide more protection against fluctuating equity markets. We will continue to seek prudent strategies to optimise the risk/reward positioning of the fund, in light of prevailing economic conditions. The Plan members should be aware that while we have done comparatively well in the recent period, our conservative positioning won't always produce the best result. When the equity markets recover, we may lag the average investor though our returns may look good in absolute terms.

Eligible but not enrolled

Carpenter Union members listed below have not enrolled in the Carpenters Benefit 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 Carpenters 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 Martin, Bruce N Robertson, J N Loberg, Monty N Soares, N N Alliston, B N Storey, J N Bourassa, J N LOCAL 27 Rody, Ryan N LOCAL 513 Hamilton, Randy J Poirier, Mike J LOCAL 527 Lafleur, Marc J Anson, Charles L Brawner, Brad D McCurdy, Daren J Dilworth, S N Doyle, Kevin N Kenny, Gavin N LOCAL 1237 Goulet, D N LOCAL 1325 Torfs, Dennis N Poirier, Bradley N LOCAL 1346 Doran, David P Lindouist, Terry N Menard, Lucien J Tolborg, Anne N Seager, Stanley G Kozin, Wally N White, Ken N Ratcliffe, Douglas J Fehr, Kurtis N Sundstrom, Fred N Finlayson, Greg S Rivert, Kevin N Stevens, Ryan N Hodgson, Robin N	LOCAL 1460 Fast, Malcolm A LOCAL 1598 Handford, Tom N Mchenry, Mark W Barry, Jay N Aldinger, Chris J Fisher, Arthur N Kilgour, Blair R Cain, Douglas J Bell, Robert G Carr, Greggor B Coulson, Craig N LOCAL 1719 Babiak, John N Smith, Dwight N Leeson, D H Bogaard, Gary O Johnston, Brian N Robinson, Craig E Opperman, Cory N LOCAL 1735 Beckley, Roy N Buhr, Steven N Grier, Shawn A Belina, Clayton L Spencer, Mathew N LOCAL 1812 Baldwyn, Mike C South, Clifford A Mitchell, Jerry N LOCAL 1907 Turner, Bruce N Maki, Ronald E Lockman, David N Schoeffel, Rainer N Swain, Rob L Liebe, Thomas M Hajjimonid, Robert A Nelmes, O. Brad B Sinclair, Dave C	LOCAL 1989 Pickering, Fredric D Couper, Raymond G Strachan, Michael W LOCAL 1995 Harris, Bruce N Carroll, Andre J Antinozzi, Ronald J Haasjes, Clarence J Capuani, Peter N Hansen, Steven R Portela, Manuel G Valade, Tommy H Keating, Craig N Seo, Sukwon N White, Jason A Thomas, Jessica J Mckittrick, Robert W Scott, James F Erickson, Wayne B Sweeney, John N Gladue, Doug J Shaw, John A Hoffman, Cyrille D Nagla, Hamir R Lanarre, John N Kirkpatrick, Harvey Anderson, Ken S Webster, Kim C Campbell, Bruce D Skare, Dan F Haslan, Timothy M Ng, Michael 5 Grant, Chris N Calvert, Jeramiah N Sihota, Terry N Lanci, Vincenzo N	LOCAL 1998 Chapman, Allan P Braun, Barry N Peters, Jack B Geensen, Jos N Soderena, Kevin E Blair, Crystal N Booth, Kristofer K Lachapelle, Martin P Mitchell, Todd N Foisy, Ken N LOCAL 2068 Clarke, Greg P Bowes, Don N Lange, Allen D LOCAL 2300 Roy, France J Torra, Todd N Andrews, D C Kinakin, Alex N Shippit, Chuck N Willness, Dale M Kozler, Lyle N Gregory, Jessie N Murdoch, Edward N LOCAL 2736 Brett, Ralph D Staller, Scott R LOCAL 9736 Knight, D N Braulin, K N Holm, T Ht N Giorgianni, P N Johnson, T N
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Wage Indemnity and Employment Insurance

We recently had a member lose some of his EI sickness benefit because he applied for wage indemnity and EI sickness benefit at the same time. EI deducted the \$400 wage indemnity payment from his EI benefit, so he got a net benefit of only \$13 from EI and it cost him a week of EI sickness eligibility. Not a very good deal for the member!

To get the most reimbursement during short periods of disability, please follow these steps.

1. If you are eligible, apply for Wage Indemnity (WI) from the Carpenters Workers' Plan.
2. If you are still disabled when the 15 week WI benefit period is coming to an end, apply for EI sickness benefits.
3. If you are still disabled and your EI sickness benefits have run out or you are not eligible for them, you may be eligible for up to an additional 15 weeks of WI benefits. You must complete an Application for Wage Indemnity. Your union local has to approve your application before it comes to the Plan office. You must provide proof that you will not be receiving any more EI sickness benefit. This could be a rejection letter saying you do not qualify for benefits or a cheque stub confirming that this is your final payment. You will also need to provide an Attending Physician's Statement completed by your doctor.

If you become disabled when you have an open Regular E.I. claim

(whether or not you have received any monies from E.I.), you should advise EI immediately and switch the claim to MEDICAL E.I. (15 weeks). When that runs out, if you are still disabled, apply for the CWBP wage indemnity. If you don't do this, EI will follow the same procedure as above, resulting in a benefit of only \$13/week.

Please contact Ann at the Plan office with any questions about Wage Indemnity. (604) 438-2434
Toll-free: +1 (877) 411-2806

Questions about the Carpenters Benefit Plan

Q & A

The following questions have been frequently asked of the Carpenters 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 Carpenters Workers Benefit and Pension Plans for further information

Dental Plan Questions

Q: If I have coverage under two plans, what is required to make a claim with CWBP?

- A:**
1. CWBP claim form signed by the member
 2. Explanation of Benefits from Primary Plan itemizing amounts already reimbursed (if on a pay direct plan through the dentist, the dentist can provide this for you)
 3. Paid receipt for the difference the Primary Plan hasn't reimbursed

Q: Which plan do I claim through first?

- A:**
1. The member claims through CWBP first for himself, then through spouse's plan
 2. The spouse claims through his/her plan first, then through CWBP
 3. The children claim through whichever parents' birthday comes first within the year

e.g. Member's birthday Feb 3 } The children would claim first with
Spouse's birthday Aug 6 } CWBP & second through spouse's plan

Q: Is a "Standard Dental Claim Form" a paid receipt?

A: No, it is a detailed statement showing the dates of service, procedure codes, and total fees charged, but it is NOT recognized as a paid receipt. Both are needed when you make a dental claim.

Extended Health — travel coverage

Q: My spouse and I are going to California this winter. Does our extended benefits through Pacific Blue Cross provide us with enough coverage while we are away?

A: If you need emergency medical care outside the country, the Plan will reimburse 100 per cent of your eligible expenses, to the lifetime maximum of \$100,000. Submit your expenses directly to Pacific Blue Cross, who will contact the Medical Services Plan for you.

Retired members and dependents have coverage for 30 days after their date of departure from Canada. Treatment for a pre-existing condition which was diagnosed or treated within 90 days immediately prior to their date of departure will not be covered.

Pacific Blue Cross recommends \$1 million coverage when traveling to the U.S.A. Additional coverage should be primary insurance so your \$100,000 lifetime limit is not depleted.

For further information call Pacific Blue Cross at (604) 419-2600 or toll free 1-(888)274-4672



2003 Lather contestants from left: contest judge Dale Huzar; judge Bill Shields; contestant Kevin Weston; judge Ralph Hryhorczuk; contestant Leigh Woods (rear); contestant Mike Ayotte; first place winner Will Neish; second place Kevin Seyer; third place Brent Turner

Carpenter-Lather apprentices showcase trade skills at contests

The 25th Annual Lather Apprenticeship Contest was held on June 20, 2003 at BCIT in Burnaby. Will Neish of Gallagher Bros. Contracting won the event and went on to place third at the National contest in Charlottetown, PEI in September.

Runner up at the BC contest was Kevin Sayer of Optima Building Systems. Brent Turner of Turner Bros. came in third. The other participants were Mike Ayotte, Leigh Woods and Kevin Weston.

The Winner is based on a combination of marks from a written exam and from a practical project. The practical portion of the contest, which had to be completed in seven hours, consisted of different sized steel stud walls containing a diamond shaped opening, an arched window opening, off-angled walls, bulkheads, arched entrance, curved wall and a T-bar ceiling.

There were three judges: Bill Shields (Retired Contractor), Ralph Hryhorczuk (Retired Apprenticeship Co-ordinator and Dale Huzar from Prince George, (2002 contest winner).

The contest concluded with an awards ceremony banquet at the Radisson Hotel in Burnaby.

There was no Carpenter contest this year because of budget constraints.

Various manufacturers and suppliers donated all the materials used in the Lathers' contest. All salvageable materials were then donated to BCIT.

Several contractors, suppliers, manufacturers and stakeholders donated prizes and participation gifts to the contestants. BCIT donated the venue space to hold the contest.

The sponsors this year were:

ACKLANDS GRAINGER
ASSOCIATION OF WALL AND CEILING CONTRACTORS OF B. C.
B. C. CEILING SYSTEMS LIMITED
B. C. PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS
BENTON & OVERBURY LTD.
BRITISH COLUMBIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
CARPENTERS UNION LOCAL #1995
CONCERT PROPERTIES LTD
CORUS METALS
DEWALT INDUSTRIAL POWER TOOLS LTD.
DRYCO BUILDING SUPPLIES LTD.
ESTWING
FALCON LADDER & SCAFFOLD MANUFACTURING
GALLAGHER BROS. CONTRACTORS LTD.
GEORGIA PACIFIC CANADA INC.
GRABBER - JOHN WAGNER ASSOCIATES INC.
GENE HOMEL - TROWEL MAGAZINE
IMAGIC PHOTO STUDIOS
MODERN DRYWALL
NORWITE CONTRACTING LTD
OPTIMA BUILDING SYSTEMS
RAICOR CONTRACTING LTD
TURNER BROS PLASTERING

Guy Kiss says he hopes it was just a communications failure that saw both East and West coasts shut out of deliberations to set the new exams for Carpenter-Lather Red Seal Certification. A college in Manitoba was designated to write the new exams, and HRDC invited accredited trades delegates from the Maritimes and BC to assist with the writing but somehow the meeting got cancelled and nobody from either coast got to make their input.

HRDC places the blame on ITAC which was being downsized at the time. Kiss says they could have contacted the former Trades Advisory Committee members if they really wanted our help. For more information on the Joint Advisory and Apprenticeship committee, contact Lather Apprenticeship Co-ordinator William (Guy) Kiss at (604) 437-6031

Privatization primer it just doesn't work

CCPA Monitor/CALM

Over the past two decades, the transfer of public assets to private ownership has accelerated to the point where it is now the core of economic globalization.

The 1990s saw an orgy of privatization as thousands of public services and enterprises were sold off to private owners in more than 100 countries around the world, between 1990 and 1999, the value of all state assets sold totaled nearly \$900 billion, rising from \$300 billion in 1990 to \$145 billion in 1999.

Privatization is supposed to save money, but rarely does. Profits add to costs, and governments can borrow at lower interest rates, making public financing far cheaper. In the Dominican Republic, electricity charges jumped 51 per cent after privatization. In New Brunswick, the auditor-general found that a school built under a public-private partnership deal would have cost \$775,000 less if the province had done all the work.

Privatization is often accompanied by inadequate regulation and a mindset that puts profits ahead of public safety. In Ontario, after the Tory government switched water testing from public to private labs, seven people dies from e-coli-contaminated water in Walkerton, and hundreds more became ill. In Britain, the privatization of British Rail created an inefficient, accident-prone system supported by huge public subsidies.

The doctrine of "full-cost recovery" for privately run public services means that many low-income earners can no longer afford basic services. In South Africa, 25 per cent of the country's 44 million people had their water and electricity disconnected after the services were privatized. In Britain, the first 14 hospitals that were privatized reduced the number of beds by 30 per cent and clinical staff budgets by 25 per cent.

When public services are privatized, they tend to become less accountable, leading to slipshod maintenance, less concern about safety, and even corruption and bribery. In Lee County, Florida, the water and sewer system had to be returned to public control because the private firm had neglected to allocate the \$8 million needed for repairs.

Social services versus free trade

CCPA/CALM

A study jointly released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Canadian Council on Social Development concludes that government support for non-profit social services could be at risk despite the Canadian government assurances that social policies will not be adversely affected by international trade obligations.

"The problem," says co-author Andrew Jackson, "is that U.S. and other transnational corporations see social services as a new world of opportunities for profit, and trade rules as a means to gain entry."

Trade tribunals could side with corporations says Jackson, and rule that public policy measures to support non-profit services unfairly inhibit the ability of commercial firms to establish operations in Canada.

According to the study, there are dangerous loopholes built into trade agreements such as NAFTA and the GATs. Safeguards for the non-profit sector tend to apply only to sectors that do not include any for-profit actors-not the case in health and other social service sectors in Canada, where for-profit delivery and private-public partnerships proliferate.

The not-for-profit sector includes thousands of social agencies, which operate at arms length from the state, but are funded and supported by governments to help meet our social needs. They include providers of childcare and elder care services and services to persons with special needs, such as people with disabilities and women fleeing domestic violence.



Need help with Alcohol, Drug or Family Problems?

The Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan is set up to assist you with any problems you may be experiencing with alcohol and other drugs, family or spousal conflicts and emotional dilemmas relating to your substance abuse problem.

Confidentiality is guaranteed. In no case will your name or circumstance be made public.

In most situations we can offer full or partial financial assistance.

We at the PLAN are here for you and your family — Confidential and Caring.

If you are experiencing any problems with substance abuse, please: Call the Plan

Our number is 604-521-8611 toll free 1-888-521-8611



Members to finally get affiliation ballot

Referendum seeks authority to become a truly Canadian Union



In the coming weeks the members of every Local Union affiliated to the Provincial Council of Carpenters will be receiving a ballot in the mail asking if they support the BC Provincial Council and its affiliated Local Unions affiliating to a Canadian Union.

This referendum has become necessary because every effort of the BC Carpenters Union to resolve our differences with the International have met a dead end. In order to fully appreciate the importance of this vote we should review all the events of the past eight years that have brought us to this point.

In September, 1995, Douglas J. McCarron was elected as the General President of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. In 1996 he introduced his plans to restructure the entire union. The restructuring included the forced mergers of Local Unions and the transfer of all assets and

authority to newly established Regional Councils. It also provided that McCarron would appoint all the officers and delegates of any newly established Councils. The membership in BC solidly rejected the proposed restructuring, and instructed the Provincial Council to take any steps necessary to resist the structure being imposed in BC.

Negotiations facilitated by former Labour Relations Board chair Stan Lanyon failed to find a resolution between the parties. In July of 1999, GP

McCarron came to a meeting in Port Alberni where the membership walked out after they were told that there would be no vote on mergers of Locals and no elections for the founding officers of any

new Locals or Councils. Attempts by the International to force mergers and form a Regional Council on Vancouver Island failed when the Provincial Council successfully defended a Labour Relations Board decision that prevented any transfer of bargaining

Affiliating with a Canadian Union may be the only means left available to us to prevent the International from taking away those vested rights that the membership in BC have had for over one hundred years

rights without a vote of the affected membership.

In the summer of 2000 the International and a few of their supporters in BC filed a lawsuit against the Provincial Council when we refused to turn over

our books to their auditor. The International lost this suit when Madam Justice Brown found that they had acted in bad faith in attempting to use the General President's constitutional authority to further their political battle against the Provincial Council.

In October, 2001 the Provincial Council applied to the Canadian Labour Congress, under the justification provisions of their constitution, seeking a CLC supervised vote of the membership that would allow us to affiliate directly to the

cation did not meet their constitutional requirements.

Feeling abandoned by Canada's house of Labour, the delegates at the Provincial Council's 2003 convention endorsed a resolution directing the Council to negotiate an affiliation with a large Canadian Union. Before we can proceed with these negotiations we need to be able to demonstrate that this is clearly the wish of the membership in BC. That is the reason for this referendum vote. And that is the reason why it is important to remember what the issues are.

McCarron has said that restructuring is necessary to make the union more accountable. Where his views differ from ours is that he believes the membership should be more accountable to the leadership — we believe the leaders should be accountable to the membership. Affiliating with a Canadian Union may be the only means left available to us to prevent the International from taking away those vested rights that the membership in BC have had for over one hundred years. Protect your right to vote by exercising that right when you receive your ballot in the mail.

Spotlight on organizing

by Josh Coles, provincial organizer

American control of our union would not help organizing

When the International commanded in 1996 that we restructure our union to their 33 bylaws they said it was for the good of the Brotherhood. They said that centralizing power to Washington, DC was the only way for the whole International to organize new members, including Canadians. But they did not and still have not, allowed us a chance to vote on those bylaw proposals. Even though their proposals would have fired our elected Business Agents, altered our dues structures, removed our Pension trustees, and canned our Presidents and Executives — they said we were not allowed to vote on their "great idea."

Restructuring is good for organizing, they say repeatedly, so you do not get a right to vote on the deal. But restructuring has been a disaster for organizing in nearly all areas where the International has taken over in Canada.

According to their own reporting of membership levels to the Canadian Labour Congress, the International now only has 26,000 members in Canada, compared to over 50,000 in 1996. And that includes BC. In Canada, the International has fewer members now than when they started restructuring. This proves at least one thing: American unions cannot, and should not, organize Canadian workers.

Canadians need to talk to Canadians about unions. We do not need the American government, American corporations, or our American parent union, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America telling us how to talk to each other. The International's plummeting membership numbers in Canada are unfortunate, but understandable. If we were restructured, just imagine being a Canadian worker who was approached by an organizer from the International:

Union Organizer: You really should join a union.

Canadian Worker: Maybe. Which union?

Organizer: The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Worker: Of America?

Organizer: Yeah, uh, we are an International union. So you get to send \$9 per month of your dues to the United States of America.

Worker: Why?

Organizer: Uh, to help our General President Doug McCarron who has got deep connections with President Bush. In fact, Brother McCarron rode with Bush on Air Force One, twice!

Worker: Yeah, but Bush is bad for Canada. I mean, the Americans closed our sawmills with their softwood lumber tariffs.

Organizer: Oh, yeah, our General President supported that too.

Worker: Your union President supported the layoffs of thousands of workers in Canada? Did Canadians get a chance to vote on that policy?

Organizer: No, voting slows things down. But it's not about that — do you want a union?

Worker: Maybe, but I was looking for a different union — like maybe one for Canadians?

Organizer: It doesn't matter where your union's head quarters are.

Worker: Then why is it in Washington DC and not Vancouver BC?

Organizer: Oh nevermind, goodbye.

American control of our union will not help organizing. For once and for all we need to build our union in BC, for British Columbians.

The current referendum is about protecting our sovereignty as Canadians. It is about protecting our union from American politics and American economics.

If we are serious about organizing and building our union, then lets find the answers within ourselves and not in a foreign land. Let build our province, our country and our union—our way.

I am voting Yes for Canadian autonomy because **I am Canadian**



Cartoon by Dave Livingston — Local 2300

www.carpentersunionbc.com

Autonomy referendum slated for November

Members will get to state preference for the record

The choice is clear— Do you want a Canadian Union governed by democracy — Yes or No!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER
by
Len Embree

It is with a certain amount of excitement that I write about the upcoming membership referendum vote. After years of talking about it, we are clearly at a point where the membership in BC will state for the record their preference for our union: American or Canadian.

Although the outcome should be predictable, it is worthwhile to consider how we reached this point.

The aspiration for an independent Canadian union has been proposed, discussed, and debated for more than the almost 30 years that I have been a member. It has been met along the way by the International's diversions (e.g., establishment of a Canada Council), threats, and lawsuits. It says a lot about the BC membership that through all of this experience — turnovers of leadership, and downturns in the economy — they have remained steadfast in their demand for the right to govern their own affairs within a BC/Canada context.

For me, one of the most disappointing reactions has been the absolutely unprincipled attack by a very small number of our existing members who distort facts, lie, and threaten on behalf of their International masters despite the damage

their half-truths could do to the pension plan, organizing efforts, or individual members. Their obscene devotion to the International is ludicrous. Like losing a lawsuit and saying that you won it; or Wayne Cox's attack letters on the pension plan being used as propaganda by nonunion employers during an organizing campaign; and a few retired members who previously claimed to be pro-autonomy, now working with the International against autonomy.

An old friend once coined the phrase that "you can't suck and blow at the same time."

It seems to me this is the most appropriate response to a lot of this doublespeak.

To refresh everyone's memory, the prominence this struggle has assumed was in response to the International's arrogant insistence that they had the right to appoint officers and/or merge Local Unions without any vote of the BC membership. Added to this was their scurrilous 10 B lawsuit. This lawsuit was supposed to win them the right, under provisions in their constitution, to come into union offices in BC and seize documents and financial records. Even with the slavish and questionable support of their lackeys in BC,

they lost this case in the BC Supreme Court. The judge ruled very clearly that they were found to be "not acting in good faith." This still wasn't clear enough for them; two more lawsuits initiated by them remain outstanding.

I bring up these points in an attempt to caution you to be on guard for the bullshit that undoubtedly will be manufactured by the International and their supporters around this referendum. Already the rumours have started. Fabrications about the pension plan are being circu-

lated by gossips whose only intention is to scare members from voting. The Pension Plan is recovering nicely and there is no way under law that anyone can get their fingers in that pie. The International, with no standing as a trade union in British Columbia, has no bargaining rights and thus has no legal access to your pension fund. That belongs entirely to the Plan members.

The Executive Board is very clear in its position. We have been directed by the membership through referendum, and by Provincial Council convention resolutions adopted, to afford everyone the opportunity to vote on this issue. It represents what we are all about.

This is the fundamental difference between the BC Carpenters and the International. For my part, I find it difficult

even to understand how a workers' organization — a union, or whatever term you wish to use — would feel compelled to attempt to bully a group of workers through actions like legal coercion and threats of unemployment, to stay associated with that organization. Even the most uninformed person would conclude that it all must be about power and money. What other motivation could there be for a so-called labour organization to try to justify taking away their own members' right to vote?

The time for talking is over. Vote the way you feel is the correct course, but vote!

The question is clear. Do you want to be in a Canadian union that is governed by membership democracy — yes or no?

I look forward to the results of your vote!

33 infamous Bylaws

In November of 1996, GP Douglas McCarron tried to foist 33 mandatory by-laws onto Canadian carpenters that would, if implemented, take away a Century of workers' democratic rights to select their own representatives and run their own affairs.

The Bylaws, which have never been rescinded or amended, take all significant union power away from Local Unions or District Councils and place it in the hands of a Washington appointed Regional Council headed by an appointed Executive Secretary-Treasurer. The Locals would be able to employ only clerical staff. The Regional Council would have the power to hire, discipline, promote and fire all employees including Business Representatives and Organizers. The council would also have complete control of hiring halls regionally. The EST would chair all negotiating committees and appoint all committee members. The Bylaws also would allow the appointed council to designate and remove all Trustees for Employer/Union trust funds.

Only the concerted and united resistance of BC Carpenters Union members working through the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters has stopped the implementation of those bylaws in this province to this date.

McCarron and 4 others plot AFL-CIO restructure

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America General President Douglas McCarron is one of five US union leaders behind a new backroom attempt to overhaul the American labour movement.

McCarron is a founding member of the New Unity Partnership (NUP) that seeks to make a "historic transformation" in the US, according to media reports and a released manifesto for the new group.

In addition to the International Carpenters, also involved in NUP are the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Hotel Employees International Union (HERE), the Needletrades International union (UNITE) and the Labourers International Union (LIUNA).

NUP seeks to be a counter organization, complete with staff and headquarters, to the AFL-CIO, at least until the fall of 2005, according to Business Week magazine. General Conventions for both the UBCJA and the AFL-CIO are scheduled for that year.

In press interviews last month, the unions raised the familiar alarm about union decline and, as a solution, envision a drastic restructuring of the labour movement. The group proposes in their manifesto, available at www.counterpunch.org, to merge the sixty-six unions currently in the AFL into twelve to fifteen mega-unions, forged along industry lines and operating according to a "strategic growth plan."

The manifesto says the changes would be approved by the unions' top leadership and advanced through the US with the help of a similarly restructured network of state labour federations and local labour councils.

These organization's presidents would be replaced by "chief operating officers," appointed by and serving at the behest of the new national leadership, according to the manifesto. There is no mention of the unions' general membership getting an opportunity to approve these changes.

Labourers Local 183 tries for Bill 80 ruling

Ontario Labourers in Dispute with their International

BC Carpenters are not the only union in Canada experiencing problems with their International.

This month the Universal Workers Union Local 183 of Toronto filed a "Bill 80" complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board against their International-parent, the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA).

Bill 80 empowers the Ontario Labour Relations Board to overrule the constitution of International unions if it is determined that the International does not have just cause in interfering in a Local Union's affairs.

In a press release, Local 183 says that continued affilia-

tion in LUNIA "may not be in the best interest of its members."

Local 183 is the largest construction union local in North America, representing more than 30,000 members through South and Central Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area. Over the past seven years, Local 183's membership has expanded beyond the general labourer classification to include carpenters, masonry workers, shinglers, plumbers, marble, tile and terrazzo workers and others.

Today, the majority of residential construction in the Toronto area is performed by Local 183 members. Local 183 has been a member of LIUNA since its founding in 1952.

Local 183 says relations are tense with their International

over an unspecified internal dispute.

"For years, Local 183 has provided considerable financial support to LIUNA, yet reaped few benefits from this relationship," said Keith Cooper, spokesperson for Local 183.

"Although we are tremendously proud of our long history within the international union, we believe, given the lack of confidence demonstrated by LIUNA's current leadership, that we must question the benefits of our ongoing affiliation since it is evidently damaging Local 183's reputation and standing within the communities in which we work."