

## Sidelined at Home; COVID-19 Continued

As COVID-19 continues to affect people worldwide, keeping up with the news can be difficult and bleak. We know keeping informed is important and everyone wants to know about the latest recommendations. For something different, I thought it was important to hear about some of the personal struggles from Local 230 members during this challenging time.

On March 6 and 7, Brother Kevin E.'s fiancé, Shae, attended the Pacific Dental Conference in Vancouver. This event was BC's turning point as it was sadly linked to the death of a dentist and was the catalyst for BC's scared straight COVID edition. On March 16th Dr. Bonnie Henry told the attendees, who nearly amounted to 15,000 people, that they should self-isolate immediately. This meant that Kevin's entire crew would have to go home to quarantine. Making matters worse, Kevin and Shae also had to postpone their wedding planned for this November. The couple has decided to wait to reschedule their wedding until people can gather in a meaningful and personal way.

Parenting can be challenging at any time, but a global pandemic can certainly make it more stressful. As a working single mother, Sister Carolynn decided to take a lay-off from her job to take care of her daughter. With uncertainty looming, Carolynn felt it was best to wait and see how the virus would unfold on Vancouver Island. As a motivated Chargehand, this was a difficult decision for Carolynn.



Sister Carolynn M. with her Daughter

The WHO and the CDC identified people with chronic medical conditions as part of the "highest risk groups" when contracting COVID-19. Concerned for her health, Sister Amanda R. requested a lay-off from her employer because she and other members of her family have respiratory conditions.



Brother Oliver A. and his Sons

When Oliver scheduled time off to spend spring break with his kids, he had no idea it would trump the Griswold's vacation... and not in a good way, but more in a "Trump" way. The family received a virus warning from a nurse after one of his son's sleepovers in early March, which made Oliver take this virus very seriously and extend his time away from work. He decided it was necessary to stay at home with his sons and wait for the pandemic to wane. Amidst all the anxiety, Oliver found a stronger connection with his sons through woodland hikes and planting a vegetable garden.

Thankfully, everyone and their families are safe, healthy and have gone back to work! We are so grateful to have a community of sincere and caring members. I would ask all of you to be kind to one another because you never know what personal battles people are fighting.

## Volume 2: 2020

### Inside This Quarterly

[www.ibew230.org](http://www.ibew230.org)

### Page 1:

- Sidelined at Home; COVID-19 Continued

### Page 2:

- Business Manager's Report

### Page 3:

- South Island Wastewater Treatment

### Page 4:

- Congratulations to our Apprentices

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\*Note: your card number is printed on your yellow dues receipt

## News & Notes

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the BC Health Officer has ordered it unsafe to gather with more than 50 people at any one meeting place, as well as require two meter physical distancing. Our Unit Meeting venues have shut their doors due to this declaration. Therefore, the Executive Board has suspended all Unit Meetings until these orders change. This has been done with the health and safety of our membership as the number one priority.

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# Business Manager's Report:



**Executive Directors for BC Buildings Trade Council** Left-to-right: Tom Sigurdson (outgoing Executive Director), Phil Venoit (IBEW Local 230 Business Manager), Andrew Mercier (incoming Executive Director).

## COVID UPDATE

In the second quarter of everything COVID, the virus continued to infect most countries around the world. We continued to learn from the virus itself and come to grips with what seems to be working and what seems useless. Typically, our closest allies and those we often turn to for answers, like the United States and England, have clearly not been leaders in common sense with this virus. What we know so far is that our Island lifestyle paired with our level-headedness and sense of family and self-preservation has kept the Island transmission rate low. As well, the Island has no real mass transit, city-lined skyscrapers (with jammed-packed elevators), or commuter trains. We've for the most part complied with our now famous Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. If there was truly a poster child related to the virus and flattening the curve, it would be her, BC's public health hero. In her words, we should all remember to "Be kind, be calm, and be safe". However, let's be perfectly clear, it will be a good while before we are back to our way of life we enjoyed in January. Many scientists and health professionals agree it will take a widely distributed vaccine or an established herd immunity, before we can safely shake hands or hug an old friend again, and that human connection is so important to many of us.

## BUILDING TRADES

In early March, I presided over the BC Building Trades Convention held in Victoria. We discussed, debated and decided upon the following resolutions: Unity in Construction, Tackling the Opioid Crisis, Restoring Compulsory Trades, Supporting Community

Benefits, and a long-overdue Labour Code review of the Construction Industry. We further lobbied the NDP, Greens, and Liberals on three items: infrastructure construction such as highways, hospitals and schools; the Opioid Crisis, which has hit the construction industry harder than any other industry in Canada; and apprenticeship training. We also had five Local 230 sisters

attended the International Women's Day breakfast in Victoria, which was sponsored by BC Building Trades.

After spending almost twenty years of leading the Island's construction unions against anti-union political and corporate attacks, I decided it was time to step down and refocus all my time and effort on Local 230. I have nothing but fond memories of all the leaders of the various unions and the time developing good working relationships with the federal and provincial governments, both of whom finally want to work with us. Throughout the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, I had several teleconferences with BC's Premier John Horgan, Finance Minister Carol James and Labour Minister Harry Bains to discuss what BC needs to be doing to address the struggles of our impoverished, the growing homelessness, working-class economic stability, as well as the much needed on-site construction sanitation protocols all in relation to the changing environment of the global health crisis. I followed up with a letter to the Premier citing numerous infrastructure projects to keep construction and shipyard members working into the next year and beyond. For those interested in reading it, that letter is on our Local 230 website in the "Letters and Correspondence" section.

## THE OFFICE

Throughout COVID-19, our Local 230 office has been at work and doing its best to ensure safe practices and preventing the spread of the virus. Our staff continues to adapt to the "new normal" and are available to answer your questions or concerns through email and/or phone. While the global pandemic has led to many layoffs around the island, we are seeing a positive trend in dispatching, along with a good number of larger projects coming

out to tender. Additionally, our Unit Meetings continue to be suspended at this point due to the physical distancing and safety concerns. Our construction Collective Agreement is at the printers and the new *green* booklets should be available in August. Organizer, Wayne MacPhee, has returned from his leave and we welcome Lilja Chong to the clerical team in part aiding me in Research and Communications.

## APPRENTICESHIP & BURSARIES

I came across some great news from the Industry Training Authority's Annual Report, listing Local 230 as the 6th largest sponsor of Women in Apprenticeship and as the 8th largest sponsor of Apprenticeship in British Columbia. I am so proud to help empower women in the electrical trade and provide many of the Island's youth a fighting chance into a great career. The Bursary Committee convened an online meeting to pass a unanimous motion to declare an amnesty on Apprentices having to attend Unit Meetings to receive their bursaries at this point. The motion is effective from March 1st 2020 to March 1st 2021. You will still have to apply through the normal channels as it will still have to be approved.

## HEALTH & WELFARE

Our Health & Welfare Trustees agreed to increase the number of visits with Shepell, our Employee Assistance Program advisor, and allow for standalone registered psychologist services up to \$1,000 per year. This was previously bundled in with the acupuncture, physio and massage services. We also agreed to increase the life insurance to \$100,000 per member who passes away prior to turning 65 years old, while active members 65 and older will continue to receive the previous \$70,000 benefit. This was done with the idea that members at the age of 65 are likely no longer raising kids, and have had a longer time to pay down their mortgage and other financial responsibilities. We also revamped our Retirees Benefits Package and simplified their coverage.

## ORGANIZING

Finally, I would like to welcome ESC Automation to the Union. The Nanaimo based automated controls company specializing in Delta Controls work was bought out by Ainsworth Inc., a large company from Ontario who has a long-standing relationship with the IBEW. After contacting them very early on this year and working through a bridging agreement, we will see the 20 employed electricians and apprentices become new Local 230 members and they will be brought up to the same wage and benefit rates described in the construction Collective Agreement prior to the next open period.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy summer!

Phil Venoit, RSE  
Financial Secretary



# South-Island CRD Wastewater Treatment



Photo taken by Times Colonist

Wastewater treatment in the Greater Victoria area has been a source of contention for several decades and has even been called "the largest boondoggle in Canadian history." Since the 1960s, debates between scientists, politicians, business leaders and advocacy groups have taken up more paper than Victoria has trees. However, in 2006, much of the scientific rumblings came to a stop once the BC government mandated Victoria to treat its raw sewage, which is pumped into the Juan de Fuca Strait. The pressure heightened when millions of dollars of government assistance was put on the line in conjunction with the federally legislated deadline of December 31, 2020.



Raymond J. working at Macaulay Point Pump Station

The Wastewater Treatment Plant is located at McLoughlin Point in Esquimalt and will provide tertiary treatment to the core area's wastewater. This core area includes the municipalities of Victoria, Esquimalt, Saanich, Oak Bay, View Royal,

Langford, Colwood, and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. There are three main components to the project:

- McLoughlin Point Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Residuals Treatment Facility
- Conveyance System

The McLoughlin Treatment Plant is where tertiary treatment will take place. The residuals from the treatment will then be transported by the Conveyance System (pipes and pumps) to the Residuals Treatment Facility at the Hartland Landfill. At this point, the residuals will be converted into Class A biosolids that can be used in the future. This project is expected to cost approximately \$775 million. Through the Building Canada Fund, the Government of Canada is contributing up to \$120 million towards the McLoughlin Point Wastewater Treatment Plant; through the Green Infrastructure Fund up to \$50 million for the Conveyance System; and up to \$41 million through the P3 Canada Fund for the Residuals Treatment Facility. In addition, the Government of British Columbia will provide up to \$248 million towards the three main components.

## CONSTRUCTION WORK

All major components of the Wastewater Treatment Project are currently underway with significant progress made. Moreover, the project remains on schedule and is to be complete by the end of 2020 to comply with the federal and provincial regulations. In the spring of 2017, construction began at McLoughlin Point and in early 2018 construction began on the Conveyance System, Macaulay Point Pump Station and the Residuals Treatment Facility.

Aaron Emery, Project Manager for Emery Automation shares, "each element of the Wastewater Treatment Project has its challenges and complexities. The Residual Solids Conveyance Line Project allows Emery Electric to showcase the talents and abilities of its IBEW electricians."



Emery electrician Kyle C. working on the Residual Solids Conveyance Line

Chris Heesterman, General Superintendent for Western Pacific Enterprise reports, "although this project was challenging from the beginning, Local 230 members came together through a global pandemic and showed off their skills and determination to pull it off. This is just another example of the IBEW difference. Local 230 has so much to be proud of."

Plans for the use of biosolids at Hartland Landfill will be coming to fruition in the near future. On February 12, 2020 CRD Chair Colin Plant explains that "using biosolids at Hartland will not only help to capture landfill gas, but will also help sustain and improve the tree cover over the closed portions of the site. This approach demonstrates a beneficial use of biosolids, required by the provincial regulator."



Ryan B working at Macaulay Point Pump Station



Due to continued suspension of our Unit Meetings, we delivered each Red Seal certificate to our new Journey electricians to their job sites.

## Congratulations to our Apprentices on achieving their Red Seal!



**Left-top:** Albert H., Cam H., Chris S.

**Left-middle:** Richard L., Business Manager - Phil Venoit, Ashley L., Dan N., Jason L., Sarah M.

**Left-bottom:** Keegan M., Graham D., Shane C.