

# DC38 Council Chronicle



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## Our pension plan is rated #1; no thought being given to rollbacks or premium hikes

DC38 members from across the province turned out in strong numbers in February to receive an update on our pension plans and to get their questions answered.



Assistant Business Manager Pat Byrne and DC38's pension administrator Debbie Bremner held meetings in Victoria, Prince George and New

Westminster on Feb. 2, 3 and 4. Purpose of the meetings was to provide an opportunity for pension administrator Ed Meyers to provide new members with an orientation to the plan, a bit of the plan's history, and how it is managed on behalf of the members. Debbie Bremner also gave an update on the DC38 plan.

The IUPAT Union and Industry Pension Fund is based in Canada and is governed by a board of trustees including union and employer representatives.

Pat Byrne said members responded positively to the news from Ed Meyers that the plan was performing extremely well in

relation to other similar plans in operation in Canada and the United States. "Of all the multi-employer pension plans in Canada," he said, "ours is rated Number One."

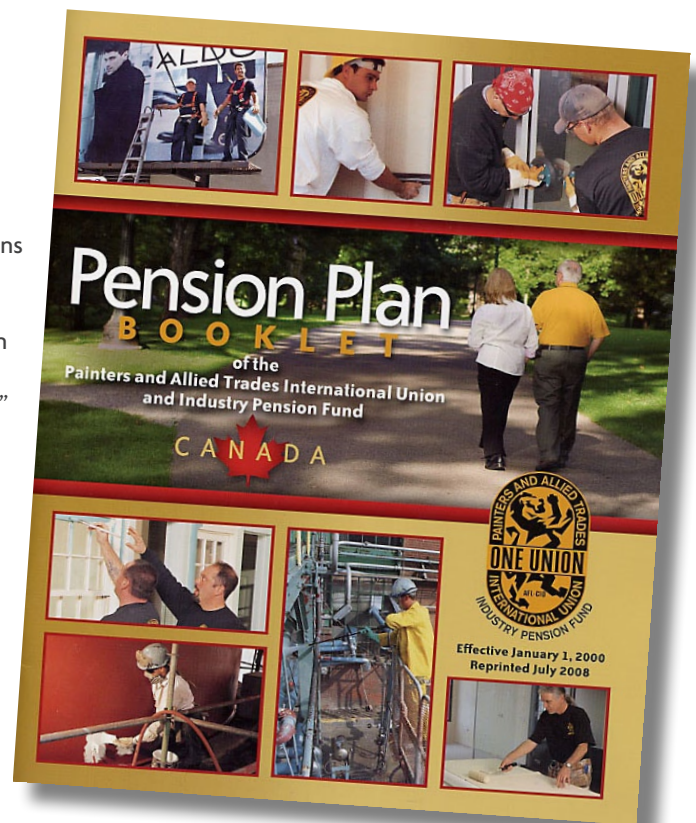
He said even with the current hard times with the economy, there is no consideration being given to rolling back benefits to retirees as we have seen in other plans. There is also no consideration of going to higher premiums to compensate for investment losses suffered through the current worldwide fiscal crisis.

"Our plan took a big whack like everyone else did, but we have a contingency fund built into it which is covering the gap and providing us with that protection," Pat Byrne told the members.

The trustees and the plan administrators keep in touch with the impact of world money markets on the plan on a weekly basis, and are able to make adjustments as

necessary, including switching money managers if they are not performing at a high level. Byrne said members were relieved to hear about the strength of the plan and the vigilance being taken to keep it that way.

For those who were not able to attend the meetings, a pension plan booklet is available from the office.



## Everyone's asking: What's the work situation looking like down the road?

Everyone is gazing into their crystal balls to try to predict how the current housing and fiscal crisis in the United States is going to affect their job prospects.

The total situation is unclear right now, because different sectors of the economy are affected in different ways. In construction, the finishing trades come onto job sites toward the end of projects so right now most of our employers are working with full crews.



However, the people who dig holes for new buildings are not as busy because of the tight money situation brought on by the collapse of the US economy because of the mortgage crisis there, which means there will be fewer buildings coming into their finishing phases down the road.

But many of our contractors take on projects other than new construction. That sector, together with our members who work in shops, will have a stabilizing influence on the job situation for DC38 members. All in all, our work numbers appear to be strong through the summer months, but it is hard to predict what the job situation will be after that point.

## DC38 mourns the death of Lorne McRae

Lorne McRae, former business manager of the painters local, passed away in March of this year. Lorne moved to BC from Ontario in 1969 and began work as a painter shortly afterwards. By 1976 he was elected business agent in local 138 and later became its business manager. Under his leadership the training school was set up in Surrey in 1993, and in 1997 he was instrumental in the formation of District Council 38, which brought the painters, drywall finishers and glaziers together under one roof. Lorne took early retirement in 2004 and moved to Sechelt with his wife Myrna, where he succumbed to cancer on March 3, 2009. He will be missed.

## "Gas up your car the night before work."

That advice comes from Mark Breslin, a dynamic speaker and fourth generation construction worker and manager. Breslin now earns his living speaking to groups of union leaders, apprentices, journeypersons and contractors about the activities and attitudes which are needed to put union construction back on top of the industry.

Go to his web site [www.Breslin.biz](http://www.Breslin.biz) to sample more of his advice. He has published a poster containing 50 quick tips and reminders to help you be a more successful journeyperson in the construction industry. Gassing up your car the night before is one of them.

Here are some others:

- Eat breakfast.
- Don't shortcut safety for production.
- Be someone people look up to.

There are 46 more on the list. We're going to run one a week on the front page of our union web site at [www.DC38.ca](http://www.DC38.ca). They're worth reading and thinking about, because one of the ways we're going to beat non-union construction is to create greater value for our contractors by being better workers.



Mark Breslin

## MESSAGE FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

# Your union is in a strong position to face the challenges of the future

When your main preoccupation is to deal with the many issues that pop up every day, it is often difficult to keep your eye on the big picture. But over the past few years at DC38 we've managed to do a pretty good job of taking care of the big stuff. Here are some examples.

- DC38 has grown by more than 800 members over the past four years.
- Financially we've done quite well by keeping our books in the black for the past five years.
- We have built a strong financial base by building up our financial assets.
- We have extensively remodeled our building on Kingsway to accommodate the extra staff needed to serve a larger membership by making better use of the existing space.
- We have negotiated collective agreements with good wage increases and improved benefits.
- Our investment of more than \$2 million at the Finishing Trades Institute gives our union one of the finest trades training facilities in Western Canada.
- We have totally revamped our graphics, branding and communications tools to better position ourselves as a progressive labour organization ready to tackle the challenges of the new era.

## Taking a Progressive approach to BC politics

These are uncertain political times in BC and it is difficult to decide issue by issue which political brand is in fact doing a better job on behalf of our membership and working people — the New Democrats or the Liberals. In the coming election DC38 will be taking a neutral position between the two parties because our long-term goal is to be able to represent our membership's interest to whichever party is in power in Victoria.

DC38 supports the *Count Me In* campaign coordinated by the B.C. Federation of Labour to ensure that union members understand the impact of politics in their communities and workplace. It's union members talking to union members

about issues that matter to them. Think of it as a massive organizing drive, reaching out to over half a million union members in every community across the province. Working people who are involved, informed and mobilized are a powerful force for positive change. For more information on the *Count Me In* campaign go to the BC Fed's web site at [www.bcfed.com/node/1359](http://www.bcfed.com/node/1359)



*Dave Holmes,  
Business Manager*

*"We have negotiated collective agreements with good wage increases and improved benefits."*

## Get Active

We always advocate that our members participate in the political life of the Province through whatever party they support. For the coming provincial election, DC38 will support any member actively working in the provincial campaign, for any party, by making a \$500 donation to their constituency. Please contact me for info on applying.

## Retirees Luncheon May 21

One of the year's highlights for me is the annual DC38 Retirees Luncheon, when I get to greet the veterans who built our great union and who provide a living history book of memories of the "good old days." This year it's on Thursday, May 21 at 11 a.m. at the Operating Engineers Hall, 4333 Ledger, Burnaby. Retirees need to contact the office at 604-524-8334 to confirm their attendance and reserve their place. Of course, spouses are welcome.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Holmes". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

## We need 25 good men and women for 24 hours

DC38 will be supporting the Easter Seals 24-hour Relay for the kids in Central Park in Burnaby on June 20 and 21. We need a team of at least 25 people, and the objective is for the team to have someone walking, running or crawling on the 4-km track through the park during the full 24 hours, beginning at 9:30 am Saturday.

There are full facilities including camping areas in the park for those who want to camp out, a beer garden, food services, free coffee and free water on the track, change rooms, washrooms, entertainment, and a lot of fun. Join the DC38 team as it helps the kids and has a lot of fun in the process. To sign up, call Dave Holmes at 604-524-8334 or by email to dholmes@dc38.ca

## FTI continues to grow; adding an abrasive blasting lab

DC38's Finishing Trades Institute in Surrey continues to grow to meet the needs of the finishing trades industry. Workers are currently installing specialized equipment for training in abrasive blasting. The entire installation will cost about \$100,000 and is expected to be in operation at the institute later this spring.



Painting Coordinator Mark Tenbroek indicated that there is significant demand in the field for people who are skilled and trained in abrasive blasting, which is most often used to remove rust prior to painting, or to create a profile or texture which can take an industrial coating. He said it is advantageous for a tradesman to have the diversified knowledge of all aspects of a trade from start to finish. That will include instruction on what inspectors will look for after the work is complete.

The abrasive blasting component will be integrated into the apprenticeship program, and could also be offered as part of journeyman upgrading if there is sufficient demand.

## Five-fold increase in Apprentice training

FTI Director Graham Young said the introduction of this new training is part of the Institute's continuing mission to provide facilities and increased capacity to meet the skills in demand in the industry. He said the FTI has grown significantly from two years ago when they had only two full time instructors. Today the institute has five full-time instructors and a number of others who are brought in as needed for specific training sessions. He said in 2006, approximately 80 apprentices attended 8 training sessions at the Institute. By the end of 2009, he anticipates more than 275 students in 23 classes will pass through its doors.

## Three DC38 kids earn scholarships

Three children of DC38 members have earned scholarships to help them finance the next stage in their education.

The Gordon Searle Scholarship Award of \$1,500 went to Taryn Hubbard, daughter of Gordon Hubbard, to help her pursue her education as a journalist.

The Searle award of \$1,000 was earned by Brad Bertholm, son of Brent Bertholm. Brad is pursuing his studies at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

And Elicia Peterson, daughter of Tom Peterson, earned The Searle award of \$500. Elicia is studying for a diploma in business from BCIT.

Congratulations and best wishes to these students.

The Gordon Searle Scholarship Awards were established in the memory of Brother Gordon Searle, who was Business Manager and Financial Secretary of Drywall Tapers and Finishers Union Local 2009 during the '90s, who tragically lost his life in an automobile crash while driving to a union meeting in the Interior of BC.

# DC38



THE FINISHING TRADES



**Dave Holmes** Business Manager / Financial Secretary

**Pat Byrne** Assistant Business Manager

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