



The Comp-Ten REPORT

JULY 2005

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ACTIVE ROLE A group shot of Component 10 delegates to the recent BCGEU convention in Vancouver.

The people have spoken!

By Mike Nuyens
Component 10 Chairperson

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE been busy for Component Ten. First we sprang into the Member-to-Member (M2M) campaign early this spring. Then we leapt into the provincial election, and wow, what a result! And we've had a successful union convention in late June—where delegates addressed an important issue for Component 10 members.

The M2M campaign continues to be an overwhelming success, and has helped your executive meet with you one-on-one and discuss issues and problems affecting you and your worksites. As well, we discussed some of the reasons for those difficulties.

Many of you told us that because of the policies the government has imposed, our jobs are now less secure than they were just a few years ago.

To deal with this, your Component Executive endorsed a number of resolutions that went to BCGEU's 46th Constitutional Convention which could have some impact on the future of our industry forever.



NUYENS

Delegates gave widespread approval for a measure proposed by Component 10 to explore creative opportunities including employee bid initiatives. And given how important the issue is for our members, that support is a positive sign.

Regardless of the government in power, we have seen the need for being proactive to secure our work for the future in the Highways sector.

Much like the *Road to Ruin* campaign that we successfully held a few years ago, there is great potential for a new campaign that all of you will have the opportunity to participate in.

Of the 4,000 or so members in Component 10, this new direction we are seeking will affect all of us, not just Highways. Pacific Regeneration Technology, Traffic Control, Envirotech (Aircare), Privatized Highways Maintenance, Center Line Crews, and few smaller certifications throughout the province can all rest assured that the future includes everyone—and that by starting with a few we can work together for that goal for all.

Finally, I would like to personally commend all of you for stepping outside your comfort zone, and getting out there to vote.

No matter which party forms the government in this Province your executive of Component 10, and your union will be here to challenge and engage them on issues that affect our future.

Consortium chosen for Sea to Sky Highway P3

By Kelly McDonald,
Local 1006 chairperson

THE PROVINCIAL MINISTRY OF Transportation has selected S2S Transportation group as the preferred proponent for improvements and maintenance for the Sea to Sky Highway project.

Based in Vancouver, the S2S consortium consists of five major firms.

These include the U.S.-based Peter Kiewit and Sons Ltd., JJM Construction Ltd., the American-owned engineering firm of Hatch Mott Macdonald, design company McElhanney Engineering Services, and



MCDONALD

Capilano Highway Services. One of the world's biggest proponents of private infrastructure development—the Australian-owned Macquarie Bank is also involved.

The S2S group will design, build, finance, and operate the highway on behalf of the provincial government for a 25-year period and will be a performance based agreement.

But a big concern arising from this deal is that it's just another sell off of our resources by the Liberal government.

Two years ago Victoria tried to privatize the Coquihalla highway, but the people of BC stopped that.

This could be a similar tactic only in this incidence the toll will be a hidden toll. That's the whole concept behind so-called private-public partnerships, better known as P3s.

Our economy is taxed to the limit already and surely the government does not think were foolish enough not to think this is not just another tax.

We already pay for the roads and bridges in this province to be built and maintained, so this P3 highway scheme is just another way of double dipping on the government's

part and getting a new highway at the same time.

It's quite obvious that the recently announced Caribou Connector project that will upgrade Highway 97 from Cache Creek to Prince George will have the same concept behind it as does the Sea to Sky Highway.

This government has only one intention when its comes to building and maintaining roads and bridges and that is to let someone else do it!

With P3s, the price is more costly because now it has become profit-driven instead of value-based with no profit. Before, the roads and bridges in BC were maintained by the government.

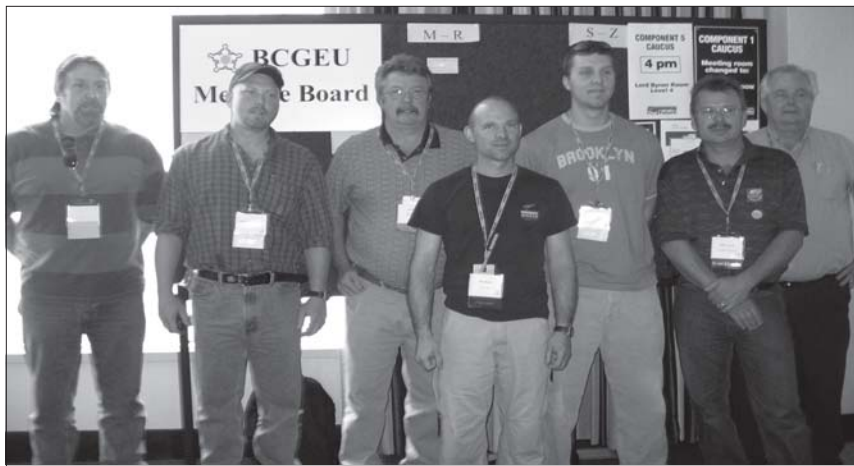
Now it's by private contractors and for more money. That money should be going to maintaining B.C.'s roads and highways--not into some shareholders pocket.

A warning for all tax payers: look for more P3s coming to a neighborhood near you.

"It's obvious the Caribou Connector from Cache Creek to Prince George will have the same P3 concept"



ON THE JOB Don Stewart of the Grand Forks bridge crew on a break, posing beside a tandem dump truck used for sanding and plowing.



USK FERRY WORKERS Roy Warren, Jeff Hewko, and Glen Hewko are joined by Component 10 executive and union staff at BCGEU's recent convention.

Usk members stand united to press for contract terms

BACK IN APRIL 2004, Nechako Northcoast Construction (NNC) entered into a new 10-year maintenance contract with Victoria to maintain highways in the Skeena region. The big difference in this contract was the inclusion of the Usk cable ferry—which crosses the Skeena near Terrace—and the employees who operated the ferry.

The contract had provisions to negotiate adjustments to our collective agreement to include these ferry workers. But as of June 25, it still hadn't happened.

Because of this failure to come to agreement on terms for these workers, the union notified the employer of our intent to exercise rights to revert to a standard shift as per the collective agreement.

Unfortunately, the employer locked out the workers who were affected and replaced them with scab workers from NNC's sister company, Billabong Road and Bridge Maintenance.

That's when the union applied to the Labour Relations Board under part 5 of the labour code for a hearing to have the employer lockout declared illegal. During the subsequent

hearing, employer legal council, Peter Gall, said that NNC had no interest whatsoever in reaching an agreement for the workers.

As a result of the LRB hearing, NNC has been ordered by the LRB to fulfill its obligation through mediation and by no later than the end of July.

This is a victory for the union because an unwilling employer has been forced to live up to its commitments.

However, the focus here ought not to be on an unreasonable employer but on the incredible strength shown by three ferry workers who stood together, and who reported to work each day only to be turned away and suspended by the employer.

These members put the wellbeing of their families on the line for the greater good of all union members. There are no words that can come close to describing the strength and solidarity shown by these members and their families.

Today, these members are back to work. They're looking forward to achieving security through a collective agreement by the end of July, 2005.

Congratulations, and thank you Brothers for a job well done.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE UNION

Here's how we're educating our young workers

By Angela Will
Component 10 young workers representative

In February I had the opportunity to attend the Canadian Labour Congress winter school in Harrison.

The class I attended was *young workers in action*.



WILL

Our class was quite small and most of us were new to unions and somewhat unsure of our place in them.

We started with an overview of union history, touching on the lengths people were willing to go to stand up for their rights.

We also studied the development of a union for farm labourers and the process for unionizing a work site.

We had a speaker come in and address work site safety and the process for dealing with unsafe working conditions.

In our group, we also discussed the consequences of the privatization of health care and free trade.

At the end of the week we all left with an appreciation for the improvement unions have made in peoples lives and the understanding that involvement by members is key to their survival.

THEY'VE GOT STORIES From left Al Magee, Frank Carter, and Stu Roberts at their March retirement party at the Cumberland Yard.

By Frank Carter

IN THE PHOTO LEFT to right, we have Al Magee, Frank Carter and Stu Roberts at the retirement party at the Cumberland Yard on March 18. Add it up, and between the three of us we have 94 years seniority!

Stu Roberts started with Highways in 1958 in Kamloops as a summer student and became full time in 1960.

He worked with various crews throughout the interior and spent some time on the bridges in Vancouver as a patrolman/wrecker operator. He left Highways in 1968, but in 1978 Stu returned as a machine operator in Port Hardy.

He transferred to Courtenay in 1986, and very quickly became the sign foreman. Over the next years he would hold the position of road foreman as well.

Stu told me about his job as a swamper on a grader. He would drive a pick-up loaded with fuel, grader blades, etc. They would head north from Kamloops on what is now the Yellowhead route, grading it. They'd be gone for two weeks at a time.

Stu would be carrying a trusty highways rock fork. When a rock rolled off the blade of a grader, Stu would use his rock fork to pitch it off the road.

Along with his wife Pat, Stu has always enjoyed sports. He hopes to finish restoring his 1955 Chevy Nomad, do some gardening, catch and smoke a few fish, go golfing, and when he gets tired of all that, he'll cut his winter supply of firewood.



Nearly a century of seniority

Al Magee started in 1972 in Courtenay as a service man in the shop. He then became a machine operator, spending much time as a foreman on various projects. He was the low

bed operator for several years and he was the spray truck operator who sprayed the hot oil on crushed gravel that was then mixed in by graders to form a paved road.

In retirement Al will catch up on his many projects, spend time BSing with his many friends, help out any one needing it, and do some part time work. And he wants to spend time in Mexico in the winter.

Now something about me, Frank Carter. I started with Highways as an oiler on the Queen of the Islands on the Little River/Powell River run, moving from that position to

service man in the Courtenay Yard. From there I became a roller operator on the grader mix crew. When I was not rolling the new pavement, I got to use the trusty rock fork picking larger rocks out of the new mix. I found out later the reason I got the roller job was because no one else wanted it.

From that position I went on various pieces of equipment from trucks to graders before becoming a foreman.

I have always been based in Courtenay Yard, which is now called the Cumberland Yard. I spent time traveling the Island, working in Port Hardy, Sayward, Campbell River, Gold River, and most of the smaller islands off Vancouver Island, on paving and seal coat crews. I made it as far as Creston on a seal coat crew once.

I became a steward in Courtenay Yard in 1978 and I've been involved in the BCGEU

See "Retirement" on page 5.

"Al Magee will get caught up on his many projects, spend time BSing with his friends, and help out any one needing it."

Magee, Roberts and Carter say 'so long'

right up to my retirement, finishing up as Local Chair for Area 02 and Bargaining Chair for Contract Area 3. I have held various other positions over the years.

For my retirement I plan to catch up on all things that I haven't been able to do while working, like walking my dog, spending time with family and grandchildren, riding my Honda trail bikes, camping, and fishing.

When I get tired I will sit beside some railway tracks and watch trains go by.

I also hope that while I'm doing the above in various parts of the province, I will get a chance to stop and see the many friends that I have made while working for Highways and through my involvement with the labour movement.

Bye for now!

*In recognition and appreciation for his work on behalf of BCGEU members, Brother Frank Carter was honoured with the union's life membership award at the BCGEU's 46th triennial convention in June.



SPELLING TROUBLES The Campbell Liberal's privatized sign shop gets a failing grade for not knowing how to spell Nanaimo. Photographed by a BCGEU member, this sign was up for quite a while on Vancouver Island before some bright lights replaced it.

Employer group breaks election law

In the midst of last May's provincial election, Elections B.C. ruled that a brochure prepared by the B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association is election advertising, and ordered the association to comply with election laws.

Highways workers in many areas like Nelson, Cranbrook, 100 Mile and Ashcroft were given the leaflet in their pay packages from Emcon, Mainroad and Interior Roads. The brochure implies that only the current Liberal government has a

commitment to transportation infrastructure spending, and advises workers "On May 17th, Vote to Protect Our Jobs."

The leaflet didn't mention that the Campbell Liberals cut over \$30 million annually from highways maintenance contracts, and threatened members' job security in the re-tendering process. In addition to ruling that the brochure is election advertising, Elections B.C.

also required the employer organization to register as a third party advertising sponsor and report expenditures.



Ex-shipyard owner admits guilt in Victoria shipyard pension scandal

The former owner of a bankrupt Victoria shipyard that shutdown in 2003 has admitted that he broke the law by diverting hundreds of thousands of dollars of statutory pension plan payments for 60 shipyard workers, who were members of the BCGEU at the time.

Ex-Point Hope Shipyard boss Bill McKechnie pled

guilty in B.C. Supreme Court in late May to one count of violating provincial pension laws. Surprisingly, failure to remit those contributions and the use of the money for other purposes is not a criminal offence.

McKechnie will be sentenced by the Court in late November.

He says he used the money to try to keep the company afloat.

Local 1001 vice-chair Glenn Avon told Victoria media that about \$300,000 was diverted by McKechnie.

Avon said problems with the pension plan were "a real kick in the pants" for shipyard workers as they were losing their jobs in 2003.

He said the union will do what it can to get the money back.

Contractors net close to \$2 mil. in performance bonuses from Victoria

FIGURES OBTAINED by the union show that B.C.'s highway contractors were given \$1,780,576 in bonus payments last November.

Details of the payments became available earlier this year and include contractors in all service areas except SAs 11 and 20 which operate under different contracts.

All contractors shared in the summer 2004 bonuses, but only half passed the test for the winter bonus.

The biggest bonus share, just over \$600,000 went to Emcon Services Inc. which holds contracts for road maintenance in Central Island, North Island, and Kootenay Boundary service areas. Emcon pulled down summer 2004 payments of \$227,740 plus a combined winter bonus of \$376,489.

Argo Road Maintenance netted \$353,743 for the contracts it holds in Service Areas 8, 13 and 15. Meanwhile, Mainroad Contracting gained \$237,726 for SAs 4 and 6.

HMC Services Inc. also earned a hefty chunk of change for its sole contract in Service Area 12 in the Selkirk. HMC was paid \$77,989 as a summer 2004 bonus, and \$105,414 in the winter for a total of \$183,403.

The bonus payment report didn't include payouts to contractors in Service Areas 11 or 20 because of different contract provisions currently in force.



EMERGENCY LANDING This single engine plane got into trouble and was forced to make an emergency landing on a straight patch of Highway 3, near Hope on May 29.

A Carter update: retirement is okay!

As you know I recently retired. It is the best job I have ever had. I have woke up a couple of times wondering if I have done the right thing, that usually only lasts for a few seconds.

My days are quite full. After breakfast it's time to walk my boarder collie pup. I am doing my best to train her to behave. But I think it is the other way around—she is training me. She loves to herd the birds in the local park until she cannot run anymore and will not come until she is done.

Getting caught up on the projects that have fallen behind is high on my list of things to do. Sorting years of union materials that I have collected will be another project I need to complete. I have a railway memorabilia collection that spans 35 years, and it needs to be sorted and catalogued.

Along with my interest in railways, I love to ride my Honda trail bike, usually on old railway grades or old roads that go to the tops of mountains.

Family is very important, we have several grandchildren. My dad is 83, I try to spend as much time as I can with him.

Camping is another past time we enjoy near lakes, the ocean or sometimes even near a railway.

Fishing—my favorite lure is patience. I love to drag a gang troll around a lake for hours, and it does not matter if I catch a fish or not.

Volunteering will be another past time that will keep me busy. I am a director of the Cumberland Museum, which has a large collection of labour history and holds Miner's Memorial day each June.

I will continue to help the members in my local with advice on how to deal with the boss.

Talking about the boss, I am now my own boss, I am enjoying my freedom and would recommend it to anyone.

Frank Carter
Former Local 1002 chair
SA3 bargaining chair

Working safe, working healthy

This issue, health and safety activist Mike Prystae examines stress on the job, hazardous materials in the workplace, and new training standards for traffic controllers

Beware: Stress is the silent killer!

We talk about stress in the workplace because of the greater demands put onto our members due to drastically reduced work forces, cuts to collective agreements, and other associated reasons.

Stress is increasing at an alarming rate, and if not addressed may become a chronic illness due to the body's need for energy resources exceeding its ability to produce them.

The first step in coping with stress is to identify it. Symptoms of stress may include:

- increased heart rate and blood pressure;
- rapid breathing;



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- sweating;
- a decreased digestion rate that feels like butterflies and indigestion.

If there is no escape from the symptoms the body will begin to release stored sugars and fats, using up its bodily resources leading to exhaustion and consumption of energy.

If the stress is not resolved, you may become chronically stressed and the body's need for energy will exceed its ability to produce it.

Contact your medical advisor if you are experiencing stress.

Know WHMIS?

It's our workplace hazardous material information system

WHMIS provides employers and workers with information about hazardous materials which are referred to as controlled products in workplaces across Canada. Exposure to these products can

lead to damage to eyes or skin, heart ailments, kidney lung damage and cancer or even death.

The goal of WHMIS is to recognize, evaluate and control workplace hazards ahead of time in order to prevent injuries or occupational disease from occurring.

The key elements of the information system are labeling, material safety data sheets or MSDSs, and worker education and training.

Consultation with the local occupational health and safety committee is an essential part of ensuring an effective WHMIS program is in place.

Remember it is the employer's responsibility to establish and maintain an effective workplace occupational health and safety program.

If an OH&S course is needed in your area, call your local area office and they will have you put on the list for the next one offered.

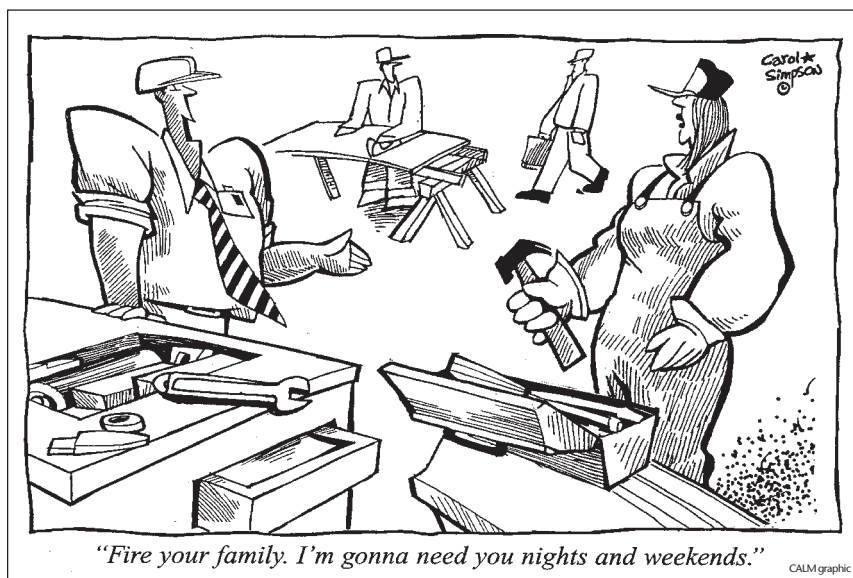
New training standards for traffic controllers

Effective Jan. 1 this year, employers must ensure that their traffic control persons, or TCPs, have received accepted training and possess written proof of that training.

Only accepted TCP courses will be considered by the Workers' Compensation Board, the WCB, under section 18.6 of the regulations.

Any employer whose TCPs cannot provide to board officers written proof of this training will be in breach of the OH&S regulation.

- Chairperson of Component 10's OH&S committee, Prystae can be contacted by email at: prystae@sunshinecable.com



Pension plan doing well, most recent audit shows

The most recent audit gives the pension plan for most Component 10 members a clean bill of health, says BCGEU's pension specialist Paul Martin.

"Everything is in order," says Martin.

Investment returns for the \$126 million plan for the past year were 10.28%.

The full report is posted on the Component 10 website, www.bcgeu.ca/533.

Martin says planning for your retirement ahead of time is key.

He urged plan members to obtain a copy of a special planning booklet that's available from all area offices.

Our personal line of tolerance

By John Cantlon
Local 1010 chairperson

Whether it be career, family, or personal we each have a line of tolerance of things we'll accept and things we won't.

It often amazes me at the elusive line of tolerance when a venue changes. How often do we hear in our homes or even our lunch rooms that *we just won't take it anymore* in a various number of colourful adjectives.

We hear what our political leaders are doing wrong, how we are mistreated by our employers and how the union is trying to tell us how to vote. But—and this is the amazing part—when we are presented with the chance of being heard to get our views out there at a variety of public or local union meetings, we lose our line of tolerance.

Many will say we have no time or one vote won't make a difference. Take your pick from a vast host of excuses and that's all they are. If we took that same time putting into action our tolerance as we do grumbling about what bugs us, we would be much more satisfied with at least our efforts to make a difference.

Every day we have opportunities to be heard, whether it be vocally or a simple check mark on a ballot card. Let's do ourselves a favour and stand up and be heard or support those who will maintain our line of tolerance.



HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE workers from left, Jim Kastrukoff, Mike Prystea, and Bill Duff talk with B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair during a Member-to-Member campaign event this past spring.

Winter puts drivers at risk

By Walt Dettwiler
Local 1011 chairperson

Last winter adverse road conditions gave some B.C. drivers a little more than they could handle.

From December through February, highways workers were put to the test with snow then freezing rain.

It was quite common to see a plow sand truck chained up on four or six wheels, as the case may be, just to stay on the highway, never mind have to plow, salt or sand to try to keep the roads safe for the traveling public.

This brings up another issue of safety in regards to the average driver. Most of the travelling

public do not give the road conditions a second thought.

Here are some common ways in which drivers make bad decisions in bad driving conditions:

- o If it's raining, the road's only wet, and it's not slippery so they must have sanded it by now.
- o Blowing snow—'I can pass, there's no one coming and the roads are dry. Right?'
- o Compact ice or snow—if it's brown it must be sanded. So I can do the speed limit.

These are just a few points that the professional drivers who work for the highways contractors face every day.