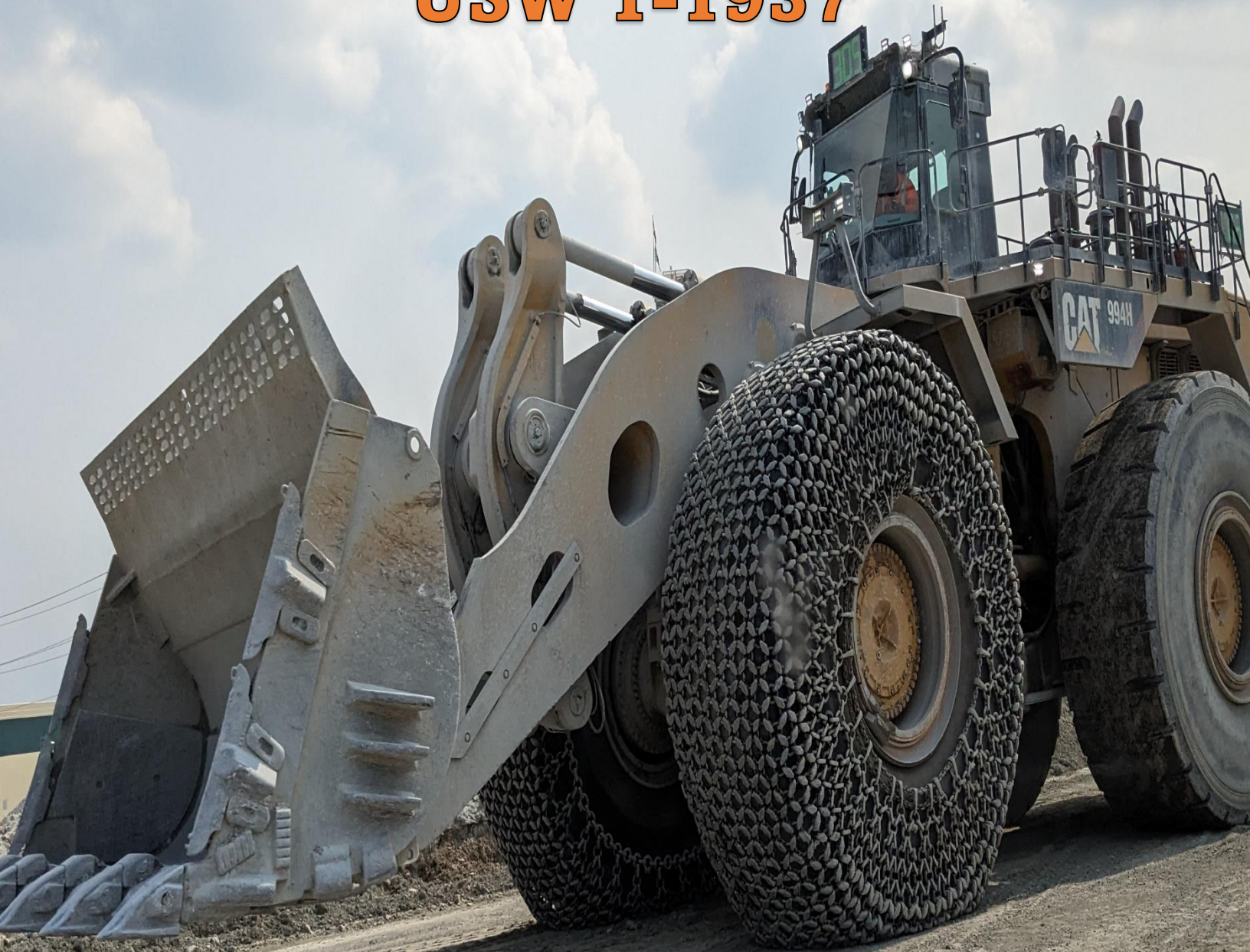


SOLIDARITY NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

USW 1-1937



FEBRUARY 2024

WINTER EDITION

INSIDE

COVER PAGE - USW member working at the Newmont Red Chris Mine

PAGE 2	TABLE OF CONTENTS
PAGE 3-4	PRESIDENT'S REPORT
PAGE 5-7	50 YEARS OF LOGGING BY ROB NORMAN
PAGE 8	MAINLAND REPORT
PAGE 9	SOUTH ISLAND LOGGING REPORT
PAGE 10-11	CINKANT REPORT
PAGE 12	FOOD BANK DONATIONS
PAGE 13	PORT ALBERNI REPORT
PAGE 14	FINANCES REPORT BY DUSTY PALMER
PAGE 15	NORTH ISLAND LOGGING REPORT
PAGE 16	EDUCATION & OPS. REPORT
PAGE 17	MID ISLAND LOGGING REPORT
PAGE 18-19	SOUTH ISLAND REPORT
PAGE 20	TO JOIN OUR UNION CONTACT US

EFAP

EMPLOYEE and FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

DUNCAN	250-746-6900
NANAIMO	250-754-8222
PORT ALBERNI	250-723-7001
POWELL RIVER	604-485-2800
LOWER MAINLAND & VICTORIA	1-877-746-6911
CAMPBELL RIVER, COMOX VALLEY & NORTH ISLAND	1-866-789-2266

Solidarity News is the Official Publication of United Steelworkers, Local 1-1937

Editor: Shelley Siemens
President: Brian Butler
1st Vice-President: Rick Nelson
Financial Secretary: Dusty Palmer
Telephone: 250-746-6131
Fax: 250-746-1012
Email: ssiemens@usw1-1937.ca
Website: www.usw1-1937.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Brian Butler



LOCAL TO COMMENCE COAST FOREST INDUSTRY BARGAINING IN 2024

This year we are back at the bargaining table with Western Forest Products (WFP) for the first time since signing the last collective agreement in February 2020. Of course, you are all aware that the current agreement followed a prolonged strike due to unwarranted concessionary bargaining tactics of the employer. It was our members' collective strength that led to the withdrawal of 21 significant concessions, including an attack on our pension plan and the ratification of a good collective agreement.

Since that time, the parties have made joint efforts to improve labour relations which will hopefully translate into a more amicable set of negotiations this year.

In recent years, we have gone through a period of high inflation and continue to be in an era of low unemployment. The need to retain and attract workers in a very competitive labour market is something that we will be addressing at the bargaining table.

For many years there has been a problem with licensees not making allowances for the increase in costs to USW Me-Too Contractors following collective bargaining. This has led to problems for Me-Too contractors who have at times dealt with the lack of finances for contract improvements, in ways that are not beneficial to our members who work for them. Some contractors have made up for the additional costs on the backs of our members by not paying for some contractually obligated provisions in the collective agreement. This has in turn led to more grievances and labour relations issues arising between the Union and said contractors.

The Local Union desires a change that would see the financial support needed for negotiated increases be applied to Me-Too contractors. The Union has raised this issue with WFP and will do so with other licensees

going forward. A resolution to this problem will be sought during collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining will begin between the USW and WFP in April of this year. No date for the first meeting has been set at the time of this writing.

Local Union delegates will finalize the members' bargaining issues at our Wage & Contract Conference in Nanaimo on February 22nd.

This year's bargaining team will include: Brian Butler (President), Richard Arnason (2nd Vice President), Chris Cinkant (3rd Vice President), Jason Cox (Business Agent), Nolan Paquette (Business Agent), Jeff Bromley (USW Wood Council Chair) and Al Biekse, (President Local 2009).

FIRST NATIONS, LABOUR AND INDUSTRY SEEK TO GAIN A VOICE AT THE TABLE

As Local Union President, I have been meeting with Western's CEO on a quarterly basis since he started with the Company in September of 2022. Those meetings have been productive as we have used the time to understand one another and advise on issues of concern and determine where we are aligned.

When it comes to concerns and possible resolution to legislative and policy problems we have with government, I have found there is more alignment than there is disagreement, which is good for both parties.

In recent joint meetings with the Premier and the Forest Minister, the group we were a part of, brought together First Nations, Industry and Labour Representatives to advise government on issues of mutual concern and offer solutions. We raised the idea of having a voice at the table for First Nations, Industry and Labour regarding any proposed legislative or policy changes moving forward and the ability to

President's Report Cont'd

review current legislation and policies with a view to making recommendations that would help everyone concerned. The initial response we received from both the Premier and Forest Minister was positive. It is our hope that we will make some headway with government in follow-up meetings to come.

I may be wrong, but I am not aware of another instance of First Nations, Industry and Labour having approached government together to offer their support collectively. It is not something any of the parties involved have experience with, including the government, who noted their supportive surprise to see us working together at our first meeting. I believe it makes sense on so many levels for First Nations, Industry and Labour to work together, as we have more issues on which we are aligned on than most people would believe.

With pending new government legislation on the horizon known as the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework, it is more important than ever that First Nations, Industry and Labour work together alongside government to ensure the forest industry gains the certainty it needs in these uncertain times.

WFP FORMS NEW LIMITED PARTNERSHIP WITH 4 FIRST NATIONS AT MID ISLAND

The Local Union was advised this past fall that WFP is entering into another Limited Partnership (LP), this time with four First Nations (Tlowitsis, We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, and K'ómoks) on TFL 39 block 2, north of Campbell River. The Company has advised the Union that they plan to create partnerships on all of the TFL's that they manage.

The Local Union supports this partnership, as we have with the LP on TFL 44. It is important that USW members recognize the need for reconciliation with First Nations, as well as understanding that it is also good for members and the industry to have the long-term certainty these partnerships provide the forest industry.

I attended the announcement of the new LP at the Legislature in Victoria on October 24th. It was a moving ceremony that I was honoured to have been invited to.

WFP's first LP was with the Huu-ay-aht First Nation (HFN) on TFL 44. The LP's name is Tsawak-qin Forestry. We have worked closely with HFN and Tsawak-qin and continue to support our mutual desire to work together "as one".

Unfortunately, the work on TFL 44 is currently managed by Navalign Forestry which is a woodlands contractor, and has not yet met the goal of working as one in our opinion. Our members have had significant labour relations problems with Navalign, which is somewhat of a continuation of the previously subdivided management model (of which the majority of the principles within Navalign were also a part).

It is our understanding that the new LP on TFL 39 block 2 (WFP Mid Island Operation) will continue to operate as a company crew under the new LP. I believe that if they do, it would alleviate many of the problems the Union and its members are currently experiencing with Navalign in TFL 44.

In Solidarity - Brian Butler



At the public announcement on the creation of a Limited Partnership between First Nations of the Nanwakolas Council and Western Forest Products – **From Left to Right: K'ómoks Chief Ken Price, We Wai Kai Chief Ronnie Chickite, Nanwakolas President Dallas Smith, USW Local 1-1937 President Brian Butler, We Wai Kum Chief Councillor Christopher Roberts, WFP President & CEO Steven Hofer and Andrew Puglas**

LOGGING IS IN MY BLOOD 50 YEARS OF LOGGING BY BROTHER ROB NORMAN

I grew up in a BCFP logging camp at Caycuse. Being a 3rd generation kid from a logging family in this camp it was obvious that my career would be in this industry. In the summer of 1973, after being told I was too young to work in the woods, I worked as a carpenter's helper in camp putting shingles on the company houses. In the fall I went back to school and finished my grade 12 and started logging in Caycuse on July 17, 1974. Other than a short stint logging at BCFP Wakeman Sound in the spring of 1975, I have worked my entire career in the Caycuse, Renfrew area on TFL 46. My first 26 years were in yarding and loading and my last 23 years were in log haul. I retired as a log truck driver for Mt. Sicker Timber.



I am glad to have been part of an era when there was big logging equipment along with big timber. I was lucky to have worked with countless good people, many of whom mentored me and taught me the business. With the many photos along with the stories I have from all these years it has evolved into me being a logging historian.

In my entire career, I have been an IWA or USW member and was able to raise my family on good wages and benefits along with a pension.

LOGGING IS IN MY BLOOD



Despite my many frustrations with the industry, along with the misinformation from the green movement, I am glad to have been a part of it for 50 years.

After all logging is in my blood.

Rob Norman



50 years of logging



**Photos - by
Rob Norman**



MAINLAND REPORT

By 1st Vice-President, Rick Nelson



SKEENA SAWMILLS CLOSING IN TERRACE BC

It is with a heavy heart that we have to report that Skeena Sawmills will no longer be a large part of the economy and job opportunities in Terrace BC. On September 8th last year, the Company was forced into bankruptcy receivership as a result of overwhelming debts accumulated over the past few years while trying to make this operation profitable.

This sawmill and planer mill dates back to the 1970's and has a long history of good-paying Union jobs for families over the last 50-plus years, employing multiple generations of workers. The mill was purchased from West Fraser in 2011 after 4 years of downtime by ROC Holdings, a Chinese-based Company, and in November of 2012 it was once again up and running and although it presented many challenges, they were able to operate until September of last year when the financial challenges just became too much.

As a result, the Local Union has been working with Alvarez and Marshal Canada, who is the court-appointed receiver to assist the workers in applying for compensation through the Wage Earners Protection Plan, as well as accessing resources through Service Canada, WorkBC, and the Provincial Bridging to Retirement Program in an effort to help workers get through this difficult time.

All of the assets of the mill, which include two Forest Licenses and a Tree Farm License, will now be

liquidated in order to pay off as much as possible to the creditors. It has been reported that the debts that have been called in are in excess of \$140,000,000.

Although there may be a slim chance, it is unlikely that anyone will be purchasing the entire operation with a plan to reopen.

In Solidarity, Rick Nelson



The crew from Delta View Farms, along with our friend Joginder Sunner.

The picture was taken right after they ratified their new Collective Agreement. Congratulations Everyone on a job well Done!

SOUTH ISLAND LOGGING REPORT

By Richard Arnason, 2nd Vice-President



Since my last report, I have had several arbitrations. One four days in length for a member that has been refused the right to return to work after a WorkSafe BC claim. The company argued for clarification from the arbitrator on when exactly the employee was fit to return to work from the WorkSafe BC claim. We are waiting for the arbitrator's decision and award.

While the employee was not being recalled to work on that case the employee accessed his pension due to lack of finances. The employer has taken the position that as the employee accessed his pension he retired and terminated his employment. A four-day arbitration was held to determine if the employee had terminated his employment because he accessed his pension. We are waiting for that decision and award.

Recently I had a mediation for a member at Red Chris Mine who was terminated for absenteeism due to alcoholism caused by personal problems. We were successful in mediating a settlement for the member to return to work at Red Chris Mine.

Nolan Paquette and I recently attended the BC Natural Resources forum in Prince George where we worked together with others from Local 2017, District 3 and the Wood Council to build relations with companies and First Nations in the northwest part of the province involved in mining and forestry. The forum was very interesting and educational.

I continue to work jointly with Nolan on the many issues at Red Chris Mine including payroll issues and deficiencies, contracting out and the block caving work. We are slowly making progress on the payroll issues and will keep you updated as we make progress.

The Mount Sicker HBO crew on TFL 44 has worked very little this year which has resulted in some members starting to lose their six-month benefit coverage while on layoff. Teal Jones has not provided any information as to when the crew will be returning to work at this time.

I am on the Local Union's bargaining committee for the Coast Forest Industry Negotiations. The current collective agreement expires on June 15, 2024. We have been busy gathering resolutions at the various area meetings and drafting resolutions to bring to the wage and contract conference in February 2024.

I continue to work with others on a variety of issues including successorship rights and sectoral bargaining in the forest industry, Old Growth deferrals and changes to the labour Code and many others.

Currently, Local 1-1937 has several good organizing targets that we will be focusing on in the next few months to start organizing campaigns. Organizing is key and important to grow the membership for Local 1-1937.

In Solidarity, Richard Arnason

CINKANT REPORT

By Chris Cinkant, 3rd Vice-President



MANUFACTURING

Recent layoffs affecting sawmills and smaller remanufacturing plants have caused a feeling of uncertainty to many of our members. Without answers on the future of WFP APD and the skewed and misleading media coverage on old growth harvesting, including shortfalls in, hiring, retention, training, skilled trades, and pending retirements contribute to worker uncertainty in the manufacturing sector.

On a more hopeful note, lumber markets ebb and flow, and there seems to be a trend upward currently.

WFP

Meetings with WFP senior Management, Mill Plant Chairmen and Business Agents have taken place providing a progressive step in bringing communication from the mill floor to the highest levels of the company.

We thank WFP President and Chief Executive Officer Steven Hoffer and his team of senior VP, Human Resources Jennifer Foster, and Derek Haupt GM of manufacturing for actively engaging with the sawmill plant chair reporting and direct questions. The frank two-way discourse is appreciated by both parties and is a positive step toward keeping communication lines open. Encouraging progress is acknowledged from our first meeting to our more recent meeting on January 11th. Credit to CEO Steven Hofer's recommendation of follow-up meetings. Presently, further in-person discussions will be scheduled on a regular basis. Our Local Officers and Chairmen working group appreciates the open and transparent conversations between parties and recognizes the importance of workers' concerns advancing from the plant floor.

Many thanks to our Steelworker reps John Binng APD, Kevin Empey & Mike Redmond DPSD, Dan Gabrielson SSD, Keary Henning CBSD and Randy Robertson CSD.

Glen Cheetham, Nolan Paquette and I attended from our Local offices.

At the Saltair Sawmill division, a new Continuous Dry Kiln is close to completion. As the new Kiln produces on a 24-hour 7 days a week basis, Western has given Notice to implement an Alternate shift. At the time of this writing, the Plant Committee and this office are drafting an Alternate Shift proposal we feel would better fit the workforce and work/life balance for members posted to weekend work. We are hopeful the company will recognize the proposed shift and at least implement the no-risk three-month trial period option under Supplement 8 of the Collective Agreement. I will report on the above in our next newsletter.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Many thanks to all our safety activists for your selfless dedication to worker safety with the many challenges you face every day in promoting a safe and healthy work environment.

Incident and near-miss reporting is a pillar of any Health and Safety program and reporting remains woefully low. The reasons for much of the decline in reporting are quite apparent to our Safety Committees. The possibility of, and the humiliation of, a drug and alcohol testing process comes into play. Fear of putting coworkers at risk of the same fate compounds the issue. Legal use of cannabis in off-duty hours on nights before or even days before in most cases usually exceeds the unreasonable limits in Employer Drug and Alcohol Policies, thereby driving safety underground, then inevitably quashes our Safety Committees' opportunities to investigate and/or fix, remove potential hazards. Tragically, this is the dangerous consequence of unreported incidents.

It is a testament to our Safety Committees that they keep fighting for our Health and Safety amidst these challenges.

BILL 41, the WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT, has come into effect as of January 1st of this year. This Bill will impact all our members injured on the job. Duty to Cooperate and Duty to Maintain Employment will affect any worker's return to work process. This Bill puts more responsibility on both the Employer and Employee to have a bigger role in the return-to-work plan. It would seem WSBC will act more as a dispute umpire and less as a participant in the early return to work stages.

We will closely monitor how the new regulation unfolds this coming year. This Local has several concerns with the new language in the Act. Let us hope all parties concentrate on what is best for our injured workers and provide an uncontentious and effective route back to a safe and healthy work environment.

We are sad to report we had a work-related fatality within our Local this past year.

On December 8th, 2023, Brother Todd Fair was killed in a fatal incident that took place at the Nesook Bay dryland log sort, west of Gold River on Vancouver Island.

Todd leaves behind his wife and three children. Our deepest sympathies go out to Anne Marie, their sons, Tyson and Nolan and daughter Jordyne as well as their extended family, friends, and coworkers.

Our fallen Brother is a tragic reminder to us all to be relentless in pushing safety standards forward and return home to our loved ones in the same condition we left them.

**In Solidarity,
Brother Chris Cinkant**





Seen here on the left is Chris Cinkant handing a donation to the food bank from the Steelworkers Humanity fund.



FOOD BANK DONATIONS



Seen here on the left is Jason Cox, handing a donation to the Comox Valley food bank from the Steelworkers Humanity fund.

PORT ALBERNI REPORT

By Glen Cheetham, 4th Vice-President



Here we are starting 2024 with issues from 2022 still unresolved.

After shutting APD down in October 2022 and the employees 55 and older being offered the government bridging to retirement and then being topped up to full contractual severance by Western Forest Products we had approximately 60 employees take advantage of a bad situation and be able to move on with their lives and remember what once was.

Having said that there were still 60 – 70 employees left behind, some of them were able to find employment at other WFP operations through pref. hire. There are still approximately 40 -50 employees who still have ties to APD and are hoping to hear some positive news on a potential sale of the mill. We are still being told there are ongoing talks with a potential buyer for the operation which gives us hope that one day that operation will reopen and provide meaningful employment to those employees left behind.

As we wait for any good news we have begun working with individuals from the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation of the Provincial Government to try and assist employees with the different programs that the government has to offer. We will be meeting in Alberni the week of February 12th to get the ball rolling helping members with further training and other programs that may be available to them.

Nolan Paquette and I began negotiating a first Collective Agreement for the Hacas Inn which is a motel located in Bamfield with the cleaning staff and front desk employees. We will endeavour to get them a fair deal with wage increases and safety language that fits their needs.

Locally in the Alberni Valley two companies successfully secured funds from the Provincial Government for making upgrades to their facilities to help stay competitive in an everchanging modernizing world. Franklin Forest Products which is a small custom-cut mill

that employs approximately 40 people hopes to add 5 - 10 positions with the financial support. The other company receiving funds is the SAN Group for upgrades to their operations.

The year started out quiet on the grievance front but that has picked up in the last couple of weeks. There have been a couple of lengthy suspensions out of Duke Point Sawmill that are currently going through the process, and we are dealing with a termination out of Franklin Forest Products.

This is a little early, but I will put it out there now that we are planning to hold a golf tournament in Port Alberni on June 8th tentatively, as it gets closer to the date there will be more information put out with the details, so keep that date open.

That is all for now, stay safe.

In Solidarity,

Glen Cheetham



FINANCIAL REPORT

By **Dusty Palmer, Financial Secretary**



Greetings Friends,

2023 was a difficult year for all of us and we are happy to have it behind us. Our members like many workers in Canada are faced with challenges relating to housing affordability, increased interest rates, household debt, persistent inflation, forest fires and drought conditions. Many members also faced layoffs and some permanent closures, which we all know is tough on workers and their families. We are definitely hoping for better in 2024 with some studies suggesting a stronger economy by mid-year.

Thankfully one of our Locals' greatest strengths is our diversity of operations; while the forest industry is our mainstay, other industries such as mining, public sector, aquaculture, gaming, trucking, and many others give us strength.

For the Local Union, operating in challenging times makes you look for savings wherever you can. The Local Union has done this over the past year including staffing adjustments that have allowed us to remain healthy financially as we head into a bargaining year for the Coastal Forest Industry.

The number of active members varied drastically from month to month this past year but averaged 4,000 for the year. Currently, our membership accounting program puts the total number of members in our system at 5,500.

One very positive outcome from the increased interest rates last year was that we were able to reinvest large portions of our Guaranteed Investment Certificates at higher return rates than we have had in many years. They will earn the Membership good returns over one-year and two-year terms.

As a Trustee on the IWA Forest Industry Long Term Disability (LTD) Plan, I am pleased to report that the plan is doing very well. The changes implemented back in 2011 to reduce costs have paid off and allowed the Plan to be healthy financially. A large part of our membership has the benefit of having

this insurance is available to them as it has been carefully managed by Trustees from the Union and industry. LTD insurance provides financial assistance when a covered plan Member is unable to work due to an accident, illness or injury that prevents them from completing the duties of their own occupation.

Early in 2023, we closed our second building in Duncan, the Mercury Theatre, which had been offered to the community theatre group at reduced costs for over two decades. Sadly, the building is in disrepair and was costing more to operate than we received in revenue for a number of years. We are now saving the considerable cost of upkeep on the building. The community of Duncan benefited greatly from our low-rent space over the years. When the time is right, we will review its usage, but for now, the property will remain idle as a property investment for our Local.



Dusty Palmer Donating a cheque from the Steelworkers Humanity fund to the Cowichan Valley Basket Society

Of late I have been busy renewing leases in three of our offices to ensure that the appropriate lease rates are achieved. This is essential due to inflation impacting the rising costs of operating our buildings.

I will close by noting members can remain confident in our Local Union's ability to address the service needs of members as we remain in good shape financially and are ready for any challenge ahead of us.

In Solidarity, Dusty Palmer

NORTH ISLAND LOGGING REPORT

By Dan Jorgenson, Recording Secretary



The Winter of 2024

Hello, It's January and we just came out of a freeze, with a forecast for Snow in the near future. WFP Port McNeill is working, and some of Jeune Landing is as well following being down for many months..... since August 2023. The crew has launched an Article XXV grievance which the Local is pursuing. Holberg should be flashing up in the next couple of weeks as well as Englewood, and thereafter H&D too. The Kokish crew, Bonanza Lake Logging made it back in early December and should be up and running, weather permitting, by the time you read this.

The biggest topic of discussion on the north end of Vancouver Island right now is bargaining and whether there will be a "strike" this year. Of course, no one has a crystal ball, so I suggest members read the article by our Local President, where he states "joint efforts to improve labour relations...will hopefully translate into a more amicable set of negotiations this year".

I for one am hopeful that WFP is sensible and does not bring concessions to the table this year.

A few of the Business agents along with operational Chairs have held a couple of meetings with WFP CEO Steven Hofer, VP Don Holms, and Senior HR VP Jennifer Foster to discuss concerns in the harvesting side of the business. These meetings have been useful in communicating the concerns the Union and its members have, to the highest level of the company. We are hopeful these productive meetings continue going forward.

The Local just finished up an A&D arbitration with WFP on the North Island, I felt good about how the case was presented, and we are hoping for a decision sometime in May which I hope to report on next time.

I am now the business agent for Comox Valley Distribution on the Island and am getting to know the crew. They are a good group and I am happy to represent them. You may see their trucks on the road and around the north island. They are responsible for much of the goods we see in our stores.

One final note: If you find yourself in Campbell River with time on your hands stop by the Chances Casino. The staff there are members of our Local Union and would welcome you anytime.

In Solidarity, Dan Jorgenson



EDUCATION & OPERATIONS REPORTS

By Shelley Siemens, Warden



EDUCATION

Our education department is busy as always training activists and continually improving our programs. Last December we held a Shop Stewards level 1 in Campbell River and then another in January in Duncan. We have also held a few online Shop Stewards level 1 courses for those stewards who are working in more remote areas. If there is a will there is a way that we will make your education available to you.

Education has a New Members online interactive course being built as we speak. This will be extremely beneficial to all our members and will be a click-and-learn class program. I am really excited about this and can't wait until this is available to all of our members!

NEGOTIATIONS:

Strathcona Gardens:

This year seems to be a big year for contract negotiations. We have gone full circle with Strathcona Gardens and are now back at the table with the Regional District of Strathcona. Both Parties have tabled their demands in December and have had another 2-day session on January 11 & 12. We are scheduled to reconvene again on February 29th & March 01 and will be working really hard at getting a deal in those two days.

Chances Casino:

Also on the list of negotiations is Chances Casino, a Casino in Campbell River. The newly elected Bargaining Committee and the Union have had several meetings and are ready to table their demands on February 13th. We are looking forward to negotiating some great contract demands and increases for the members of the Chances Casino.

Micron Machine Works:

Micron Machine Works is a small machine shop in Port McNeill. The Bargaining Committee and the Union will be

tabling their demands on March 06, 2024, and are looking forward to an upgraded Collective Agreement following that.

OPERATIONS REPORT:

No two days are ever the same in this business, I enjoy the everyday challenges that are always present with the ongoing grievances from our operations.

I currently have three grievances outstanding with Lemare Lake Logging. I also have a mediation coming up with the Regional District of Mount Waddington on a Policy Grievance for the interpretation of the Collective Agreement. I want to point out that if there ever is a reason to join a Union it is because of this exact reason. The Regional District has currently hired a new CAO who insists on interpreting the full-time workers as casual workers. Although I can understand why an employer would not want to pay their employees as a regular full-time worker with no benefits or pension, I cannot for the life of me understand why an employer wouldn't want to give an employee job security and incentive to continue to work for you. I have seen this time and again where employers cheap out and then have a problem retaining hardworking skilled employees. The ripple effect from this is that the company runs so skinny because they can't retain workers that no one is able to take a vacation or heaven forbid be sick. This also stresses the rest of the employees out as they get multi-tasked and burnt out and eventually leave as well. It is a vicious cycle and just so unnecessary but seems to be a common occurrence.

Tyee Chevrolet Dealers

Tyee Chev has just elected a new Health and Safety Committee as well as a Shop Committee Chair. I want to say thank you to all who stepped up and also say welcome to the Union! to the New members that were recently just hired there.

In Solidarity, Sister Shelley Siemens

MID ISLAND LOGGING REPORT

By Jason Cox, Conductor



A quick recap of 2023 and the beginning of 2024 so far. I ended the year (December 18th and 19th) and started it again on January 3rd, 4th, and 5th in arbitration. The arbitration was regarding the invasion of privacy. The company felt they had the right to install cameras in crew buses (crummies), the Local Union filed a grievance citing invasion of privacy as the video cameras were not only forward facing to detect incidents while driving like collisions with other vehicles, machinery or wildlife encounters but also had a camera facing the crew compartment of the vehicle that was also able to record audio as well. The company argued that this was to make it a safer workplace. We argued it overstepped the rights of management and our members' personal privacy. Traveling to work talking about whatever is being discussed with co-workers and video recording the occupants does not do anything to improve the safety of a worksite in my opinion. The capabilities of these cameras that we discovered through the arbitration process were staggering.

The units installed in the trucks can be set for a wide variety of parameters, how long the recordings continue after the vehicles have stopped and the vehicles are turned off, this gives little comfort for our members who may have to relieve themselves after a long trip to the worksite, where standing beside the vehicle is the only place a person can be. The units take a picture every few seconds and store it on a memory card in the unit. The units' memory cards are downloaded once they come into service the same way our phones work over wi-fi.

My personal favourite (sarcasm) was when I heard the cameras could be turned on to live-stream mode. Does management not have anything better to do than watch our members bounce down a logging road on their way to work?

But we were assured the video would not be reviewed unless there was reason to look back for an event. I guess that is why they need to record and save for 400 hours. I am no mathematician but if I spend 2.5 hours a day traveling to and from work that equates to 160 days. We await the decision from the arbitrator.

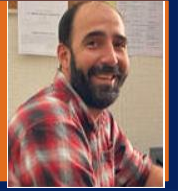
Industry is always concerned they cannot attract new people to the forest sector, with employers like this out there, it is no wonder why people do not want to get involved with the forest sector. Do not get me wrong, employers are not all bad, but there are some real winners out there (more sarcasm).

On a better note, we delivered cheques from the USW Humanity Fund to local food banks before the Christmas break. These monies will provide many families with much-needed help in these trying times that have just become the norm, unfortunately. Having a good Union job and being able to assist not only our own members but non-members alike is something that we can and should all be proud of.

In Solidarity – Jason Cox

SOUTH ISLAND REPORT

By Nolan Paquette, Business Agent



Hello Friends,

Just wanted to update everyone on the goings-on since the last newsletter, as usual, it has been very busy,

Bargaining prep has begun for Western Forest Products (WFP) and area meetings have been held with a good number of members showing up to each of the meetings to have their resolutions heard. We held area meetings in Duncan, Nanaimo, Campbell River, Port McNeil, Powell River, and Gibsons. Your 2024 Bargaining Committee for the Union will consist of Brian Butler, Richard Arnason, Chris Cinkant, Jason Cox, and myself Nolan Paquette, we are anticipating that bargaining will begin in April and I am looking forward to being part of the committee for this round of bargaining.

Another contract that is underway is the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) the prep work will be completed, and we will hopefully have started negotiations by the time you are reading this letter. With an experienced committee in place and a very active and involved membership, we are hopeful that we can clean up some major language issues in the current agreement and make some significant gains in this round of bargaining.

CIDA Holdings is also underway, but we have hit a few roadblocks with the employer as we are working through some rate of pay issues coming out of their Division 4 operation. I am confident that we can get a deal done in Division 3 once these pay issues have been corrected.

School District 79 has held a vote on their new Shop and Safety Committees, and we have six new members that have been voted into the Shop Committee and a small shuffle in the Safety Committee. To date we have had these new committee members complete the Stewards Level I training and are looking at getting them all into Stewards Level II as soon as possible, there will also be some health and

Safety training will take place for our committee members in the coming months.

On a very positive note, I'm happy to say that we have made enormous gains in solving almost all the grievances at the Cowichan Bay Sawmill, over the last three years we had what seemed like an endless pile of grievances, many of which took until a step three grievance meeting to resolve. The Company and the Shop Committee including myself underwent some joint training in conflict de-escalation, this training I feel has been a large part of why the Shop Committee and the Company can now talk through issues ahead of them becoming a grievance and are meeting regularly to keep lines of communication open.

We will also be conducting elections for both the Shop and Safety Committees in April of this year, so if you are thinking about becoming more involved in your Union no better way than running for a committee.

Newmont – Red Chris Mine Report

After a six-year-long organizing drive the USW Local 1-1937 negotiated the first collective agreement on April 24th, 2023. Things have been a little rocky with this being the first collective agreement for Newcrest and shortly after transitioning ownership of the mine to Newmont.

The top concerns the Union is hearing from membership are the constant payroll errors, sick day/vacation errors, lack of training, and travel delays to and from the site. These delays are frequent and are very draining on members as they often sit on runways waiting for better weather or are placed on buses and made to make the long journey to camp by road if the weather doesn't allow them to fly. These are concerns that we are working on currently and have been very busy filing grievances on behalf of the membership, with the help of our amazing shop stewards on site.

South Island Report Cont'd

There seems to be very little if any process of policy on site to help set guidelines as to having both members and management on the same page as to what is expected in the different areas of the operation. HR is holding training sessions with management to help explain the collective agreement and how to properly follow it, but we are still seeing lots of issues coming up regarding overtime allotment, contracting out, training, and most importantly pay on premiums.

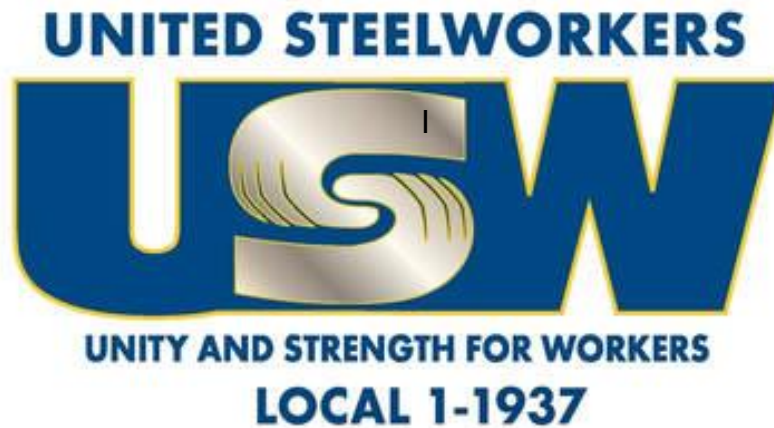
Payroll is constantly making errors, and this seems to be an ongoing issue with members not being paid as per the collective agreement, when they reach out to have this corrected, they are met with very little or delayed responses. The new mine manager for Newmont is aware of these payroll issues and has said it is a top priority in the first quarter of 2024 to have all of these corrected. We are hopeful that this will take place as there have been several members and staff quit over payroll errors.

In closing the Union remains hopeful of having a positive working relationship with Newmont moving forward as the new owners of the Red Chris mine, but that is something only time will tell.

I would like to thank the Shop Committee for their continued involvement and for all the great work they are doing to uphold our collective agreement, stand strong.

In Solidarity, Nolan Paquette





If you want improvements in your workplace, organizing is the most important way to raise the working and living standards of workers. Union workers earn 30% more money than non-union workers and 44% more when you include the total compensation of health and welfare benefits. The Union advantage is clear. Organizing more workers will strengthen our Union, our contracts, and our communities with good jobs. Over 1 in 3 workers in Canada belongs to a Union. United, we are a powerful voice for justice at work. Together, we can protect the good jobs that workers and their families need to achieve their potential at work as well as life after work.

CONTACT US to join our Union or for more information contact us at the toll-free phone numbers below:

1-866-746-6121 Duncan

1-800-663-5594 Courtenay

1-877-611-2171 Burnaby

1-888-956-4312 Port McNeill

1-250-724-0171 Port Alberni

Or email our Organizing Director Richard Arnason at: rarnason@usw1-1937.ca

An organizer will contact you within the next few days on a completely confidential basis.