

# ICEBREAKER

August 2020

Jason Amesbury

## Business Manager's Report

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

To say this year has been one for the history books would truly be an underwhelming statement. From the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic the entire world seems to have had to re-think the way we manage day to day life. Major shifts in how we must handle our childcare, our finances, safe working conditions, and even the most mundane things such as our shopping habits or how we socialize have become challenges to champion.

The management team at the Local has faced some very specific challenges since the onset of the pandemic. First and foremost, we collaborated with our provincial government and the BC Building Trades to ensure safe working conditions for not only our membership, but for all trades people.

Secondly, we pushed to establish the construction and service industries to be designated as essential services to ensure we were able to continue to use our talents to help in the effort to maintain our economy and ensure our provincial infrastructures could remain intact. Having been involved in these processes firsthand, I have to say I was, and still am, quite proud of British Columbia's provincial government's response to the pandemic and their willingness to work with labor at such a crucial moment in our history. This is something we can all be very proud of. I want to give my personal thanks to all the members who in very uncertain times went to work and truly helped their communities by building and

maintaining the HVACR systems that allow all the other essential work to continue.

The Executive Board met multiple times throughout the spring and summer to ensure the business of the Local was maintained and adapted to the changes and challenges that arose due to the pandemic. The trustees of the Health and Savings plans have also been diligently monitoring the experience and performance of the benefits plans and taking action when necessary. I would like to commend these unpaid Officers and Trustees for their dedication and focus in directing the Local and its entities through these never-before-seen circumstances.

It has been difficult not being allowed to have in-person general membership meetings since March but I am hopeful that we'll be meeting in September in some capacity. We are obviously limited to Covid-19 protocols such as max occupancy and social distancing guidelines, so we have developed a plan to facilitate meetings which will still allow us to come together albeit in smaller groups. We will be setting up the meeting space in the back half of the RTI facility and will be requiring pre-registration for all members who wish to attend. We will have multiple meetings to accommodate as many members as needed, so that all of us can continue to participate in the business and brotherhood/sisterhood of the Local. Dates, times, and registration details can be found later in this newsletter and also on our website.

Our litigation continues against JARTS and Richard Seder. Since our last update, our counterclaim has been revised to include claims for damages arising from the removal and destruction of property owned by the Local, updated claims for breach of trust, and adding additional defendants. Our lawyers have completed our document disclosure, and examinations for discovery are being planned for this Fall. While it has been a significant wait while the i's were dotted and the t's were crossed, a 24-day trial is set to commence August 3, 2021.

In addition to our website being an excellent source of current Local 516 news and updates, our social media team has been sharing as much pertinent information as possible throughout the last five months. The union staff have been working throughout the entire pandemic to ensure the day-to-day was not interrupted in anyway. While in-person meetings are still by appointment until further notice, phone calls and emails are being handled as per usual.

I look forward to meeting with you in person again in September at the general membership meetings and area meetings in the interior and on the island. Dates, times, and protocols for the area meetings will be released very soon. Enjoy the rest of the summer and be safe.

Fraternally yours,

Jason Amesbury  
Business Manager



Keith Mackinnon, General Manager

In response to the directives of the BC Public Health Office (PHO) related to COVID-19, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, RTI suspended all classes for the safety and protection of all students and staff. We needed time to ensure we could continue to deliver on our promise of providing a safe learning environment.

The flexibility of our building permitted us to fold back the partitions in our classrooms and re-configure for social distancing allowing for reconvening of classes in a limited capacity on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Enacting our COVID -19 Safety Policy brought our students back and classes were only suspended for 4 weeks. During the hiatus we also converted our workshop area into a temporary classroom that provided us again the ability to be flexible and start back a 3<sup>rd</sup> class of students while adhering to the requirements of the PHO and not further delaying the apprentices the education they require. We have continued to deliver afterschool training for UA516 Apprentices instructed by Tony Kostka for each week while they are onsite.

It is a great asset to have this building and an advantage to all the Apprentices, Members and Contractors as we are able to proceed into our fall sessions as planned pre-pandemic with our new classroom configurations and session times. This new configuration will also allow us to reconvene programs in the fall for General membership. We will be publishing dates and registration directions for each program as they are scheduled.

To give you an idea of what is coming, RTI will be hosting an **FSR Class RE program on OCT 23-25** and a **Controls Technician Certification Course** consisting of 12 Online courses and 2 Practical classes beginning in October.

If any member is interested in instructing a Saturday course on topics such as Basic Electrical, Brazing, Soldering, please contact Ian McComish at [training@ua516.org](mailto:training@ua516.org). This is your school and we need your knowledge to help the next generation. RTI is continuing on the path to be the best facility for you and will continue to navigate through the bumps in the road as we travel together to this destination.

## Upcoming General Membership Meetings

To comply with provincial guidelines, the maximum number of attendees per meeting must be set at 40. In order to give all members an opportunity to attend an upcoming general membership meeting, members are required to register for one of the following dates: **Tuesday, September 15th** or **Wednesday, September 16th**. The meetings will be held in the back half of the RTI facility, and will begin at 5:00pm on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

We are using the Eventbrite system to facilitate registration. To register, visit [bit.ly/UA516Sep2020](https://bit.ly/UA516Sep2020) and select your date of choice. Only register for the date that you know you can attend, so that others have the same opportunity. If both Tuesday and Wednesday meetings fill completely, additional members will be placed on a waiting list and a third meeting will be scheduled if necessary.

To register:

**[Bit.ly/UA516Sep2020](https://bit.ly/UA516Sep2020)**

Alternatively, you may contact the union office to check availability and to register for the meeting of your choice.

# UA Local 516 Staff Introductions

## **Brittanie Alonzo** (brittanie@ua516.org), **Accounts Administrator**

Brittanie started with UA Local 516 back in January 2019. She joined the team having previous experience in payroll and bookkeeping, and an acute attention to detail. She quickly learned from her predecessor, Marcia, and made Marcia's transition to retirement as smooth as possible. Brittanie's extreme organizational skills come in especially handy in her position as she must administer the finances for all the Local's entities including keeping all the records up to date for the Finance Committee and Executive Board meetings.

Brittanie is very excited to be expecting her first child at Christmas time, and is looking forward to everything that comes along with motherhood!

## **Jennifer Schaefer** (jenn@ua516.org), **JATF Administrator**

Jennifer joined the Local in May 2019 bringing a background of hospitality and healthcare. Her skills have been a natural fit in coordinating the school needs and safety training of members in accordance with the collective agreements. Jennifer works daily with UA 516 contractors, the trustees of the JATF, the ITA, RTI staff, and the Local 516 Training Coordinator to ensure training compliance among members and contractors. She is also responsible for updating apprenticeship hours and coordinating the reimbursements from the Journeyman Apprentice Training Fund.

Outside of work, she works as an unpaid and unreviewed uber driver (for her kids!) and really enjoys the outdoors, food, and being a passionate sports-mama.

## **Julia Ballantyne** (julia@ua516.org), **Public Relations**

Julia joined the UA Local 516 office staff in February 2020. Julia is a Journeyman Refrigeration Mechanic who was on the tools for about 7 years. She just recently had a baby and loves being a mom. Julia has spent many years working with Build TogetHER, a campaign of the BC Building Trades that promotes, supports and mentors women in the skilled construction trades. She currently serves as a Trustee for the JATF and has always been active in our union. Julia facilitates all UA Local 516's social media, connecting our members and contractors.

On her days off, you can find Julia enjoying the outdoors with her son or indulging in some good local eats!

Brittanie, Jennifer, and Julia have joined those below in assisting members and administering the day-to-day activities encompassed by UA Local 516 and its related entities: the Health and Welfare Plan, the Savings Plan, and the Journeyman Apprentice Training Fund. Just let us know if we can ever help you with anything!

### **Lori Jow**

lori@ua516.org

**Receptionist/  
Member Services**

### **Janine Inotai**

janine@ua516.org

**Assistant  
Benefits Administrator**

### **Melanie Beaulieu**

melanie@ua516.org

**Member/Contractor  
Services**

### **Geoff Patzer**

geoff@ua516.org

**Office Manager/  
Benefits Administrator**

# Understanding Service & Construction Agreements

UA Local 516 has two main agreements with two separate bargaining bodies. The first is the Service & Maintenance Agreement with the Construction Labour Relations Association, better known as the CLRA, and the other is with the remaining non-CLRA members known as the Independent Contractors. These two agreements are which most of our service and construction members work under. They are very similar with minor differences and small nuances spun within.

However, only with the CLRA does UA Local 516 also have a separate construction agreement. Decades ago as a response to rolling-wild-cat strikes by other trade unions, the BC Government mandated that all Construction Trade Craft Unions must belong to a bargaining counsel. The bargaining counsel would manage the renewal and bargaining with the unions collectively. The name of this bargaining counsel is the Bargaining Council of BC Building Trades Unions better known in its short form as the BCBCBTU.

When these bargaining sessions take place there are clauses and parts of agreements that are divided up as Main Table and Trade Specific. Main Table items are items that must be determined together as a whole between 15 different trade unions. Trade specific items on the other hand are bargained between the Contractors and the Union directly and do not affect the other unions within the council. Essentially, our Service & Maintenance Agreement is a trade specific agreement.

During the 1980's, UA Local 516 split from the construction bargaining counsel after successfully arguing that HVAC-R Service & Maintenance was not Construction. This allowed the Local to bargain an agreement without being told what our wages, conditions, and benefits would be by other construction trades.

However, anyone working under the UA Local 516 Construction Agreement is still vulnerable to the terms and conditions set forth by the BCBCBTU and its agreements. To date, we have no one working under the BCBCBTU Construction Agreement. We still participate in bargaining and work with the CLRA and the BCBCBTU to keep the agreement active and up to date as it is still a legal requirement to do so.

Our contractors and members alike choose not to use the agreement due to its rigidity around the type of work that can be performed, the lack of a seniority clause, and the fact that large dedicated construction crews are seldom seen within the HVAC-R industry in British Columbia. To clarify, absolutely no service work can be performed under the Construction Agreement. Additionally, due to the many parties involved with BCBCBTU bargaining, seldom has an agreement been agreed to within reasonable time frames without a mediator or arbitrator being involved.

A few weeks ago, during our last round of Construction Agreement bargaining, we successfully bargained with the CLRA to agree to match most of the current Service & Maintenance language for the Construction Agreement main table items including wages. This was due to a spirit of co-operation to keep the Service and Construction Agreements similar where possible. Without this co-operation, anyone working under the Construction Agreement would earn less than a service mechanic.



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