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 essen-
tial 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 infrastruc-
tures could remain intact. Having
been involved in these processes
firsthand, I have to say I was, and
still am, quite proud of British Co-
lumbia’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 mem-
bers 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 meet-
ing in September in some capacity.
We are obviously limited to Covid-
19 protocols such as max occupan-
cy and social distancing guidelines, so
we have developed a plan to facili-
tate 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 requir-
ing 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 re-
moval and destruction of property
owned by the Local, updated claims
for breach of trust, and adding addi-
tional 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 com-
mence 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 pos-
sible throughout the last five
months. The union staff have been
working throughout the entire pan-
demic 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 proto-
cols for the area meetings will be
released very soon. Enjoy the rest of
the summer and be safe.

Fraternally yours,

Jason Amesbury
Business Manager
In response to the directives of the BC Public Health Office (PHO) related to COVID-19, on March 20th, 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 20th. 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 3rd 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. 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 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

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