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CONSTRUCTION MAINTENANCE AND ALLIED WORKERS CANADA

a newsletter from the union of construction maintenance & allied workers

THE WRITE ANGLE

VETERAN CMAW SHIPBUILDERS TRANSFER THEIR KNOWLEDGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION

Richard Gilbert
CMAW freelance writer

The number of Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Canada (CMAW) members employed at Seaspan's Vancouver Shipyards has increased rapidly over the last year, as work ramps up on a multi-billion dollar Canadian government shipbuilding contract. The construction of these vessels for the Canadian Navy and Coast Guard is providing an opportunity for experienced shipbuilders to transfer their knowledge to a new generation of apprentices.

Boom-and-Bust Shipbuilding Cycle



"The biggest change in the 40 years since I have been working at the Vancouver Shipyards is the employment structure," said Mike Horton, dock master, Seaspan.

"When we came into the industry, it was feast or famine. You would come in, learn the trade, and start to get really good at it. And, when you get a mortgage there would be a big lay off."

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CMAW CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Richard Gilbert
CMAW freelance writer

The members of the Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers (CMAW) Canada are celebrating their 10th anniversary as an independent trade union in 2017, which marks a milestone in the struggle to break away from an American-based International parent union.

"The 10th Anniversary of CMAW is a significant achievement, because every time the BC Labour Relations Board (BCLRB) made a ruling on our case it was a matter of whether or not we were going to survive," said Jan Noster, president, CMAW. "We really didn't know if we were going to be successful.

We were trying everything we could. We knew we were right, but our victory was not at all certain."

The struggle for Canadian autonomy started in the Victoria Local 1598 on Vancouver Island in 1969. The Local put forward a resolution for "Complete autonomy for the Canadian Section". Resolutions were passed that demanded a Canadian union for Canadian trades workers.

"Our fight for Canadian Autonomy would not have been successful without the strong support that we received from our members," said CMAW secretary treasurer Paul Nedelec.

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**Hey!
We're
10 years old**

We're proud to be Canadian

**TWITTER@CMAWUNION
www.cmaw.ca**



Cont'd. CMAW's 10th Anniversary.

For Nedelec, one of the most critical fronts in CMAW's struggle for independence from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBCJA) was an epic legal battle, which began in 2005 when the BCLRB ruled that CMAW is a trade union. The struggle at the BCLRB and was finally settled in the B.C. Supreme Court.

"With the decision of the courts, we were able to create an entity that was completely autonomous," said Noster. "The dream of a Canadian trade union that started with carpenters calling for a Canadian union was realized. As a result, CMAW set up shop; the first order of business was to go around to the jobsites and sign up the previous UBCJA members and apply for union certification."

CMAW made a complaint to the BCLRB in December 2007 that Columbia Hydro Constructors (CHC) and the Allied Hydro Council (AHC) refused to recognize CMAW Local 2300. AHC would not dispatch carpenters from Local 2300 to work on the Revelstoke 5 hydro-electric project in southeastern B.C.

Local 2300 business representative Paul Nedelec organized an information picket line at the Revelstoke project. Many members from locals 2300, 1719 and 1346 blocked the entrances to the project. AHC applied for an injunction to remove the pickets which placed CMAW at the BCLRB.

Most of the AHC certified unions were affiliated with international organizations or parent bodies based in the United States. A number of these affiliated unions and the AHC itself opposed CMAW Local 2300's application to replace BCPC on the AHC certification.

Despite strong opposition, the BCLRB ruled that AHC must direct CHC to contact CMAW Local 2300 and dispatch carpenters to work on the Revelstoke 5 Project. CMAW won a very big and important battle.

In response, AHC applied to the BCLRB in April 2008 to reverse this decision, which allowed CMAW to replace the BCPC on AHC certification.

AHC argued the BCLRB did not have jurisdiction to vary its certification to replace a constituent member, without the consent of the other constituent members. Alternatively, the AHC said that if the LRB had jurisdiction, its decision to do so was unreasonable in the circumstances of this case. The AHC said the original decision is contrary to principles of natural justice and values expressed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"The international (UBCJA) tried to place CMAW under trusteeship, they made all kinds of false allegations against us," said Noster. "The judge ruled that the international was making false or trumped up allegations about CMAW. The court actually ruled they (UBCJA) acted in bad faith."

Former secretary treasurer Dave Flynn and then president Len Embree spent two and a half weeks on the witness stand being questioned by \$500 an hour corporate lawyers, who were hired by the American union. The entire CMAW executive board sat in the courtroom and watched the drama unfold.

The BC Supreme Court ultimately dismissed the UBCJA's case in December 2008, because it was based on the same ineffective jurisdictional and constitutional arguments as the previous BCLRB cases.

During the legal struggle for independence from the UBCJA, CMAW was involved in a failed experiment to affiliate with the CEP, which began in November 2003.

"The American carpenters union (UBCJA), said that even if we (CMAW) won our case at the Labour Relations Board, we would never be able to survive", said Noster. "Then the AMERICAN carpenters union said CEP is funding CMAW, (which was not true). They won't be able to make it once CMAW is done with CEP, or CEP is done with CMAW."

According to Noster, CMAW had a fairly amicable divorce with CEP, who

the CMAW executive board felt just did not have the best interests of construction workers at heart. CEP president Dave Coles tried to take over CMAW and make it just another local using some extremely one-sided clauses in the CEP's constitution.

In particular, there was a clause that said if CMAW wanted to withdraw from the CEP, the union would need to get 50 per cent of the votes from all CEP members in Canada. In addition, CMAW would need to get these votes within a six month window, or the option of withdrawal would be closed forever.

CMAW leadership realized this would be an impossible task since CEP had a membership of about 130,000 people compared to less than 10,000 CMAW members. After gaining autonomy from the UBCJA, CMAW refused to give up the freedom it had won to decide their own future by merging with the CEP. **CMAW**

BOB WHITE OBITUARY

Bob White, Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) president between 1985 and 1991, died on Feb. 19, 2017. White was an influential labour leader, who was behind the decision of Canadian autoworkers to split from the U.S.-based United Auto Workers and establish their own union in 1984. He led Canadian workers through a five-week strike at Chrysler that was opposed by UAW leaders. Chrysler eventually agreed to a \$1.15 per hour pay increase for Canadian workers, which led to a similar deal for American workers. White was elected president of the Canadian Labour Congress in 1992. He was re-elected for two subsequent terms before retiring in 1999. Unifor was created in 2013 from the combination of the CAW and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union. White died at a long-term care facility in Kincardine, Ont.

CMAW IS PROVIDING MEMBERS WITH FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Richard Gilbert
CMAW freelance writer

The Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Canada (CMAW) are providing members with immediate and confidential help under the Employees Family Assistance Program (EFAP) and the Member Assistance Fund.

The service is provided at no cost to CMAW members. He said the EFAP is based on support services in the following areas:

- 1) clinical;
- 2) work/life; and
- 3) professional.

"We are there to help people with any concerns they have with regard to work, family, personal and emotional problems, as well as stress, anxiety and depression," said Cam Sekora, program manager, employee support solutions, Morneau Shepell Inc. "We are there to help with any sort of situation that goes on in your regular everyday life. We are a life support mechanism." Sekora said Shepell's EFAP is a confidential support service that can help CMAW members and their families solve a wide range of problems and challenges. The service is provided at no cost to CMAW members. He said the EFAP is based on support services in the following areas: 1) clinical; 2) work/life; and 3) professional.

"The first key component of the EFAP is clinical counselling support, which is available for primary presenting issues, such as stress, anxiety and depression," said Sekora. "We also offer assistance with family and relationships, addiction related issues, and work/life services, which includes registered nutritionists and naturopaths, as well as health coaches, who are registered nurses."

Shepell's EFAP also offers CMAW members hard copy information and packages on childcare issues such as pregnancy and choosing a college for your son or daughter. In addition, information is available on eldercare, which involves issues like downsizing your home and choosing a care facility.

Finally, the EFAP offers professional advice, which includes legal, financial and career consultations.

All support services are accessed voluntarily by the individual and are strictly confidential. There is no cost to CMAW members or their families to use EFAP.

The EFAP Care Access Centre can be contacted toll-free, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week at 1 800 387 4765. EFAP can also be accessed through the web site (workhealthlife.com) or by mobile app.

CMAW also offers its members a unique program called the Member Assistance Fund, which provides financial help up to \$2,500 within two to three days.

"The whole idea is that we only have one criterion, and that is we will help members who find themselves in trouble through no fault of their own," said CMAW president Jan Noster. "It allows us to help our members in need."

For example, a CMAW member was receiving cancer treatment in a hospital in the city. However, he lived in a rural area and his family needed to travel to the hospital.

In one case, a CMAW member had a daughter who was involved in a fatal car accident, but there was no plane or flight out of town until the next day. In response, CMAW chartered a helicopter and landed it on the job site. The CMAW member was transported 800 km to the hospital in Calgary and he spent time with his daughter, during the last moments of her life.

In another case, a CMAW member in Calgary had opened up his roof to install a new one and decided to take his daughter to soccer practice. There was a hail storm and his roof caved with all the drywall ending up in the living room.

The Member Assistance Fund was also used by CMAW members who lost their homes in the Fort McMurray wildfire.

CMAW members can apply for this funding by talking to their business representative. The forms are readily available and confidential. **CMAW**





Cont'd. Veteran CMAW Shipbuilders...

Horton began his career at Vancouver Shipyards in 1979, as a member of the docking crew in the labouring department. The shipyard, located on a 40 acre site on the North Shore of the Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver, was characterized by irregular fluctuations in production and employment.

"With the exception of the boom years between 1979 and 1983, it has been very slow for the shipyard," said Surjit Parmar, welding supervisor, Seaspan. "After that we had some smaller jobs until the late 1990's, when we built the FastCat Ferries."

Parmar, who began his career as a



welder in 1973, said several major shipbuilding contracts were the main drivers of employment at Vancouver Shipyards over the last few decades.

For example, Parmar was part of a team that built a ferry named the Queen of Alberni, which was completed for B.C. Ferry Corporation in 1976. Parmar was involved in the construction of the Miscaroo, which is a Class 4 Icebreaker completed for Gulf Oil Canada in 1983. Finally, there were three high speed ferries called the Pacificat Explorer, Pacificat Discovery and Pacificat Voyager, which were completed for the B.C. Ferry Corporation in 1997 and 1998.

According to Horton and Parmar, these large public and private sector investments generated a "feast or famine" cycle, which made it difficult for the shipyard to retain a block of skilled tradespeople to sustain and develop the workforce.

"In the feast or famine years, a knowledge gap was created in the workforce," said Horton. "You would employ some very good tradespeople, but everybody would get laid off and move on to a fab shop or here or there. But, only some would come back."

When each project was completed, tradespeople were laid off and the



Seaspan's Vancouver Shipyards has been selected under the Government of Canada's National Shipbuilding Strategy for the construction of up to 17 Non-Combat vessels.

focus of activity shifted to repair work. Some people were able to hang on through an extended period of unemployment to be rehired on the next shipbuilding contract. Many others were forced to find work elsewhere.

Old Guard Hands Over to Apprentices

This boom and bust cycle at Vancouver Shipyards was broken in October 2011, when Seaspan was awarded an \$8 billion federal contract for the construction of seven non-combat ships, under the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS).

"These are key years, because we have an older faction of workers that have some history, and have many years of experience," said Horton, who is planning to retire in 15 months. "So, they can mentor people. You hit critical mass after a large group of apprentices come through and work in the trade for five or six years. As the old guard phases out, the whole yard is up to speed."

The shipbuilding contract is the largest federal government procurement awarded in B.C. history. It involves the construction of Offshore Fisheries Science Vessels, an Offshore Oceanographic Science Vessel, and Canada's first Polar Icebreaker for the Canadian Coast Guard.

Seaspan was awarded a second federal government contract in October 2013 to build up to 10 vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard at an estimated cost of \$3.3 billion. This investment is for up to five Medium Endurance Multi-Tasked Vessels

and up to five Offshore Patrol Vessels.

In total, Seaspan has been awarded \$11.3 billion in federal government contracts to build up to 17 vessels.

"This is the first project, where it is reasonable to look forward to spending half of your life here. Or, if everything goes right, you could start and end your career here," said Parmar. "With the number of ships we are going to build for this project, by the time we finish the last ship, the first ship will be ready for a mid-life refit."



Construction workers at Vancouver Shipyards are building three Offshore Fisheries Science Vessels for the Canadian government at its production facility in North Vancouver, BC.

Parmar has worked at Vancouver Shipyards for more than 43 years and he retired on March 31, 2017. One of his most important achievements in the last few years was to build ships for Canada and pass on what he has learned to the next generation.

When Seaspan won the first contract in 2011, there were 60 office staff and 120 tradespeople working at Vancouver Shipyard.

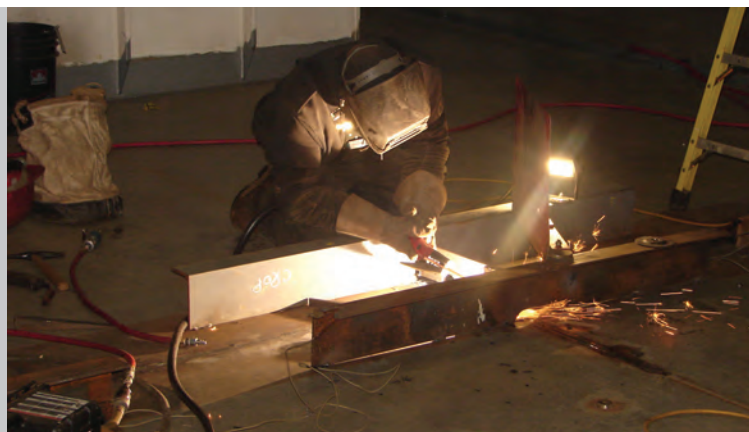
Butch Sidey, financial secretary and business agent, CMAW Local 506 Marine & Shipbuilders, said the number of CMAW workers employed by Seaspan at Vancouver Shipyard jumped to 600 workers in April 2017, compared to about 150 in April 2016. Out of this total, there are more than 40 apprentices.

According to Sidey, there are currently three Offshore Fisheries Science Vessels being built at the shipyard, with construction of the first vessel starting in July 2015. Construction on the other two vessels began in 2016.

Training the Next Generation of Shipbuilders

The construction of vessels for the Canadian Navy and Coast Guard by Seaspan at the Vancouver Shipyard is part of the federal government's 30-year, \$35-billion national shipbuilding strategy, which was announced in June 2010. This federal program represents an opportunity for

At its peak, it is expected that Vancouver Shipyards will have a workforce of more than 800 hourly workers. A management and technical staff of about 100 people will support this workforce.



apprentices to make a contribution to the transformation of the Vancouver Shipyard and revitalize the B.C. shipbuilding industry.



"The most important thing about being an apprentice is to become like a sponge and absorb everything around you," said Lauren Miller, apprentice fitter. "I think a big part of creating your own work ethic is learning from all the other journeymen. When I started work here I was extremely worried and anxious about knowing everything they threw at me. But, that is the biggest part of the apprenticeship. You are here to learn."

Miller said being a first year apprentice can be overwhelming

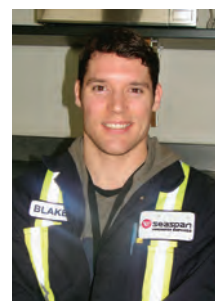
at times. She says it is important to remember that the apprenticeship is four years and to go with the flow.

"The most important thing for an apprentice is to take in as much information as you can, and be willing to learn," said Blake Crome, apprentice welder. "You must learn all the different processes, and make sure you remember how to do things. There is a lot to learn here and a lot of different tasks."

It is also very important for apprentices to understand that they must learn from their mistakes.

"Initially, I was afraid to make a mistake," said Miller. "So, when I make a mistake, I learn not to do that again."

Crome agrees.



"If you mess up, you need to know where you went wrong," he said. "But, don't let it get under your skin, get you down, or rattle your confidence."

Every three months, apprentices are put in a different area to learn all aspects of the shipyard.

Seaspan is planning to expand its workforce even further to build new icebreakers, Coast Guard vessels, and support ships for the next 30 years. The Marine & Shipbuilders Local 506 represents painters/sandblasters, welders, shipfitters, metal fabricators, crane operators, riggers, joiners and general labourers. **CMAW**



The \$35 billion National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy will create stable high-skilled work opportunities over a 30-year period.

Seaspan photos taken by Richard Gilbert



CMAW ACHIEVES MORE THAN 4 MILLION INJURY FREE MAN-HOURS WORKING FOR DCM ON ALBERTA OIL SANDS PROJECT

Richard Gilbert
CMAW freelance writer

The Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Canada (CMAW) has delivered more than 4 million Lost Time Injury (LTI) free man-hours providing services for DCM at Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL) between 2012 and 2017.

"The safety culture is really strong in the oil sands. It's the number one priority over everything," said Kelly Wilchak, maintenance general superintendent, DCM. "It starts with the management and goes right down to the bottom. We get people to buy into it from the top down. The most important thing that we want everybody to do is take safety to heart, so everyone can go home to their families the same way they came in."

DCM is an experienced maintenance service provider with an established track record at CNRL's Horizon Oil Sands project located north of Fort McMurray, Alberta. The project includes a surface oil sands mining and bitumen extraction plant, as well as on-site bitumen upgrading with associated infrastructure to produce synthetic crude oil.

"Our maintenance work at CNRL has expanded exponentially in the last couple of years," said Wilchak. "We have more than 300 employees on site and last year we put in 800,000 hours."

DCM helps CNRL maintain and improve the efficiency of their facilities, by providing mechanical,



pipework, scaffolding, insulation and electrical & instrumentation maintenance services. There are a total of 300 DCM employees working at CNRL, but there are about 150-160 workers on site at any given time.

"We are 100 per cent maintenance. We maintain the live running plant and work on shutdowns," said Wilchak. "There is a lot of critical work that needs to take place during a shutdown. Maintenance is done during the spring, because plants are not shut down in the winter when it is minus 30 degrees celsius out."

DCM has successfully executed numerous shutdown projects, both scheduled and unscheduled. For example, Wilchak said CNRL has bumped up a mini shut down, because a couple of exchangers

at the facility were leaking. CNRL is also planning to have a bigger shutdown in September.

"Critical pieces of equipment that would normally slow or shut down production can be worked on for annual inspections and tune ups," he said. "Obviously, they want as little disruption as possible to operations and production. With the men and women that we have on maintenance, they know the plant and the systems. So, we are pretty efficient when it comes to doing the actual work."

Wilchak said there is a safety coordinator on site and DCM has an in-house training course, which must be taken every two to three years. DCM also has recognition programs that promote safe behaviour. *continued on next page*



BILSLAND GRIFFITH TAKES OVER ADMINISTRATION OF CMAW'S BENEFIT AND PENSION PLANS FROM D.A. TOWNLEY

Richard Gilbert
CMAW freelance writer

The administration of the Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Canada (CMAW) benefit and pension plans have been taken over by Bilsland Griffith, who is working with the former provider to make the transition as smooth as possible for members.



"So basically, anything that D.A. Townley was doing, we are now doing," said Julie Coster, consultant, Bilsland Griffith. "CMAW members will not see a big difference in services received, but we are the first call when you have any benefit or pension related questions."

CMAW Trustees recently appointed Bilsland Griffith as the new administrator of the benefit and pension plan. Bilsland Griffith took over administration of the plan from D.A. Townley on March 1, 2017.

"One of the things we are working on is a website," said Coster. "The CWBP (Carpentry Workers' Benefit Plan) has the benefit and pension plan in it, but it will require some updating. Once that updated website is up and running, the

transition between service providers will become much clearer, in terms of where to go for forms and other frequently asked questions. The web site will serve as the main interface between Bilsland Griffith and CMAW members."

Currently, the best way for CMAW members to contact Bilsland Griffith is to use the toll-free number (1 844-366-CMAW - 1-844-366-2629) or use this email address (CMAW@bgbenefitsadmin.com) to contact the new plan administrator.

The phone line will be available from Monday to Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm PST.

"I just want CMAW members to know that we are here to help them navigate the stuff they generally don't deal with on a daily basis," said Coster. "For example, we can help members translate our language into plain English and explain the way claims actually work. We can help members with their pension and retirement planning, or understand the requirements for a specific claim."


Coster said the benefit coverage for CMAW members will not change, which means Greenshield Canada will continue to provide drug card coverage and administer claims such as dental and glasses.

"What we are doing is taking all the reports

from the employers, and ensuring that everybody gets credited for their hours and contributions to either their benefit fund or pension fund," she said. "In addition, when members do retire we are the ones who will be calculating and using that information to determine what their pension should be and coordinate with Greenshield."

According to Coster, Bilsland Griffith is also rolling out a new booklet that explains the terms of the plan.

CMAW members should contact the Plan Administrator for any queries related to eligibility for health and welfare benefits. For issues related to extended health and dental claim payments, members should contact Greenshield.

Travel medical claims should be remitted to the CMAW Benefit Plan c/o Bilsland Griffith Benefit Administrators at the following address: Suite 1000 - 4445 Lougheed Highway, Burnaby, BC, V5C 0E4. 




continued from CMAW Achieves...

"We are the ones who put the safety program into place, and it has spread out to everyone else," said Wilchak. "We have lots of safety training, which is mandatory. For example, there is site access training that workers are required to take before coming to the site as a new hire. There is also computer-based safety training that people take while they are working."

Achieving 4 Million LTI free man-hours early in 2017 is a significant accomplishment for DCM employees and CMAW members, given their commitment to safety at the Horizon Oil Sands project.

"Everybody working at the Horizon project spends half of their time here, or the same amount of time they spend at home with their families," said Wilchak. "There is a family atmosphere with this company and everybody is looking out for each other."

Wilchak said the Recordable Injury Frequency (RIF) for DCM in 2016 was 0.25 for 800,000 man hours at Horizon. This indicator, which is used to monitor and evaluate employee and contractor safety performance, is extremely low and well below industry standards. 



CMAW JOINS WITH GLOBAL BUILDING AND WOOD WORKERS' UNION

Richard Gilbert

CMAW freelance writer

The Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers (CMAW) Canada joined forces with the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) in May 2017, which is a global union federation of democratic and free trade unions.

With headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the BWI groups together about 334 trade unions in 130 countries, which represent around 12 million members in the building, building materials, wood, forestry and allied industries.

For CMAW members, one of the most significant benefits of joining BWI is the potential for new business opportunities with multinational contractors and employers operating in Canada who have already established relationships with the global union.

The multinational corporation (MNC) is a business organization with activities in more than two countries, but is located and incorporated in a home country. BWI has signed International Framework Agreements (IFAs) with a group of European-based MNCs in the construction industry, including:

- Hochtief (Germany);
- Skanska (Sweden);

- Veidekke (Norway);
- Ballast Nedam (Holland);
- Lafarge (France);
- Royal BAM Groep (Netherlands);
- Italcementi (Italy);
- Impregilo Salini (Italy);
- Dragados (Spain);
- OHL (Spain);
- Sycr (Spain); and
- Acciona (Spain).

IFAs assist affiliates like CMAW to get recognised as unions, encourage social dialogue and start collective bargaining with BWI partner companies. Under these IFAs, MNC's make a commitment to respect workers' rights based on the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

This means MNC's agree to offer decent wages and working conditions, as well as to provide a safe and healthy working environment. IFA's may contain a complaint and/or monitoring system, which also covers suppliers and subcontractors.

These agreements complement and do not substitute for agreements at the national or local level. In fact, full implementation of

a global agreement is only possible when workers are organised in free trade unions and are able to bargain collectively at the national and enterprise level.

The mission of BWI is to promote the development of trade unions in the building, building materials, wood, forestry and allied industries throughout the world, as well as promote and enforce workers' rights in the context of sustainable development.

BWI has regional offices and project offices located in Panama, Malaysia, South Africa, India, Burkina Faso, Chile, Kenya, Russia, Peru and Brazil.

The BWI holds a World Congress every four years, consisting of delegates from the member organisations. The congress establishes the priorities and strategy for the organisation, and elects the World Council, which meets once a year.

BWI will hold its 4th BWI World Congress and related meetings in Durban International Convention Center (ICC), South Africa, during the week of 26 November to 1 December 2017. CMAW

REMINDERS TO MEMBERS

- Apprenticeship and Training - Missed Training Penalties – CMAW makes a significant investment in training our members every year, because the organization recognizes the benefits of training. It is important for members to understand that training is scheduled on an as needed basis when there are enough members interested to make up a full class. For this reason, any member who does not show up for training without 48 hours' notice will be ineligible for all training, including reimbursement for training, for a period of one year, with the exception of Emergency situations.
- New Mark's Work Warehouse Discount cards have arrived and are available at your local Union Hall.
- Please ensure that your contact information and address is up-to-date with your local Union Hall.



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