



The Current

News from IBEW Local 1837

Fall 2016

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Maine & New Hampshire

Another Big Election Day for Unions on Tuesday, November 8

How you vote is a personal decision and nobody can tell you how to vote. Union leaders hope you will consider the positions of the various candidates on issues that affect our ability to secure good wages, good benefits and a safe workplace.

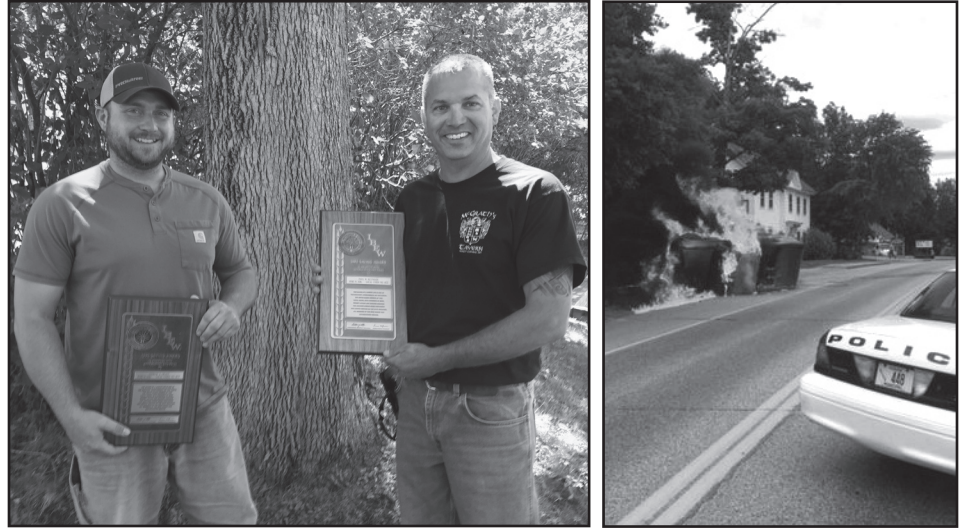
If you're not already registered, you can register and vote at your polling place on Election Day (bring ID). Maine members are urged to consider taking advantage of the option to vote early at their town or city hall to avoid lines on Election Day or difficulties getting to the polls because of storms and restoration work.

Unions in Maine and New Hampshire continue to fight against anti-worker initiatives in Concord and Augusta. The last two years have seen passage of so-called "Right to Work" bills in other states like Wisconsin and West Virginia that are designed to weaken or damage the ability of unions to represent their members by undermining their financial stability. It is only because of the sustained, excellent work of labor activists and allies in our two states that we were able to minimize the damage against working people and their unions. Having pro-labor candidates elected to office helps create a firewall against these damaging bills.

With **New Hampshire Gov. Maggie Hassan's** decision not to seek another two-year term but to run instead for the United States Senate against **Kelly Ayotte**, November's election looms

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IBEW 1837 Members at CMP Receive Lifesaving Awards After Daring Rescue



Andrew Grant and Paul Reynolds received well-deserved praise from the Bridgton Police and their co-workers at CMP for their act of heroism, and from their union, the highest honor they bestow: the IBEW Lifesaving Award. (Photo on right: Bridgton P.D.)

Two IBEW 1837 members working at Central Maine Power have received the highest commendation offered by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers after rescuing a man trapped inside a burning pickup truck after a crash.

It was an ordinary Thursday afternoon this past June that quickly turned extraordinary when CMP Lineworkers Andrew Grant and Paul Reynolds came upon a car/pole accident in Bridgton, Maine.

"It was just a regular day. We saw the truck was on its driver's side and was on fire," Brother Reynolds said. "There were secondaries (power lines) down there barking and arcing. (Then) we realized there was no one out of the vehicle yet!"

After Reynolds struggled at first to break the window with a gloved hand, Grant grabbed a set of pliers to smash it and pulled the man out before the truck was fully engulfed in flames.

"We were at the right place at the right time," Reynolds added.

As paramedics cared for the accident victim, Reynolds and Grant tended to the downed power lines to make the scene safe.

"We appreciate the acknowledgement but don't feel like any heroes," Brother Grant said.

Of course, their Brothers and Sisters in IBEW Local 1837 disagreed and contacted the International Union to request the well-deserved recognition. Andrew Grant and Paul Reynolds received *Lifesaver Award* plaques, pins and

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Eversource Auction of Generation Assets Moves Forward

IBEW 1837 members working at the Generation Assets of Eversource in New Hampshire are waiting to find out who the new owner or owners of their fossil and hydro plants will be. Those assets are now up for auction after the New Hampshire legislature voted last year to securitize stranded debt for a divestiture settlement once it was approved by the Public Utilities Commission. The Union participated in the settlement talks and helped obtain widespread support among the legislature for employee protections for workers who may be affected by divestiture.

Union members in Generation overwhelmingly ratified an agreement that extends their current contract while providing additional employee protections if the fossil or hydro facilities are sold or closed. Those protections applied to existing employees but have also been extended to new employees as well. In that agreement, IBEW was able to negotiate enhanced employee protections. The Union also received a guarantee of the transfer of the collective bargaining agreement to prospective new owners for a period of two years after the transfer of assets.

The deregulation of PSNH was started in the late 1990s but came to a halt when skyrocketing rates and rolling brownouts affected other states that had completed the process. Eversource in New Hampshire is among the very last electric utilities to own both generation and transmission assets.

The PUC recently opened a new Docket (# DE 16-817 Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy Auction of Generation Assets) and on September 13, 2016, the Union filed for Intervenor status. IBEW 1837 wanted to have full participation in the Auction process, to be informed about all relevant transactions, and to ensure the labor protections terms of our agreement are explicitly explained and detailed to potential buyers and executed as required. As an Intervenor, the Union will have the opportunity to make sure that the needs of Eversource workers are not overlooked or neglected.

The PUC has contracted with JP Morgan as the auction advisor, and they have formulated a design and multi-step process for the sale of the assets.

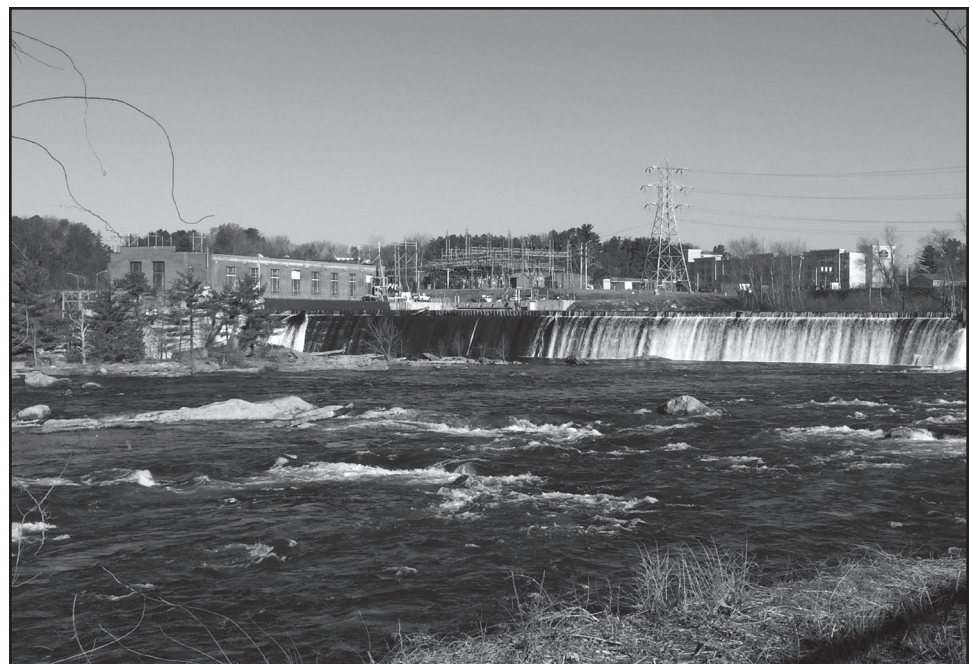
“We appreciate how stressful this process is for many of our members,” said Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan. “The Union will be thoroughly engaged throughout the auction process to make sure that our members’ rights are protected.”

The multi-step auction process is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2017.

The Union represents nearly 175 members at the Merrimack Station, Newington Station and Schiller Station fossil fuel plants as well as at hydropower generating facilities throughout the state. IBEW 1837 also represents generation maintenance workers.



Union members at Eversource Generation assets including Schiller Station who are affected by the divestiture are eligible for additional benefits under the terms of the agreement reached between the Company and the Union.



Eversource Hydro generation assets may be sold to different companies than the Fossil plants. Some municipalities have expressed interest in purchasing the hydro plants in their communities. It remains to be seen if they will be able to make a competitive bid within the timeline of the auction process.

Protect Yourself: Disciplinary Interviews and Weingarten Rights

It's a simple concept that some of us forget when we're under the gun and being interviewed by a supervisor about something that could lead to discipline: **First, ask for a Steward to be present. Then, Tell The Truth.**

"We've seen too many instances where one of our members may have been less than truthful or tried to alter the facts to make things better for him or herself," said IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers. "Unfortunately, that's often worse than the original offense itself and gets the member into much deeper trouble."

If a Grievance is filed and that Grievance leads to Arbitration, the neutral third-party Arbitrator may decide that the original offense was relatively minor, but that lying to the employer was worthy of termination of employment. Again, honesty is the best policy and be sure to ask for your Steward.

Union members have certain rights and protections during disciplinary interviews that non-union members do not have, thanks to a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1975, in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc.*, the U.S. Supreme Court defined the rights of employees in the presence of union representatives during investigatory interviews. Since that case involved a clerk being investigated by the Weingarten Company, these rights have become known as Weingarten rights.

One of the most vital functions of a Union steward is to prevent management from intimidating employees. Nowhere is this more important than in closed-door meetings when supervisors, often trained in interrogation techniques, attempt to coerce employees into confessing to wrongdoing.

Under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1975 Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply:

RULE 1: The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request. For example, the employee should say:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined, terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to answer any questions."

Weingarten Cards are included in our new member packets and are also available upon request. Contact the Union Office at 207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652 for more information.

RULE 2: After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose from among three options. The Employer must either:

Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or

Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or

Give the employee a choice of (1) having the interview without representation or (2) ending the interview.

RULE 3: If the employer denies the request for union representation, and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer. The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal. We encourage our members to assert their Weingarten rights. The presence of a steward can help in many ways. For example:

- The steward can help a fearful or inarticulate employee explain what happened.
- The steward can raise extenuating factors.
- The steward can advise an employee against blindly denying everything, thereby giving the appearance of dishonesty and guilt.
- The steward can help prevent an employee from making fatal admissions.
- The steward can stop an employee from losing his or her temper, and perhaps getting fired for insubordination.

Weingarten Card

If this interview could in any way lead to my being disciplined, terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer or steward be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to answer any questions.



Weingarten Cards are available from the Union Office.

Field Tech Negotiations Continue at Eversource

Negotiations continue on a first contract for the Eversource Field Technicians and Specialists. The Union Bargaining Team has been pleased by their progress toward reaching an agreement.

“We’re cautiously optimistic that we will have a first contract agreement for the Field Techs to vote on by the end of the year,” said Tom Ryan, IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager for New Hampshire.

As *The Current* went to press, there were still a small but substantial number of issues remaining on the table.

The Field Technicians are commonly referred to as “Writers” and are responsible for work associated with the design, maintenance, construction and operation of the Eversource electric distribution system in the Granite State. When they voted to be represented by IBEW 1837 and included in the existing bargaining unit in late May, there were 29 workers in the Field Technician A/B/C and Field Technician Specialist classifications.



From left to right: IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan, Vaughn Taylor and Dan Pariseau during a break in negotiations. IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers and Administrative Assistant Sue Ekola are also on the Union Negotiating Team.

IBEW 1837 at Convention

IBEW 1837’s elected delegates attended the 39th IBEW International Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, where the very first Local was founded in 1890.

Delegates reviewed resolutions, heard from inspiring speakers and shared information with union activists and leaders. The convention is held once every five years.

The Convention also coincided with the retirement of **International Representative Ed Collins**, a longtime friend and important resource for IBEW Local #1837. More information on the daily activities of the convention can be found at ibew.org/convention2016.



From left to right, IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers, Pat Cote from Emera, IBEW 1837 Business Representative Renee Gilman, Jeff Huckins from Eversource, IBEW Treasurer/Recording Secretary Pam Paquette, and IBEW 1837 President Bill Tarallo.



Quick Notes and Announcements



Eversource contract negotiations are slated to being in the spring. Members are encouraged to make contract proposals for consideration. Please include your name and the reason for the proposal and any supporting information. Completed proposals can be brought to the unit meetings or sent to IBEW Local 1837, 680 Central Ave. Suite 202, Dover, NH 03820. Proposal forms will be available at the unit meetings, can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/ibew1837proposal or call the Union Office in Dover at 603-743-1652.

Members’ union dues are never used for contributions to political candidates, but some members choose to make voluntary contributions to the **National IBEW Political Action Committee or PAC**. The IBEW-PAC in turn donates to candidates who support working people and their unions. Your voluntary member contributions can be made through payroll deduction at some of our represented companies or by writing a check made out to the IBEW-PAC. Contact the Union Office for more information at 207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652.

IBEW 1837 Members in NH Help Lead Asplundh Organizing Drive

Tree Trimmers working for Asplundh in New Hampshire are signing cards to be represented by IBEW Local #1837, and our members are playing a key role in this organizing campaign.

Following on the heels of a successful union organizing campaign in Vermont, IBEW members at Eversource, Unitil and the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative have helped to set-up meetings and lead conversations with employees of the nation's largest tree trimming corporation, Asplundh.

The foremen and groundmen can often be seen on the highways and back roads of the Granite State trimming trees in their distinctive orange trucks. Asplundh is the dominant contractor working for our represented utilities clearing lines to prevent outages and their employees frequently work side-by-side with our members during storm restoration work. Although IBEW represents thousands of these workers in other states, in New Hampshire and Maine they are non-union. Consequently, their wages and benefits are well below what they deserve when you consider how difficult and dangerous their work can be.

"They don't have any paid sick days and we've heard horror stories of these folks working with pneumonia and other serious health problems because they can't afford to miss a paycheck," said IBEW 1837 Organizer and Business Representative Matt Beck. "Some told us that they're making just \$15 an hour after working for Asplundh for close to twenty years. Many of them went years without any pay increase – although once we started our union meetings, suddenly almost everyone got a big raise."

Although the Asplundh workers are smart enough to know that it's only because of IBEW that they now are seeing more in their paycheck, many of them are also frightened by some of the things they're hearing from the Company about how they might lose hours or pay or suffer other losses if the union comes in. Asplundh has been using the typical anti-union scare tactics that are common during organizing campaigns.

"We're grateful to our members for their leadership during this campaign," Brother Beck continued. "We hope they continue to have conversations with Asplundh workers about the benefits of being a member of IBEW and how it can improve things for them in a big way. We're willing to meet with any of them at any time to discuss how to join the union. They can reach me by cell at 207-441-4123 or email at matt@ibew1837.org."



IBEW already represents more than 7,000 Asplundh workers in the USA and Canada and just added 100 new members in Vermont. Their tree trimmers in New Hampshire and Maine are currently non-union. (IBEW File Photo.)



Members at CMP Receive Lifesaving Awards After Daring Rescue

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letters of appreciation at a union executive board meeting in August. (You can watch a video of the award presentation and hear them tell the story online at tinyurl.com/1837lifeaward.)

A statement by the Bridgton Police Department on their Facebook page said "If not for their bravery and quick thinking, this story could have had a much different headline."

"It could've been any one of our family members in that vehicle," IBEW 1837 Business Managers Dick Rogers said. "They were just there to help. I would hope we all would do the same thing."

The awards were presented at a Union Executive Board meeting in Manchester, Maine, on August 19, 2016.

Agreeing with Andrew Grant, Paul Reynolds said "We gladly accept this but don't really feel like any heroes."

Sea-3 Members of IBEW 1837 Ratify Two-Year Contract Agreement



Photos by Sue Ekola.

Union members working at the Sea-3 propane terminal facility in Newington, New Hampshire voted in late June to ratify a two-year contract. The agreement will run through June 30, 2018.

All terms and conditions in the previous contract will continue without change. The ten members of the IBEW 1837 bargaining unit will receive wage increases of 2 ½% each year.

Sea-3 has indicated that they have not been profitable in recent years. A proposed expansion of the Newington rail facility that could expand the work there has been put on hold by Sea-3's parent company, Trammo.

IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers and Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan appreciated the work of their fellow negotiating team members: Chief Steward Steve Paine and Steward Al Newton.

“Our team felt going in that if we were able to secure a reasonable wage package, our members would be satisfied,” Ryan said. “We’re glad that we were able to maintain the rest of the contract as is. We hope that the company decides to complete their expansion plans to provide more work for our members in the future.”



From left to right: IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers, Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan, Steward Al Newton and Steward Steve Paine made up the Union Negotiating Team.

NHEC IBEW Members Excel at NEPPA Lineworkers Rodeo



At the Rodeo, from left to right: Apprentices Nick Tarmey, Daniel Hockmuth, Randy Gaudatt and 1st class Lineworker Kyle Jacques. (Rodeo photos courtesy of NHEC.)

New Hampshire Election Cooperative sent a crew of IBEW 1837 members to the 10th Annual Northeast Public Power Association Lineworkers Rodeo. Designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of lineworkers while encouraging teamwork, this year's Rodeo was held September 15, 2016 at the NEPPA Training Center in Littleton, Massachusetts. The Rodeo provides families and other spectators a greater understanding of electric utility work in a fun atmosphere, according to NEPPA.

Our NHEC Brothers performed admirably and brought home the following awards: Second Place in the Dead End 5kV Single Phase Relocation; Second Place in the Obstacle Course; Second Place in the Hurtman Rescue and Third Place in the Transformer Changeout.



Another Big Election Day for Union Workers on November 8th

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especially large. Union activists hope to elect a pro-labor Governor who can veto anti-worker bills. Republican gubernatorial candidate **Chris Sununu** has pledged his support for union-busting legislation while Democratic candidate **Colin Van Ostern** opposes such laws.

“We cannot afford to have Sununu as our next Governor,” IBEW 1837 President Bill Tarallo said. “Van Ostern was a strong advocate for working people when he served on the Executive Council and stood with striking IBEW members during the FairPoint strike. I’m glad that the New Hampshire AFL-CIO has endorsed Colin Van Ostern in this race.”

There are some strong pro-union candidates running for the New Hampshire legislature, longtime IBEW member and building trades leader **Joe Casey in NH State Senate District 6** which includes Rochester.

A full list of NH AFL-CIO endorsed candidates can be found online at tinyurl.com/NHendorsed.

In Maine, Gov. Paul LePage, has two years left in his final term. The emphasis for union activists in the Pine Tree State has been to support pro-labor legislative candidates in hopes of gaining a majority in the Senate and holding onto a majority in the House.

In addition, the Maine AFL-CIO has been supporting a “Yes” vote on two ballot referendum questions. Voting **Yes on Question 4** on this November’s ballot will increase Maine’s minimum wage to \$9 in 2017 and then by one dollar each year until it reaches \$12 in 2020. The cost of groceries, housing and other basics have gone up for years, but wages haven’t come close to keeping up. **Voting Yes on Question 2** will increase state funding for Maine’s public schools by having the wealthy pay their fair share. This initiative generates \$157 million more for public schools statewide and will finally get the State to its 55% share of funding by putting a 3% surcharge on household income ABOVE \$200,000.

A full list of Maine AFL-CIO endorsed candidates and ballot questions can be found at tinyurl.com/MEendorsed.

Of course, it is the presidential race that gets the most attention. While many of our members have been disappointed with the two top choices on the ballot this year, there are significant differences between the candidates.

Donald Trump has said he would do without unions completely and that he 100% supports “right to work” laws that weaken unions and drive down wages. While he has correctly criticized unfair trade policies, he himself has exploited them by manufacturing his products overseas to maximize his profits. Trump has also proposed cutting taxes for the wealthy and major corporations.

Hillary Clinton disappointed union members by previously supporting the TPP trade deal, but she now pledges to oppose it. She supports the right of working people to organize and opposes “right to work” laws that hurt unions. Clinton has committed to raising incomes for hardworking people and making the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share of taxes. She has been endorsed by most major labor unions.

The next President will also be responsible for appointing an unknown number of Justices to the **United States Supreme Court**. Since the passing of Justice Antonin Scalia, there have been a number of split 4 – 4 decisions, including the *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association* case that could have had a disastrous impact on all public sector unions. Based on the list of prospective justices he provided, there is no question that a Trump presidency would move the Supreme Court in the wrong direction when it comes to determining the constitutionality of possible labor law reforms.

The only Senate contest in Maine or New Hampshire this year is outgoing New Hampshire Gov. Maggie Hassan’s race for the United States Senate seat currently held by **Kelly Ayotte**. **Maggie Hassan** has opposed efforts to privatize Social Security while Ayotte has supported privatization. Minimum wage increases have been supported by Hassan and opposed by Ayotte. Senator Ayotte has also opposed guaranteed paid leave bills for people to take care of their families while Hassan has supported them. The winner of this race could help determine which party has control of the U.S. Senate.

In the New Hampshire race for Congress, Democrats **Carol Shea-Porter** (CD 1) and **Ann McLane Kuster** (CD 2) have been endorsed by the AFL-CIO and will go up against Republicans **Frank Guinta** and **Jim Lawrence**, respectively. Guinta and Kuster are the incumbents but both Shea-Porter and Guinta have held the CD 1 seat in Congress.

In Maine, Democrats **Chellie Pingree** (CD 1) and **Emily Cain** (CD 2) have the Maine AFL-CIO endorsement. Both have been steadfast supporters of labor. Cain also picked up the IBEW Local #1837 endorsement. Congresswoman Pingree is expected to cruise to victory against newcomer Republican **Mark Holbrook**. Cain is locked in a very tight race with incumbent **Bruce Poliquin** that has gathered national attention.

More information on the candidates and issues can be found at ballotpedia.org, vote411.org and ibew1837.org,



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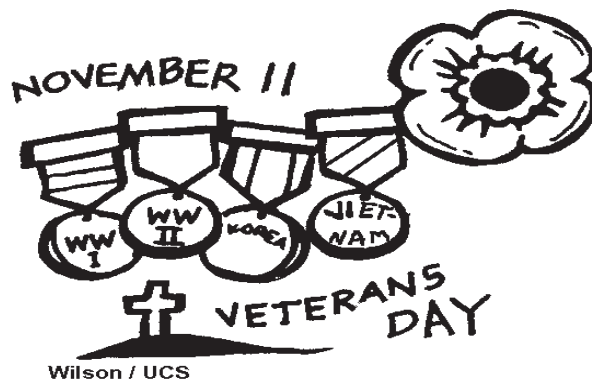
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The Current

Newsletter of IBEW Local 1837

207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652

www.ibew1837.org

President - Bill Tarallo

Vice President - Michelle Crocker

Secretary & Treasurer - Pam Paquette

Business Manager - Dick Rogers

Assistant Business Manager - Tom Ryan

Business Representative - Renee Gilman

Business Rep. / Current Editor - Matt Beck

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