



The Current

News from IBEW Local 1837

Fall 2018

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Maine & New Hampshire

Nearly Five Years after Layoff, Member Returns to Brookfield with Gratitude to IBEW

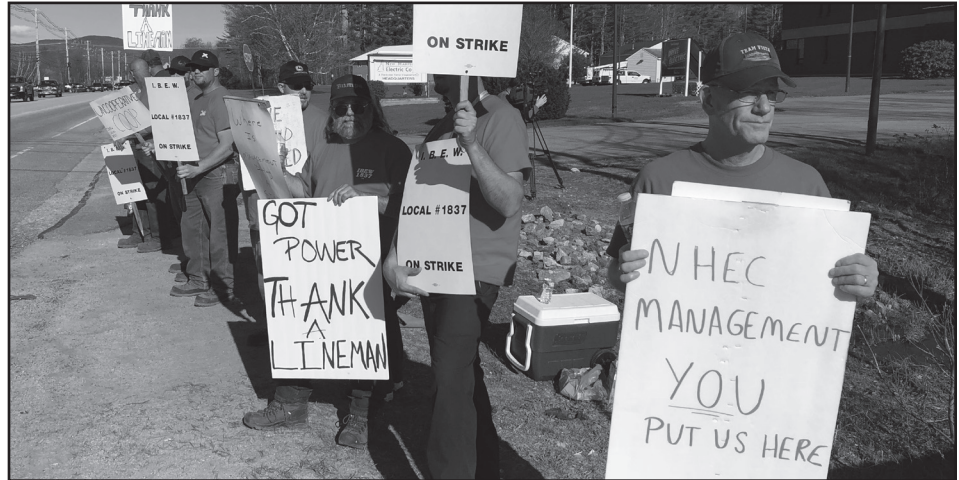
It's all too common for some people to question the need for unions in 2018. "Unions had their place in days gone by but they're no longer necessary," they say. But don't say that to Bill Brady at Brookfield's Renewable Energy. Bill is one member of IBEW Local 1837 who clearly understands the value of union membership and having union representation in today's workplace.

When Brookfield announced their intentions in 2014 to pare back staffing at their Maine hydro facilities, IBEW Local 1837 proceeded to enter into a determined round of negotiations with the Company to make sure our members received respect and the best treatment possible under the circumstances. While some members eagerly accepted a package of buyouts and early retirement incentives, some of our members were not ready or able to take that step. The Company agreed to the Union's proposal to give lengthy call-back rights to laid off workers for jobs that might open several years down the line.

For 54-year-old Senior Production Tech A, Bill Brady, it was a wait of 4 ½ years of working in non-union jobs and some challenging health problems, but his call-back finally came just before summer this year. Coming back to IBEW 1837 and his job at Brookfield was "like a cold drink after a long, hot day," Bill said.

Story continued on page 6

Contract Round-up: NH Co-op Strike Ends with Union Victory; Contracts Ratified for Six Other Companies



The strike ended after the New Hampshire Electric Co-op dropped their demand to have the right to make future changes in IBEW members' retirement plans without first negotiating with the Union. The final agreement was ratified by members the next day.

It was an historic year for IBEW 1837, not only in terms of the large number of new contracts that were successfully negotiated on behalf of our members, but because our Local had its first strike in more than a generation.

IBEW members at the New Hampshire Electric Co-op voted on May 17th to ratify a new 3½-year contract agreement and end their 10-day strike. The contract includes wage adjustments for some classifications, annual wage increases for all bargaining unit members and improvements in the retirement plans for union employees.

Significantly, the final agreement does not include the Company's proposed language that would have given them the ability to modify or eliminate their contributions to employee retirement plans. It was that proposal from the Company's so-called "last and final offer" that was pivotal in the decision of IBEW members to overwhelmingly approve a strike at the Co-op.

"The courage and determination of our members at the Co-op cannot be overstated," IBEW Local #1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers said. "They stayed strong and unified throughout the strike and none of our members crossed the picket lines during the strike. They have earned our respect and admiration."

In addition, our members are entitled to unemployment benefits for the time that they were on strike. That decision from the New Hampshire Employment Security Appeal Tribunal came after the Union successfully contested an initial decision agreeing with the Company that denied them those benefits.

Story continued on page 2

NH Co-op Strike Ends with Union Victory; Contracts Round-up

Story continued from page 1

In addition, the Company agreed to settle an unfair labor practice charge filed by the Union with the National Labor Relations Board for failing to pay a member for vacation time that they requested during the strike.

Union workers walked off the job in early May. Union and Company negotiators reached a tentative agreement on the tenth day of the strike as union members continued their picketing. Throughout the strike, support for our members on the picket lines was overwhelming. Countless people driving by picket lines honked their horns or gave a big “thumbs up” to show their appreciation for the people who have done so much to serve the Co-op’s customers (who are referred to as Co-op “members”). The Company serves 83,000 residents in more than 100 towns. It was the first strike action in the history of the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative.

In addition to Rogers, the Union Negotiating Team included Asst. Business Mgr. Tom Ryan (now retired), Chief Steward Arthur Cornelissen Jr., Joseph DiPrizio, Hans (Arthur) Ingemundse, Kevin McLaughlin, Bennett Mills and Shauna Offen.

Black Bear Hydro

IBEW 1837 members at Brookfield Energy’s Black Bear Hydro facilities in Milford, Maine, have ratified a new 5-year agreement. The contract has wage increases every year – 2.75% in each of the first two years and 2.5% in each of the last three years.

Other featured improvements are a 6th week of vacation after 25 years, increased boot and meal allowances, and the pay for call-outs was increased from 2 hours to 4 hour minimums. The contract also includes a \$500 signing bonus. Over the term of the contract, the Company will eliminate the incentive bonus.

The Union Negotiating Team included Union Steward Gary Crane, IBEW Local 1837 Business Representative Renee Gilman and IBEW Local 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers.

Brookfield Renewable Energy

IBEW Local #1837 members at Brookfield Renewable’s hydroelectric assets in Maine ratified a new, 5-year contract. Members will see a 12.75% increase in wages over the term of the agreement while maintaining their level of benefits.

“This is a good contract,” said IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers. “The members will receive a wage increase similar to or even a little better than workers at other Brookfield hydro assets.”

In addition, minimum call-outs for members were increased to four hours for regular call-outs to six hours on holidays. Stipendable skillsets were changed which will qualify more than half of the members to receive more money beginning in 2019. New employees will now get holidays immediately after being hired instead of having to wait for six months.

“There were no losses and most of the (members) seemed to be happy,” said IBEW 1837 Chief Steward Ed Goodale. “The negotiations themselves went well. The company proposed some changes including adding a stand-by policy and changing the management rights clause but we were successful in getting them to drop those.”

IBEW 1837 Business Representative Renee Gilman also joined the Union Negotiating Team.

IBEW Local #1837 represents 29 Brookfield hydroelectric asset employees in Maine. According the Company’s website, Brookfield’s “hydro and wind portfolio provides nearly 6,000 MW of clean and renewable energy in 13 states and three provinces across North America.”

NextEra Energy

IBEW 1837 members working for NextEra Energy at Wyman Station on Cousins Island in Yarmouth, Maine, ratified a 3-year contract extension in late September. The Union represents 32 workers there.

The idea of an extension to the collective bargaining agreement was initially proposed by Union Stewards at the oil-fired power plant. IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers brought the idea to the Company, who initially offered a 1.5% wage increase each year for three years with no other changes to the contract.

After some discussions between Rogers and the Company, the offer was improved to a wage increase of 2% in each of the first two years and 1.5% in the third year. A \$750 ratification bonus was also in the Company’s extension offer. Again, there were no other changes to the contract. NextEra members voted on Monday, September 17, to ratify the extension. The extension comes at a challenging time for oil-fired generation and as the Company announced plans to take two of Wyman Station’s four units offline.

Sea-3

In June, members at the Sea-3 propane facility in Newington ratified a new 5-year contract with cash bonuses and/or raises in each year of the agreement. All other terms and conditions remained the same. The negotiating committee strongly recommended the membership accept the agreement.

The Union Negotiating Team included Tony Sapienza, Assistant Business Manager for IBEW Local 1837, Al Newton and Stephen Paine (who has recently retired). Sea-3 is a crucial component of the energy distribution system in New England, and one of only about half a dozen liquefied gas-handling facilities operating in the United States. They are owned by Blackline Midstream LLC.

Unitil

IBEW 1837 members working for Unitil in New Hampshire ratified new 5-year contract agreements in late May that provide wage increases and other improvements in benefits.

A total of 38 members of IBEW Local 1837 work at two New Hampshire locations of Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. (UES): “Capital” in Concord and “Seacoast” in Kensington. They work as Lineworkers, Meter Mechanics, and some as Support Personnel. A second, smaller bargaining unit of five Electric System Operators work at Unitil Service Corporation’s Centralized Electric Dispatch (CED) in Portsmouth.

Both contracts include pay increases in each of the five years, revaluation of some job classifications and increases in meal and clothing allowances.

“I think this is a good agreement,” IBEW Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan said. “Other than a small increase in our medical co-pays, we were able to reevaluate many of our classifications prior to the annual adjustment, increase standby pay and receive 3% annual wage adjustments.”

In addition to Brother Ryan, the Union Negotiating Team included IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers, Assistant Business Manager Tony Sapienza, Administrative Assistant Sue Ekola, Mike Pouliot, Scott MacDougall, Don Palmer, Bob McNeff and Shawnn Vaillant.

WGME-TV

IBEW 1837 members working for Sinclair Broadcasting Group’s Portland, Maine, television station ratified a new 3-year agreement this week after rejecting a previous offer from the company by a 37 – 5 margin and authorizing a strike. The overwhelming strike vote was the first at WGME-TV in 30 years and helped to persuade the Company to improve their wage offer beyond what they’ve been offering their other employees.

Wages for those at or above top scale will increase 6 ¾% over the 3-year agreement while other employees in the wage progression will receive larger step increases. News Editors will have their pay scale improved to the same level as Operating Technicians, a longtime priority of the Union given the increasing workload and responsibilities of News Editors and their previous low pay.

“We’re very proud that our members at WGME-TV were willing to stand up and stand together to get a better contract,” IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers said. “They sent a strong message to the Company that they were unhappy.”

Other improvements include hazardous duty pay for News Photographers who drive during snowstorms when a state of emergency has been declared and the addition of drone photography for news and commercials to the jurisdiction of the bargaining unit. A Company proposal for mandatory, unpaid “on call” status for some employees on weekends was ultimately dropped in exchange for the Union’s promise to “strenuously” encourage our members to respond to emergent weekend calls for overtime and an obligation to work collaboratively with the Company to come up with an on-call system if it becomes necessary.

Takeaways were minimal although the Company held fast on their refusal to call Producers in on overtime should another Producer call out sick. Producers made a compelling argument that the additional workload and stress was not only affecting the quality of the on-air product but also their personal well-being. The Company made it clear that they understood it may affect show quality but that was a management decision.

IBEW 1837 represents most of the people who work behind the scenes at the station, about 50 employees including photographers, news editors, producers, directors, maintenance engineers, operating technicians and assignment editors. Their ratification on Monday, September 17, also included a \$400 signing bonus. In addition to Business Manager Rogers, the Union Negotiating Team included Chief Steward Jack Amrock, Steward Pierre Maurice, Stephanie Greenland, and IBEW 1837 Business Representative and Organizer Matt Beck.

Changes in Union Leadership



Anthony "Tony" Sapienza took over as the new Assistant Business Manager from New Hampshire, effective June 1, 2018. Brother Sapienza succeeded longtime Assistant Business Manager **Tom Ryan**, who retired after nearly 15 years in that role.

Tony will be taking a leave of absence from Eversource NH, where he began work as a System Electrician for Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) more than 32 years ago. Brother Sapienza has served his union as an E-Board member, a Chief Steward and as Unit 2 (Manchester) Recording Secretary for over 20 years.

"I'm grateful to my union for the wages that allowed me to raise four kids," Tony said. "The union paycheck and our premium pay made a big difference to my family."



Tom Ryan (center) was recognized for his service to the Local by Business Manager Dick Rogers and President Michelle Crocker.

Another longtime IBEW 1837 union activist recently retired from Eversource in New Hampshire and left her position as Recording Secretary on the Union's Executive Board. **Pam Paquette** worked for 37 years at the state's largest electric utility. Pam was active in her union for more than 30 years.

"The Local and I share the same beliefs – that the dignity of labor needs to be maintained and defended for all workers, regardless of gender, race or experience," Pam said.



Pam Paquette also was honored for her service to IBEW 1837.



Important Notes and Announcements

Changes in the IBEW 1837 Executive Board

Kitty Kilroy was appointed to replace the retiring Pam Paquette as the E-Board's Recording Secretary by IBEW Local 1837 President Michelle Crocker. Brent Drake was also appointed by Sister Crocker as the new E-Board Rep. from Unit 10, Bangor, and Jacob Cote was appointed as the new E-Board Rep. from Unit 4, Berlin/Lancaster.

Thanks to All of Our Stewards!

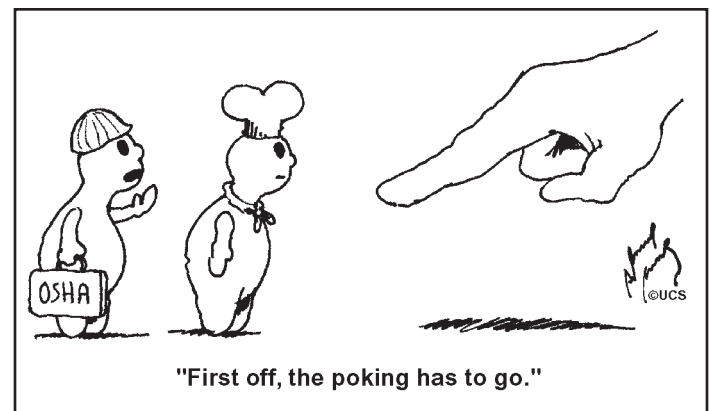
A quick note of gratitude to all of our union stewards for everything they do for our Local. Special thanks to Chief Stewards Ryan Wilson and Lisa Bean who are leaving CMP, Chief Steward Rick Simons who has retired from Eversource, and Peter Brennan at NextEra who is stepping down as Chief Steward after years of service to IBEW 1837.

Please Keep Your Union Info Up-to-Date!

It's important that IBEW 1837 members notify the Union Office when they move or change phone numbers (or eliminate landline phones). We may need to send you information by mail or contact you about important Union business. If we can't reach you in a timely manner, you may miss getting some important information. Also, be sure to routinely check your paystubs to make sure that your wages are correct and that your Union dues are being correctly withheld. We hate having to send out bills for unpaid or overdue dues payments.

Donate to IBEW-PAC

Members' union dues are never used for contributions to political candidates, but some members may choose to make voluntary contributions to the **National IBEW Political Action Committee**. 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 and mailing it to the Union Office. Call the Union Office for more info at 207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652.



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

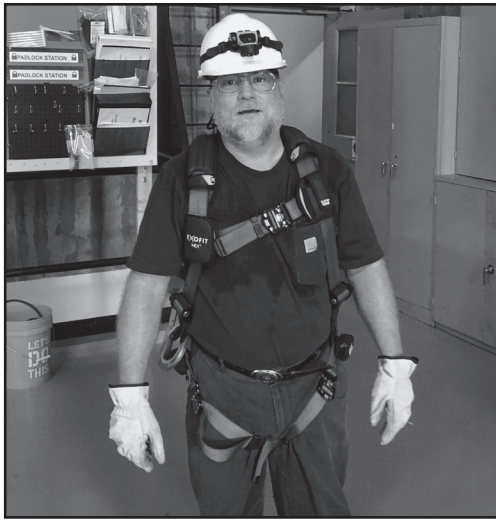
If this interview could in any way lead to my being disciplined, terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer or steward be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to answer any questions.



Weingarten Cards are available from the Union Office.

Nearly Five Years after Layoff, Member Returns to Brookfield with Gratitude

Story continued from page 1



Bill Brady is a Senior Production Tech A for Brookfield Renewable Energy in Maine. (Photo courtesy: Dave Estes)

“The dynamics of a non-union shop were an eye opener,” Brady said. “Things like no bargaining for wage increase, no equal overtime possibility, management selected who was going to work or not. No protection of trade ownership, for example, I hold a welding certificate, but another coworker without certification was used. And by the way, I was responsible for the cost of maintaining the licenses I hold. All these things seem to be too easy to be taken for granted when you have them, but when you don’t . . . Well you get the point.”

Aside from his escape from “at-will” employment and appreciating the benefit of the “just cause” protections of a union contract, he likes the fact that you’re guaranteed to have the safety gear and everything else you need to do your job, and you don’t have to ask for it!

“When I make the statement that it is good to be back under the union banner, not only did I get the call to return to my job, but I was able to keep my seniority date which is important for things like vacation time. I was outfitted with prescription safety glasses, electrical rated safety shoes, arc flash rated clothing, rain gear, welding gear, cell phone and computer. The

union did a nice job working with the company to provide the worker with not only a great livelihood but a means to be safe and very proud of the workplace.”

When IBEW 1837 negotiates on behalf of our members, we have people like Bill, his wife Kimi and their family in mind.

“There was no second guessing on my part coming back to 1837,” Bill Brady said. “My health is rebounding on the mend. I thank God not only for my health but for having the job available to me. Thank you IBEW 1837 and Brookfield Renewable, from my wife, daughters, grandsons, we are all very grateful.”

Maine and New Hampshire AFL-CIO’s Make Candidate Endorsements

How you vote is a personal decision and in no way does IBEW 1837 or anyone else have a right to tell you how to cast your ballot.

Both Maine and New Hampshire will elect governors in this midterm election on Tuesday, November 6. A pro-labor governor can veto anti-union legislation like so-called “Right to Work” and both of the endorsed candidates have promised to do so. Their opponents are both on record in support of this legislation which could hurt your Union.

All candidates considered for endorsement by our State Labor Federations underwent a vetting process and completed a questionnaire about their views on issues affecting working people and their unions. Any candidate who declined to fill out a questionnaire was not considered for an endorsement. The voting records of the candidates were also considered as part of the endorsement process. Positions on social issues are not taken into account.

IBEW Local #1837 shares this list of endorsements from the Maine AFL-CIO and New Hampshire AFL-CIO as the best candidate choices on those issues affecting our ability to improve your wages, benefits and working conditions.

In Maine, you can vote early by absentee ballot or at your city or town hall. Based on our experience with storms in recent years, we encourage our Maine members to consider it.

Maine Governor: **Janet Mills**

Maine U.S. Senate: **Angus King**

Maine U.S. House CD 1: **Chellie Pingree**

Maine U.S. House CD 2: **Jared Golden**

You can download a complete list of Maine AFL-CIO endorsements including candidates for the Maine House and Senate at:

www.ibew1837.org/ME2018endorse.

New Hampshire Governor: **Molly Kelly**

NH U.S. House CD 1: **Chris Pappas**

NH U.S. House CD 2: **Ann McLane Kuster**

You can download a complete list of New Hampshire AFL-CIO endorsements including candidates for the New Hampshire House and Senate at:

www.ibew1837.org/NH2018endorse.



IBEW 1837 Unit Meetings

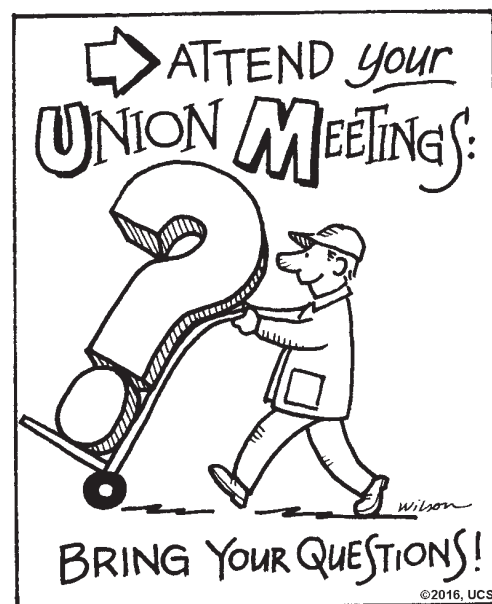
2018 - 2019 Revised Schedule

IBEW 1837 members are welcome at any unit meeting to discuss issues affecting their jobs and their union.

Some meeting dates, times and locations have changed.

Units may not meet during storms or on holidays.

Check with your steward, the union office, or log on to www.ibew1837.org before driving!



Unit 1, Dover: Fourth Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. (New date & time!)

IBEW Local 1837 Office; 680 Central Ave., Suite 202; Dover NH 03820

Unit 2, Manchester General: Second Tuesday at 5:15 p.m.

Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 131 Union Hall; 161 Londonderry Turnpike; Hooksett, NH 03106

Unit 2, Concord Electric Sub-unit: Third Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. (As Needed)

West Congregational Church; 499 No. State Street; Concord, NH 03301

Unit 3, Laconia: Third Thursday at 5:15 p.m.

Laconia Elks Lodge; 17 Sugarbush Lane; Gilford, NH 03249

Unit 4, Berlin/ Lancaster: Fourth Wednesday at 5:15 p.m. (Call 603-470-4239 to confirm.)

Randolph Town Hall; 130 Durand Road; Randolph, NH 03593

Unit 5, Keene: First Thursday at 5:00 p.m. (New time!)

NEW LOCATION: Keene Recreation Center; 312 Washington Street; Keene, NH 03431

Unit 6, Portland: First Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. (Starting in October.)

NEW CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Teamsters Local 340; 27 Main Street; South Portland, ME 04106

Unit 7, Lewiston: First Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

IBEW Local 567 Union Hall; 238 Goddard Road; Lewiston, ME 04240

Unit 8, Augusta: Third Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

IBEW Local 1837 Office (Conference Room); 16 Old Winthrop Road; Manchester, ME 04351

Unit 9, Waterville: Second Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

IBEW Local 1253 Union Hall; 176 Main Street; Fairfield, ME 04937

Unit 10, Bangor/Ellsworth: Third Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

Solidarity Center; 20 Ivers Street; Brewer, ME 04412

Unit 11, Presque Isle: Fourth Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

Hampton Inn; 768 Main Street; Presque Isle, ME 04769



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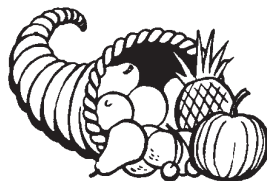
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Happy Halloween



UCS



Happy Thanksgiving

UCS



The Current

Newsletter of IBEW Local 1837
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President - Michelle Crocker
Vice President - Bob McNeff
Recording Secretary - Kitty Kilroy
Treasurer - Lisa Bartell
Business Manager - Dick Rogers
Assistant Business Manager - Tony Sapienza
Business Representative - Renee Gilman
Business Rep. / Current Editor - Matt Beck

Inside this issue of The Current:

- NHEC:** Strike Victory and New Contract Ratified (pg. 1-2)
- Brookfield:** Member Returns From Layoff with Gratitude (pg. 1 & 6)
- NextEra:** Contract Extension Ratified (pg. 2)
- Sea-3:** Contract Ratified (pg. 3)
- Unitil:** Contract Ratified (pg. 3)
- WGME:** Contract Ratified (pg. 3)
- IBEW 1837:** Leadership Changes/New NH Asst. Bus. Mgr. (pg. 4)
- Quick Notes:** Stewards Depart, Kilroy New Recording Sec'y. (pg. 4)
- IBEW 1837:** Weingarten Labor Rights Review (pg. 5)
- Labor 2018:** AFL-CIO Candidate Endorsements (pg. 6)
- IBEW 1837:** Revised Unit Meeting Schedule (pg. 7)