

## VISITATION TO INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND BUSINESSES (ICBA) September 15, 2023

I was part of a group of seventy (70) Contractors, operating in the East and West Kootenays, who were seriously affected by the B.C. Government's enactment of the Public Works Fair Employment Act in 1973. We met in Trail, B.C., and agreed to send a delegation of five (5):

1. Gordon Laarz (Electrical Contractor) Trail
2. Norm Husband (Mechanical Contractor) Creston
3. Nick Plotnikoff (General Contractor) Creston
4. Joe Pagurut (General Contractor) Cranbrook
5. Elmer Verigin (General Contractor, Millwork) Trail

To meet with Labour Minister Bill King in Victoria, B.C., and advise him as follows:

1. That there were 100,000 ticketed Tradesmen in B.C.
  - a. 33,000 were unionized,
  - b. 67,000 were working "open shop",
2. That our delegation represented those contractors that employed the 67,000 non-unionized Tradespeople.
3. That the legislation was unfair:
  - a. Only those Contractors that employed the unionized tradespeople were permitted to tender government funded projects contributed by all the taxpayers in the province.
  - b. Only 33,000 Tradespeople could benefit from all the population paying taxes.

Mr. King was apologetic in that he was not aware that his legislation was so limiting and after a two and a half hour meeting, he recommended that we form an association that could represent the Open Shop Contractors in the Province of B.C. Mr. King, later, rescinded this legislation.

In 1975 the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) of British Columbia was incorporated by an initial membership of over three (300) hundred, at the Sandman Inn in Vancouver, B.C. We credited Honorable Bill King as the "Father of ICBA".

I had the honour of being the Founding President and served on the Board for several years. The story of these times is part of a book that will be published soon. Those that may have interest, may access this publication at that time.

I retired as an active general contractor in 1993 and moved back to the Kootenays after operating in Vancouver from 1984 through to 1993. The ICBA continued to operate successfully under many presidents and Directors and the guidance of Executive Vice-Presidents:

1. Ralph J Purdy followed by
2. Philip Hochstein and now
3. Chris Gardner and Jordan Bateman

Marilyn and I were fortunate to have our daughter Nona chauffeur us to the Lower Mainland. One of the “must see” visitations had to be the new offices of ICBA located on 13761 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue Floor 8, Surrey, B.C.



### Larry Fisher

was an early member of ICBA, and it was fitting that ICBA would locate in a development by his company, Lark Group.

I contacted **Jordan Bateman**, V-P Communications of ICBA and a meeting was set up for noon, Friday, September 15, 2023, at the ICBA offices.

The lunch meeting, besides Jordan. Included Chris Gardner, Jonathan McGill, Todd Cumiskey, Sabine Just and Adriana Sadowska.



I shared my stories of the earliest beginnings of ICBA and the challenges that our founding members faced in the early years. The attendants provide some very interesting statistics as follows:

1. Office area is 13,000 square feet (400 square feet donated in 1975)
2. Membership 4,000 (300 in 1975)
3. Apprentices 1,800 (only member firms could indenture in 1975)
4. Employees receiving fringe benefits 160,000 (No packages available in 1975)
  - a. Firms with 1 employee are eligible (required a minimum of 15 in 1975)
5. ICBA employees 65 (only 1 in 1975)
6. ICBA branches are Surrey (main), Calgary and Prince George with Alberta as a chapter.
  - a. In 1975, there were organizing chapters in:
    - i. Cranbrook
    - ii. Creston
    - iii. Trail- Castlegar
    - iv. Kelowna
    - v. Kamloops
    - vi. Abbotsford

vii. Victoria viii. Penticton **Chris Gardner** is the current President of ICBA. Chris was in attendance.



Chris joined Marilyn and I in the entrance foyer which is graced with the ICBA sign.



It was humbling to stand before the wall upon which names of the many Founders were proudly displayed.

Many memories went through my mind of all the stalwart

Businesspeople that I had known and was able to

associate with and enjoy.



**Myrtle-Ann**

**Rempel**, partner to Edward Rempel. Past president of ICBA, painted a



Founders Memorial. I was honoured to have Chris join me in these historic photos.

**Sabine Just** is a director of a very fundamental part of ICBA with courses in:

1. Business Management (44 courses)
2. Civil Training (18)
3. Computer Skills (28)
4. Human Resources (22)
5. Personal Development (10)
6. Wellness (17)
7. Leadership (11)
8. Legal (13)
9. Technical Training (22)
10. Safety (18)
11. Online Self-Paced (50)



This was something the Founders of ICBA dreamed would take place at some time but now it is a reality.

After 48 years, my visit with ICBA was a great satisfaction for me to know that the Association is in good stewardship. Thanks to all at ICBA that were able to take time to be with us.

*Written by Elmer Verigin September 20, 2023.*