

Did you know.... Where did the name "piggy bank" come from?

..... The true history of the Piggy Bank is still somewhat uncertain but there appears to be a consensus that it derives its name from the orange clay, "pygg" from which it was originally made. In the Middle Ages people used to store items such as salt in wide necked jars which were made from a clay called "pygg". The so called "pig" jar retained its name long after potters stopped using "pygg" clay to produce pottery.

Money also used to be kept in the jars and in England, by the turn of the eighteen century, the jars had acquired the name of "pig banks", from where followed the name "piggy bank." These piggy banks were ceramic and had no hole in the bottom, so the pig had to be broken to get the money out.

Tudor pig bank



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ECABC 53rd Annual General Meeting & Hall of Fame Dinner

On Friday, June 11, 2003, ECA will be holding its 53rd Annual General Meeting and Hall of Fame Dinner at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel in Vancouver. The AGM will be followed by a reception and dinner for close to 100 guests. There will be music, entertainment, speeches, awards, a sumptuous buffet and more.

This year we will be inducting three well-known industry figures into the Hall of Fame. They include **Derek Johns**, formerly of Wesco Distribution, **Bob Morrison**, formerly of Ross Morrison Electric, **Rick Porcina**, formerly of the Electrical Safety Branch, and **Nes Romaniuk** who is receiving an award now because he says

he's never going to retire.

We will also be recognizing **Adam Byron** of Mott Electric for winning the Provincial Skills Canada Competition for Electrical Wiring and **John Bayers** of Westcoast Reduction for winning the Industrial Wiring competition in April. Both Adam and John will be competing in the national competitions in Winnipeg later this month.

If you haven't registered yet, but would like to join us for a great evening, please call **Zana Gordon** for details at: **604-294-4123**.

Top Apprentice – Western Joint

Dennis Martin a member of IBEW Local 1003 in Nelson won top honours with an average 98% in technical training over his four year apprenticeship. Dennis who may be the oldest apprentice on record at 59, was recognized at a dinner held in Victoria on May 8th. He received a framed certificate and a cheque for \$750.00 from ECABC. He also received a Golden Pliers award from the Western JETS and a silver cup from Local 1003.



From left to right: Richard Campbell, Jack Funk, Wayne De Delley, Philip Venoit, Paddy O'Connell, Lou Bouliane, Lew Williams, Dennis Martin (seated)

BC Economy on the Rise

The Business Council of BC recently released an economic snapshot of the province. It indicates that our provincial economy has shown stronger growth than the Canadian economy as a whole and is doing better than was anticipated by most analysts. This is good news for construction.

According to statistics gathered by the Business Council investment in residential construction increased 15% in 2003, equaling the increase seen in 2002. Increases were also seen in the ICI sector driven primarily by engineering construction in the oil & gas sector.

Employment numbers have been volatile but the

Business Council predicts an upward trend based on the positive domestic economic indicators.

For 2004, the housing market saw a 44% jump in starts for the first quarter compared to the same period last year, putting the housing construction at its highest level since 1994. The Business Council is expecting the economy to remain relatively strong though the year and into 2005.

To review the entire economic snapshot, please go to the Business Council website at: www.bcbc.com

Courtesy: BCCA Bulletin

COCTA - Trades Council Launches Action Team

Courtesy: Construction in Vancouver

In all the publicity that surrounds the 2010 Winter Olympics, they don't want to be forgotten.

"They" are the tradesmen and women who install electrical and mechanical systems, manufacture and install millwork, install flooring, and glazing, spray foam, hang drywall, lay bricks, set tile and a myriad of other things.

They belong to an informal association called the Council of Construction Trade Associations (COCTA). COCTA membership is not by company name, it is by industry Association. Members, therefore, include groups such as the Electrical Contractors Association of B.C., the Mechanical Contractors Association of B.C. and the Roofing Contractors Association of B.C. In all, there are 12 trade associations who make up the council.

Recently they announced a new initiative they are calling the B.C. Construction Action Team. In part, this is the trade contractors' response to another group – the 2010 Construction Leaders Task Force or Olympic Dream Team. This is a group of 19 of the province's largest and best-known general contracting firms, hoping to advise parties involved with the Winter Games on matters impacting the construction industry.

"The important distinction between the two groups is that it is the trade contractors and their tradesmen who are on the front lines, building the buildings, the roads, the bridges the sky trains and everything else that needs building," says **Richard Campbell**, executive director of the **Electrical Contractors Association of BC**. Given that it wouldn't happen without them, COCTA believes some recognition is well deserved.

In the majority of cases a general contractor who wins the right to build a new structure does very little of the actual construction work with his own employees.

Nearly all of it is contracted out to what would be called "specialists" in other fields. In construction they're called "trade contractors" or just simply "the trades".

The 12 associations that comprise COCTA represent almost 1,000 individual British Columbia contractors and suppliers and many thousands of employees. It is estimated that construction in the province employs be-

tween 20,000 and 25,000 women and men at any given time. Trade contractors employ the majority.

There are many other companies who do not belong to associations, primarily because they do not meet the requirements, which are fairly significant.

Among those requirements are the ability to be bonded, proof of adequate insurance and ongoing education and training programs. The roofers' association, for instance, maintains a training facility in Langley that is recognized as among the best in North America.

Speaking for the electrical association, **Richard Campbell** says, "There seems to be a difference in philosophy between contractors who belong to trade associations and find value in membership, versus contractors who prefer to go their own way. Generally, among association members, there is a commitment to quality in every aspect of their operations. Many of them also strive to protect and improve the industry through active participation."

A challenge in the coming years will be to maintain these standards with the growing demand for well-trained and skilled workers. Fortunately, through the efforts of trade associations and other industry-led organizations, more high school students than ever are showing an interest in trade careers.

The provincial government's decision to scrap the Industry Training & Apprenticeship Commission and replace it with an Industry Training Authority has been met with mixed reviews from the trades. While the electrical, mechanical, sheet metal, roofing and one or two other trades continue to prefer traditional apprenticeship training programs, a few other trade groups are benefiting from the lowering of training barriers that existed previously.

Dana Taylor, executive vice-president of the **Mechanical Contractors Association**, points out: "Although there are some 200 trades in various industries in the province, the 23 construction industry trades, have historically accounted for some 45 per cent of provincial trades training dollars." "The Industry Training Authority (ITA) will have its work cut out for it in determining whether shotgun training dollars have actually hit their mark."



From left to right: Dave Hudson, Gregg Lowes, Greg Boshard, Brian Hofler, Bob Weins, Gay Woodward, Richard Campbell, Moira Rowan, Bruce Sychuk, Dana Taylor and Bill McEwen.

ECA Logo

Please remember to use the ECABC logo in conjunction with your stationery or any advertising you do. Association membership reflects well on a contractor or supplier and the association. For your convenience, here is an electronic version of our logo that you may cut and paste.

For those of you still receiving The Conduit by fax, please call Zana at 604-294-4123 and she will be pleased to email it to you or send it to you on a CD.



Scholarships

BCEA and Electro Federation scholarships are available to dependents of personnel of ECABC member companies in good standing. The BCEA has budgeted to award \$10,000 in scholarships in 2004, towards which ECABC contributed \$500.00. Criteria are different for each program.

The deadline for submitting applications for the BCEA Scholarship Program is July 30, 2004. The application deadline for the EFC Foundation Scholarship Program is August 12, 2004. If you have any questions, please contact BCEA Scholarship Committee Chair, **Paul Black** at **604-438-8661** or BCEA Executive Director **Tracy Gallant** at **604-291-7708**.

Costs Are Up

Construction costs were the focus of a recent Forum hosted by the Public Construction Council (PCC) in conjunction with their AGM in Richmond. Three industry leaders presented their opinions on the topic and shared their experience from the field: Bill Johnson, P.Eng, President of Farmer Construction Ltd., J. Liam Murray, a quantity surveyor with Helyar & Associates and David Walker, project manager on the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project. The presenters provided three different perspectives on the issues, but all had a similar story to tell.

From the contractor's perspective there are a number of events impacting the cost of construction. Insurance costs have risen dramatically thanks to market pressures. Many contractors are looking at premiums that have increased as much as 500%. A lack of supply to meet demand for some construction materials has contributed significantly. The price of steel, for example, has increased more than 50% in the past year. Lumber prices have increased 20% in the past year, plywood 30% and Oriented Strand Board (OSB) 100% in the last 8 months. Adding to the increase in the cost of supplies, skilled labour shortages in certain sectors of the industry have resulted in a demand for higher wages. Wood framing has gone from \$5 a square foot to as high as \$14 a square foot. What is the recommendation? Owners should take steps to ensure bona fide competitive tenders by using standard documents, imposing realistic tender periods, using Bid Depository, and establishing more attractive terms of payment, just to name a few actions. From the cost consultant's perspective, construction costs are increasing significantly and managing these costs are a major challenge.

Cost increases are impacting developer projects, provincially and federally funded projects and private finance initiatives. While

developers generally have greater flexibility in managing the issues, publicly funded construction is problematic, particularly if there is a low level of acceptance regarding the increase in costs.

Agreeing with the contractor; the consultant points to shortages of materials and skilled labour as significant factors for increased costs. As for recommendations: Be sure to have the consultants approve all design specification changes. Be careful with time during planning and construction. Build and maintain sustainable relationships. Use the right contract and maintain a contingency for design and escalation.

The owner's perspective on what is behind the increasing cost of construction does not differ significantly from the contractor and the consultant. Skilled labour shortages, escalation in insurance premiums and the rising cost of materials are all named as culprits. The rising volume of construction activity is also noted. The recommendations given are to establish realistic budgets and carry larger contingencies.

The suggestion is also made to investigate alternate procurement strategies, develop strong relationships and be careful with scheduling. Basically, be a knowledgeable client and recognize the need for strong project management skills.

Through its presenters, the PCC Forum has provided an excellent overview of the current environment around construction costs. Good information is the first step towards finding solutions and the Forum established a fertile starting ground for that result.

Please go to the PCC website at: www.pccbc.com to review the Forum presentations in their entirety.

Courtesy: BCCA Bulletin

VRCA Awards of Excellence 2004

More categories and more lifelong expertise on the judging committee are among additions to this year's Vancouver Regional Construction Association's Awards of Excellence. The awards committee, composed of a cross section of construction industry representatives, is already holding meetings regarding deadlines, site visits for adjudication, and a program for the gala which is scheduled Nov. 5 at the Hyatt.

The general contractor category has

been expanded from two to three for the 2004 competition with the Journal of Commerce award going to a project valued at \$40 million or more.

The awards committee is seeking out retired experts from the Mechanical Contractors Association and the **Electrical Contractors Association** with expertise to assist the judging in these often highly technical categories.

Application forms have been distributed and the awards committee is

urging the VRCA membership to respond to ensure a broad selection for judging.

For further information contact Sylvia Carneiro at 604-294-3766.

Courtesy: Journal of Commerce

Editors Note: All ECABC member contractors are invited to participate in this year's event, regardless of whether they are VRCA members or not.



Leadership's Six Questions for Business Success

By Dr. Al Coke

Leading and managing a business is not a complex process. As practitioners of the art and science we choose to make them difficult. This gives us a reason to go to work each day – to sort difficult situations and solve impossible problems. It gives us bragging rights over a martini. Slaying corporate dragons and living with the resulting stress is a national pastime.

By making business procedures difficult we can hire experts to sort them out. This becomes a perfect default mechanism. You can always blame failure on the consultant's bad advice.

Over years we built up layers of complexity about finances, planning, human resources requirements, and so on. As they get more unsolvable and complicated we have more reasons (read excuses) for not meeting performance requirements. The T-shirt should read, 'It's not the economy – it's your bad management – stupid!'

My favorite staff area to hammer is the finance department which in reality is the most simple of all business forms. Let me illustrate. You make a big pile of money. This needs to be done on a regular basis. It is called cash flow. During the year you take big chunks from the pile and give it to your suppliers and employee. That called operational expenses. At the end of the year you take another major portion of that and give to your government. That's called taxes. When those piles are removed a small pile is left.

That's called profit for you and the shareholders. See how simple it becomes? For my finance friends reading this - don't worry, I will equally insult other staff functions in other articles.

Now I am going to take a sword to the Gordian knot to the entire complicated practice of leading and managing a business.

When you boil the essence of any business down to its purest form it means asking and answering six basic questions. I recommend you work with your management team to find the in-depth answers to these and subsequent questions.

1. Where am I going? This sets the direction of the company with all its variables.
2. Where am I now? This requires a cold hard look at your current performance levels.
3. How do I plan to get there? What are your strategic goals, smart objectives, and connecting strategies to move from the present to the future?
4. What will stop me? What are the show stoppers along the way? I don't mean management lethargy, timid goal setting, and sluggish accountability.
5. How will I get buy-in from others? Okay, you have to sell it to the employees so it better be plausible.
6. How will I measure my progress? This is where everything breaks down. Do you have the courage to install a system that provides authority, permits responsibility, and demands resulting accountability?

In Summary

Approach your business requirement with common sense. In the end that is the only business model that actually works.

Courtesy: Journal of Commerce

COCA - New First Aid Regulations and Construction

The WCB has new First Aid Regulations that require the employer to do an assessment of the level of first aid services required for the place of employment.

For the static employer, this does not present a large challenge.

For the construction Industry, with worksites constantly changing, the assessment is difficult if not impossible.

As an alternative, you may chose instead to follow the previous first aid regulations with their requirements that specify service levels.

This is contained in the previous Part 33 of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation, within the Tables. The same information is contained in the Guidelines for First Aid – attached as a pdf file. Go to pages 28 and 29 for "High Risk".

Your Assessment will then be based on the number of workers, the dis-

tance to medical aid and the assigned hazard rating for the industry. Almost all of construction is in the highest category – the "A" rating.

For multiple employer workplaces, the following Regulation also applies:

3.20 Multiple employer workplaces

If workers of 2 or more employers are working at a workplace at the same time, the prime contractor must:

- (a) conduct an assessment of the circumstances of the workplace under section 3.16 (2) in relation to all the workers in the workplace, and
- (b) do everything that is reasonably practicable to establish and maintain the first aid equipment, supplies, facilities, first aid attendants and services in accordance with the results of the assessment.



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John Watson Appointed Chair of British Columbia Safety Authority

The British Columbia Safety Authority is pleased to announce the appointment of John Watson, P.Eng., as Chair of its Board of Directors.

Mr. Watson is a Professional Engineer and a Chartered Arbitrator with more than 35 years' experience in the management of design and construction of major industrial projects in Canada and abroad. He has served as President of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia, and of the Consulting Engineers of British Columbia. He is a founding director of the Vancouver International Airport Authority and is active in numerous volunteer capacities.

Mr. Watson and the eleven other members of the Board, together with Chief Executive Officer Harry Diemer, have the responsibility of leading the British Columbia Safety Authority through its first and formative years.

"We have an exciting opportunity to ensure the ongoing safety of British

Columbians by designing a better, safer and more efficient system," said Mr. Watson. "I look forward to helping the British Columbia Safety Authority position itself as a leader in the field of safety services by establishing a system that is copied by other jurisdictions.."

The British Columbia Safety Authority is a not-for-profit corporation established to deliver safety services under the *BC Safety Standards Act*. These services apply to work and products related to: aerial tramways, amusement devices, boilers and boiler systems, electrical equipment, elevating devices and passenger conveyors, gas systems and equipment, pressure vessels and piping, railways, and refrigerator systems and equipment.

Additional information on the Safety Authority is available at www.safetyauthority.ca or contact: Harry Diemer, Chief Executive Officer, 604-660-5963

Architects Warning: Olympics could suffer

by Jean Sorensen

An Olympic event is an opportunity for a province and its construction industry to showcase its talent and capabilities, but that may not happen, according to Stuart Howard, the president of the Architects Institution of B.C.

The lack of available professional liability insurance could pose a double whammy on Olympic 2010 construction as B.C. faces a crisis in insurers willing to provide coverage to architects. Some firms are not able to get coverage or full coverage as companies have stopped issuing policies in B.C. or left the province completely. Those able to get insurance have exemptions such as water ingress. Meanwhile, municipalities have formed the Municipality Insurance Association (MIA), which is demanding that architects provide proof of liability. The upshot is that when design bids are called for, there may not be a competitive range of architects who are able to bid on those contracts because their professional liability coverage is lacking to clients and to municipalities.

He points out that it could happen that a company has existing insurance but the insurer withdraws coverage during construction, leaving the architect in a position of not being able to meet municipal demands. Some municipalities are requesting proof of liability coverage before an occupancy permit is issued.

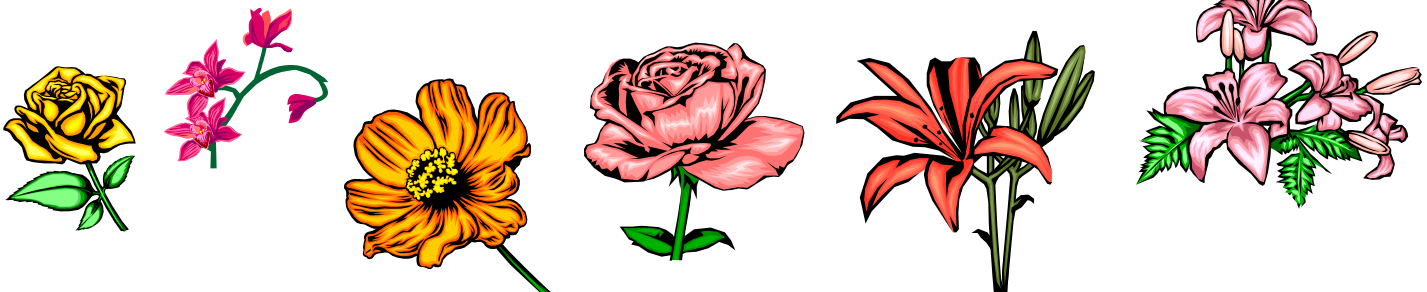
Second, those architectural companies that do bid on projects may only exercise conservative designs because they do not have full liability coverage or they do not want to risk any claims – no matter how small - that would void their coverage in the future. Howard says that many of the larger projects need to start soon and unless there is some resolution to the current situation, "there is going to be a problem" in hitting the deadline. In addition, smaller outlying communities, where grant money is given out, projects may have difficulties initiating or finishing as new 2005 requirements by the MIA swing into effect.

Courtesy: *Journal of Commerce*



APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS

(Some unpleasant occurrences bring about better things)



ECABC's Outside Involvement (ECA is involved with the following organizations/associations)

BC Electrical Association (BCEA), BCIT Construction Management Program Advisory Committee, BCIT Electrical and Electronic Program Advisory Committee, Camosun Electrical Program Advisory Committee, College Instructors Articulation Committee, Construction Specifications Can-

ada (CSC), Council of Construction Associations (COCA), Council of Construction Trade Associations (COCTA), Electrical Inspectors Association (EIA), Electrical Safety Review and Appeal Boards, Electrical Safety Advisory Committee (ESAC), IBEW 213/ECA Joint Training and Journeyman Upgrading Committee (EJTC), Public Construction Council (PCC) and Western Joint Electrical Training Society (Western Jets)



Electrical Contractors Association of BC

201 - 3989 Henning Drive
Burnaby, BC
V5C 6N5
Phone: 604.294.4123 Fax: 604.294.4120
Email: eca@eca.bc.ca

Schedule of Events

May 13, 2004

Vancouver Island Chapter Meeting
TravelLodge, Duncan, BC

May 17, 2004

Board of Directors Meeting
ECA offices

May 25, 2004

Vancouver Chapter Meeting
Accent Inn, Burnaby, BC

June 11, 2004

Hall of Fame Dinner
Waterfront Hotel

July 28, 2004

Vancouver Chapter Fireworks
Dinner Cruise

September 23, 2004

Vancouver Chapter
Fall Classic Golf Tournament
Pitt Meadows Golf Course

Wildlife Warning for Golfers

The Montana State Department of Fish and Wildlife is advising golfers to take extra precautions and be on the alert for bears while in the Gallatin, Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forests golf courses.

They advise golfers to wear noise-producing devices such as little bells on their clothing to alert, but not startle the bears unexpectedly.

They also advise you to carry pepper spray in case of an encounter with a bear. It is also a good idea to watch for signs of bear activity.

Golfers should be able to recognize the difference between black bear and grizzly bear droppings on the golf course.

Black bear droppings are smaller and contain berries and possibly squirrel fur.

Grizzly bear droppings have bells in them and smell like pepper spray.

Benefits of Membership in ECABC

Advocacy

- 1 Strong united voice to government for expressing opinions and concerns regarding issues that directly affect the electrical industry
- 2 Representation on other associations, committees and councils that deal with apprenticeship, safety, WCB and other issues

Consulting - Contract interpretation service

Discounts and Special Services

- 1 Petro-Canada SuperPass Program - New!
- 2 Esso Fleet Discount Program
- 3 Accent Inns – Preferred Rates
- 4 DM Credit Services

Education

- 1 Seminars or information sessions and speakers at chapter meetings
- 2 Salaried Employees Training Trust Fund (SETTF)
- 3 BC Electrical Association Scholarship Fund

Health Care – BC Construction Association Group Benefit Plan

Insurance - Industry specific insurance from Federated Insurance

Marketing – ECA website, advertising, electrical engineering/consultants program ECABC logo/membership stickers

Networking - Regular networking opportunities at monthly chapter meetings, annual general meetings, and an annual national conference

News

1. The Conduit and Relay newsletters to keep you up to date on industry issues and events and
2. NECA/WCB Safety Alerts

Publications – Access to a host of publications, videos, and manuals such as the Seismic Restraint Standards Manual and Health & Safety Policy Manual.

Legal – Alexander Holburn Beaudin Lang—Vancouver Law firm offering preferred rates to ECABC members for

Benefits currently in negotiation—

- Accounting (taxes, etc) discounted
- Cellular phone discounts
- ECABC Scholarship Fund
- Courier Services