



The Conciliator

UNIFOR Local594 | Canada

204 Hodsman Road, Regina, SK.
www.unifor594.com

Volume 16, Issue 7

December 2016

Local Leadership

It should be recognized that the many benefits that we enjoy have been gained through collective bargaining. We have had the benefit of having many talented and educated people represent our needs and concerns throughout our 74 year history. This leadership combined with a strong solidarity has resulted in a strike free history of our partnership with CCRL (well minus that one day back in the 70's) and has evolved into today's current CBA.

Today's environment is evolving as the company works to improve its bottom line. As with most corporate structures the focus is on the monetary aspects and that often comes in direct conflict with current workplace practices or direct attacks against membership benefits. This can be in the form of increased contractors, downsizing the workforce, and/or moves to reduce or eliminate benefits gained through previous bargaining. It is through an experienced and well educated executive supported by strong solidarity that we have been able to keep and maintain the benefits that we currently have. My hope is that trend continues.

It should be noted that there was a substantial increase in our workforce during the 1988 expansion. This bulk of these employees will be able to retire in the near future. As these workers retire, it will lead to a demographically younger workforce. This will result in the loss of valuable experience both in the workplace and in the union executive. To fully appreciate the effort that previous members have invested into our workplace we need to educate ourselves as much as possible in the history of our partnership and how we evolved to where we are today. I believe that we owe them that much, as well as our gratitude.

Any attacks on the CBA or pension, reductions or eliminations, will not likely go away. In all probability one should expect that they will keep bringing that same tired agenda to each subsequent round of negotiations. An inexperienced or junior bargaining committee would be more susceptible to these attacks without intimate knowledge of the partnership history and original intent founding the specific clauses in the agreement. Therefore, it is important that the membership be actively involved in the union business and work towards understanding today's issues as well as the benefit package that we currently have.

“As with most corporate structures the focus is on the monetary aspects and that often comes in direct conflict with current workplace practices or direct attacks against membership benefits.”

...continued page 3

• EXECUTIVE

President:

Kevin Bittman

Recording Secretary:

Carla McCrie

Treasurer:

Kaleena Baulin

Negotiating Chairperson:

Dan Josephson

Maintenance V.P.:

Abe Mejia

Process V.P.:

George Brailean

Administration V.P.:

Jamie Wilhelms

PDD V.P.:

Donny Stilborn

Chief Shop Steward:

Richard Exner

Information Officer:

Abe Mejia

Guide:

Terry Young

Sergeant at Arms:

Brandon Klatt

Trustees:

Daryl Schwartz (16)

Amy Wisniewski (17)

Daryl Watch (18)

Inside this issue:

Local Leadership	1
Sadness vs Depression	2
Local Leadership cont...	3
SFL Convention	3
Gripes & Grievances	4
Last Laugh	4
Stay Connected	4

Section IA:

Nathan Kraemer

Section IB:

Charles Britner

Section II:

Chad Gettle

Section III:

Curtis Baht

Section IV:

Avery Riche

Section V:

Chad Thompson

Building Maintenance:

Gary Gruell

MRP:

James Cheeseman & Ryan Morgan

Pipefitters:

Wayne Globisch & Shaun Jenkins

Mechanics:

Derek Kups

Stores:

Brenda Curtis

Electrical:

Les Bonkowski & Jason Kelly

Instrumentation:

Jaret McCloy & Dave Mushynsky

Inspection:

Keith Britton

Fire & Safety:

Daryl Watch

Lab:

Mike Fink & Ray Strueby

Pumpers:

Ryan Dzioba

Decokers:

Jon Javorik

Welders:

Jim Milton

Scaffolders:

Nelson Wagman

Construction:

Mike Pelzer

Boilerhouse:

(vacant)

Insulators:

Kris Atkinson & Luke McGeough

PDD Office:

Susanne Carpenter

PDD Loading:

Dean Warnke

Packing & Blending, Warehouse:

(vacant)

Administration:

Amy Wisniewski

Mental Health: Sadness vs Depression

I recently attended the Mental Health Conference in St. John's, NL. After listening to a presentation by Steven Page, formerly of the Barenaked Ladies, I came to understand two things. The first is that there is a difference between depression and sadness. The second is that a person has to be brutally honest with themselves to determine if they are just sad, or if they are experiencing a mental health problem.

As he explained from his previous experiences, sadness is an emotion and it is perfectly normal. Depression is quite another beast. It is all-consuming. It doesn't let up and it doesn't back down. A person may have trouble just getting out of bed, as he often did. Tasks, no matter how insignificant, seem insurmountable.

How did he overcome this? He didn't. He denied it at first because what did he have to depressed about? He was lead singer of a great band, he was going on tour, he was selling records and fans loved him. He pointed out though, that regardless of what a person appears to have going for them, they are not immune to depression. People would ask him, 'are you okay?' He said that question was the easiest out for someone for depression to answer. He would often give the one word answer 'busy' because 'busy' means he was productive and therefore 'fine.'

Once the depression became too much for him and his band mates wouldn't tolerate his behavior any longer, he was forced to be brutally honest with himself. He sought professional help. This came in the format of cognitive behavioral therapy and medications. He did much better for awhile and then he slipped. We all read about it in the paper, the drug bust in New York. A poor decision on his part and he readily admitted it. He didn't blame his depression, he accepted responsibility for what he did.

In summation, Steven said that mental health issues are real, lots of people have them and many people are afraid to say anything. The last piece of advice that Steven Page gave is this: if you or someone you love is in danger of harming themselves, go to the hospital right away. You will have immediate access to a psychiatrist and that could save a life.

Mental health issues deserve the same attention, funding and programs as physical health problems and this is where CRC and FCL need to step up. Our brothers and sisters need to have their mental health at the best it can be. Not just depression but other stressors related to work or the home can affect how well we function at work. If safety is truly one of our core values, then the logic is sound: management would only benefit from putting more mental health programs in place.

As a local our committees and executive are always looking at ways to protect and improve the physical and mental well-being of the members we serve. Pushing the Company to implement programs and policies that directly effect mental health initiatives will be a multi-pronged focus of our local going forward.

In Solidarity,

Heather Reid-Bell, EFAP Committee

*“Depression isn’t just
being a bit sad. It’s
feeling nothing. It’s not
wanting to be alive
anymore.”*

- J.K. Rowling

Local Leadership

Union involvement can manifest in many forms, through direct involvement on the executive or on one of the many, various committees. With that said, regular attendance at General Meetings goes a long way to educating members on the issues and path forward. Remember, this is your workplace and career and through the Union you can influence the future of CCRL. You have a direct investment in this workplace and therefore a vested interest in understanding those issues that may affect you or fellow members. I would certainly encourage more of the younger sort to start getting involved, and mentor under “the old guard”.

I will note here that this is not just about our workplace. Unions have been and are involved in many social improvements that today’s society benefits from, both in the unionized and non-unionized workplaces. Some of the benefits would be reduced working hours, minimum wage standards, pension benefits, unemployment insurance, and improved safety standards to name a few. One can readily see that unions are involved in the social political arena and can often be a powerful lobbying body that works to improve both the working and living standards of both the individual workers and society in general. That being said the union role is a leadership position that carries the responsibility for your fellow workers and society as a whole. Understandably, not everyone is interested in or able to take on a leadership role. While the Executive are our leaders, they take direction from the membership, that’s why attendance at General Meetings is important. Our local especially, is a true democracy. An educated membership provides for a stronger solidarity and greatly improves the efficiencies of the union. It is perhaps even more relevant today as we are transitioning through management restructuring, policy changes, and currently working through the bargaining process.

To summarize, I would think that we are now just entering the transition phase where we are likely to see the experienced membership start to retire out. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all of those involved for their hard work and leadership over the years. I would request that anyone considering filling these roles becomes involved as soon as possible. There are many learning opportunities in these leadership roles and many may find great personal satisfaction with being involved with the both the work, political and social aspects that the union gets involved in.

In Solidarity,
Donny Stilborn, PDD Vice-President

2016 SFL Convention

“Labour rights are human rights” says, Alex Himelfarb. He goes on to say, “It’s a global problem. The ability to exercise your rights shouldn’t be as hard as it is! Across the world it is a problem, some countries if you stand up for your rights you can be intimidated into silence, put in jail, or even killed.”

This was one of the biggest takeaways for me from this year’s SFL Convention in Regina. As a whole the Convention was enlightening; from the SLGA employees going to work not knowing if it’s their last shift, due to privatization; or similarly, the Unifor members at Sasktel, not knowing what the future holds for their company; and the USW 5890 members at Evraz, waiting on pipeline approvals to have some sense of job security and avoid lay-offs.

I have learned that being in Unifor doesn’t mean we just stand up for our local, we are all part of a bigger movement, and we need to support our brothers & sisters from all unions. That doesn’t mean we picket and protest constantly, but simple things like not shopping at Sobeys liquor stores, and emailing your MLA to not support the sale of Sasktel or any Crown Corporations.

If you are ever offered the opportunity to attend an SFL event I strongly encourage you to accept. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour represents more than 100,000 people from 500+ locals across Saskatchewan. Getting everyone together to listen to the issues and explore solutions is an amazing experience.

In Solidarity, Ryan Morgan

Gripes & Grievances

From the Chief Shop Steward perspective, 2016 was an interesting, frustrating, and rewarding adventure. In my role I get to experience the issues from every corner of the plant, from PDD to Administration to Process to bigger picture issues that can effect all 850 members of our local. It is a position that comes with great responsibility, and I have worked hard to serve the best interests of the membership throughout 2016.

Entering 2016, we had twenty-nine (29) active grievances still unresolved from 2014 and 2015. They covered a variety of issues ranging from: excessive discipline, contracting out, termination, sick leave pay, and the protection of in-scope work. It was truly an unprecedented time in our Union's history with such a high number of grievances and the insane amount of time it took to meet and receive responses. It's unclear if it was due to the high turnover in human resources, instability in leadership, change in philosophy towards the collective agreement, a bargaining ploy, a combination of all of the above, or something different all together. Regardless, the Union Executive has always been committed to the spirit and intent of the collective agreement and protecting the rights and benefits of our membership.

While there was significant carryover from past years of grievances, 2016 continued the trend of a high number of issues that were unable to be resolved through low-level discussions and therefore progressed to the grievance stage. At time of print we have filed twenty-seven (27) new grievances for 2016. This brings our current active grievance count, spanning three years, to thirty-seven (37) grievances. With issues relating to relief pool compensation, process bidding, medical information protection, in-scope job protection, contracting out, and excessive discipline. This was a year with a very diverse set of issues facing our membership and testing our solidarity, but nothing I could not handle without the support of the Law Committee, our Shop Stewards and Executive Officers.

The rewarding part was settling some rather large arbitrations, including the reinstatement of two members to active duty. I have no clue what 2017 has in store for our membership, but staffing issues in HR appear to be solidified for the time being, and I look forward to working towards resolution on all outstanding issues, and serving our local to the best of my ability.

In Solidarity, Richard Exner, Chief Shop Steward

Last Laugh



"WHILE FOSSIL FUELS ARE NOT RENEWABLE RESOURCES, THE GOOD NEWS IS GREED AND FEAR ARE."

Staying Connected

Website. www.unifor594.com

Email. info@unifor594.com

Twitter. @Unifor594

Facebook. Unifor Fiveninefour

General Meetings. Fourth Tuesday of every month at the Union Hall.