



The Conciliator

UNIFOR Local594 | Canada

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Unifor 594 Roots

The beginnings of this union, especially this local bargaining unit, 594, go back almost to the beginnings of the Coop Refinery itself. The father, as it were, of the union, came from the rank and file of the employees. Neil Reimer had the vision of a unionized workplace. The drive and determination to make it real, first in our workplace and then into other workplaces and organizing other like-minded people who knew that there would be more power if the workers were able to collectively state their demands or argue grievances.



Back in those days the union was organized under CIO's Oil Workers International Union, which was based in the United States. Neil also wanted to create a Canadian union. Over time, he worked toward making what was a branch of the Oil, Chemical, & Atomic Workers International Union (as the O.W.I.U. had become) into an autonomous Canadian union.

The Energy and Chemical Union was the result of those efforts in 1981. They served the locals across Canada until 1992, when a merger with 2 other unions created the Communication, Energy, and Paperworkers Union of Canada. You can see that the idea of merging and growing unions has continued just by the fact that our union is now Unifor 594. The result is more solidarity between locals and more support for locals going through labour issues.

This didn't happen without someone making a choice, sometimes a difficult choice, to take steps to make this happen. We see today, that because you are unionized and under a binding agreement, you were protected from the cut backs the CO-OP made to their non-unionized employees recently. But don't sit back. They will be coming for your benefits in the next round of bargaining and it will be up to you to be strong in the face of their call for concessions.

There is more history out there, and if you don't know about the past, you will be doomed to repeat it.

Yours in solidarity,
John Sader
Former Process Vice-President
Retiree Chapter



• EXECUTIVE

President:

Kevin Bittman

Recording Secretary:

Carla McCrie

Treasurer:

Kaleena Baulin

Negotiating Chairperson:

Nathan Kraemer

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Richard Exner

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Guide:

Brandon Mang

Sergeant at Arms:

Brandon Klatt

Trustees:

Daryl Nysten (19)

Amy Wisniewski (20)

Daryl Watch (21)

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• SHOP STEWARDS

Section IA:

Wade Schnell

Section IB:

Charles Brittner

Section II:

Chad Gettle

Section III:

Curtis Baht & Kevin Geiger

Section IV:

Ryan Jelinski

Section V:

Chad Thompson & Andrew Murray

Building Maintenance:

Gary Gruell

MRP:

Derek Empringham

Pipefitters:

Shaun Jenkins & Karl Dahle

Mechanics:

Derek Kups

Stores:

Dallas Allen & Nathan Fafard

Electrical:

Les Bonkowski

Instrumentation:

Jaret McCloy & Dave Mushynsky

Inspection:

Keith Britton

Fire & Safety:

Daryl Watch

Lab:

Scott Weber

Pumpers:

Ryan Dzioba

Decokers:

Jon Javorik

Welders:

Scott Wickland

Scaffolders:

Nelson Wagman

Construction:

Mike Pelzer

Boilerhouse:

Matt Wason

Insulators:

Luke McGeough & Brandon Mang

PDD Office:

Andrew Fowlow

PDD Loading:

Dylan Bailey & Justin Farrant

Packing & Blending, Warehouse:

(vacant)

Administration:

Tasha Davis & Randy Guillemain

Barriers in Communications

Communication is a two-way process that is best described as the connection between people. The goal of communication is to convey information and the understanding of that information from one person or group to another person or group. For a union representative communication is a powerful tool we use to assist our members. Often this entails that we lend an empathetic ear and listen to our brothers and sisters regarding the issues occurring in the workplace. The biggest part of being a shop steward is communicating with management to resolve different conflicts or issues. This is a challenge because of the differences between our groups, these differences cause barriers in communication.

Communication barriers might include generational barriers, language barriers, location barriers, and emotional barriers. One of the most difficult barriers to effective communication amongst management and union cultures is power distance. Management refers to themselves as higher ranking individuals that hold power over their employees. The issue is that usually in a shop or local, the union shop steward or executive is an employee reporting to the manager. For a union representative when they need to communicate with management, breaking through the power distance a manager perceives they have over that union person is difficult. When a union shop steward and a manager meet to work through a problem they need to treat each other as equals or else very little gets accomplished.

There are things we can do as shop stewards or executives in the union to break through these barriers to effectively communicate to management. First, establish a communication protocol. Management should have a clear understanding of how you conduct yourself and what you expect from them. Be a role model and set a standard of open and honest communication in the workplace. Most importantly, do not allow management to establish a power distance. Remind the manager that when you are communicating with them to resolve an issue in the workplace you are equals. Do not accept anything less than what you deserve when representing your brothers and sisters in the union.

In Solidarity,
Andrew Fowlow
PDD Dispatch

Bargaining Update

Sisters and Brothers, as the end of our current contract nears, the Bargaining Committee has been meeting more frequently in order to develop our bargaining proposals using the results from the pre-bargaining surveys that were sent out in the fall. We have completed our proposals and have formally given notice of our intention to bargain with the company. The next step will be to exchange non-monetary proposals with the Company which will occur on January 15. Following the exchange, we will be holding a **membership meeting at the Hungarian Club (1925 McAra Street) on January 28th at 7pm** where the bargaining committee will explain both the Company and the Union proposals and answer any questions you may have. Going forward, we have our first two bargaining dates scheduled for January 30th and 31st. We will be keeping all Unifor 594 members updated as we move through the bargaining process in 2019.

In Solidarity,
Nathan Kraemer
Bargaining Committee

Culture of Costing

Our refinery has been consumed by the culture of costing. Never have employees been so inundated with memos (Project Octa-mize) and programs (Fill the Barrel or Mission 9.0) to make the refinery more profitable and sustainable. Scrutiny of expenditures is unprecedented and restrictive. Important maintenance work postponed, process shifts forced to run short, and staffing complement is not keeping pace with workload, all in efforts to frantically reduce cost. The money only flows one way as the purse strings are held very tight by Saskatoon.

One area where the company appears to have no problem allocating funds is to their Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The amount of money thrown around during the last round of negotiations on training, administration, assets, consultants, and implementation of the BCP were in the neighbourhood of \$50-80 million dollars. That is a very large amount of money for any company to spend with insignificant returns. By comparison, employees were asked to Fill the Barrel with \$60 million dollars. It is almost as if the Company asked the employees to fund their own demise.

We know that FCL CEO Scott Banda has already signed off on expenses to restart the BCP train wreck. Draftspersons, engineers and other unwilling management people are training on units, contractors and consultants are taking up residence in refinery offices, and the scab camp trailers are being prepped. With the refinery capitalizing on the crude differential and making more money than they know what to do with, Saskatoon syphons money away from the member-owners to fund a BCP plan designed to harm employee families.

“In scope employees are disgruntled with how they were treated and how they are being forced to train replacement workers. Most out of scope employees feel the same way.”

While direct costs are usually easy to quantify, what often gets overlooked are the two other costs; the indirect and the human costs.

If the \$50-80 million-dollar direct cost estimates are correct, can you imagine the indirect costs associated with running a BCP? Lost productivity and production alone would have to double the cost to our organization. There are lots of questions that need to be asked and answered. If an engineer is pulled away from their regular duties to train on your job, there is no one filling in for them. Now the organization is short an engineer. What happens to the projects they were working on? They get delayed. What are the consequences of those delayed projects? Does the reliability of units and equipment suffer? Do safety concerns grow from the engineers neglect due to their BCP obligations? You can run this scenario with a multitude of management positions; Planners, Supervisors, Trainers, and other office staff. When they are in their regular roles, they all play an important role in the successful daily operation of the refinery. It's our best guess that the indirect costs of transplanting outsiders to train on a job completely foreign to them have not been appropriately weighed.

There are many more indirect costs, the most important being the Human cost. Mental health in the workplace is on the forefront in most workplaces across Canada, and the refinery should be no different. There were several comments and concerns raised by in & out of scope members during the 2016 negotiations about the toll the BCP had on their stress levels and mental health well being. If you did a mental health check into any shop or office, you would find that to be quite evident. Motivation and morale took severe hits to which we may never recover. In scope employees are disgruntled with how they were treated and how they are being forced to train replacement workers. Most out of scope employees feel the same way. They have the stress from being forced to perform a job with minimal training, the likelihood of being torn from their families for long periods of time, and the fractured relationships caused by the labour relations turmoil.

BCP is an expensive virus that caused irreparable harm to many dedicated employees on both sides. It has negatively affected the mental health of every worker in the plant, both Union and Management, but senior leadership doesn't appear to care. All they are concerned about is the bottom line, which is not what our society views to be the most important priority anymore, especially for a cooperative. It is time FCL returned to its roots, dropped the costing culture, and treat all employees respectfully and fairly, and together we can continue to thrive in this multi-billion dollar industry.

In Solidarity,

Bargaining Committee

Income Tax Assistance

One of the first highlights of 2019 is the Savings Plan cheque deposited into each of our accounts! This benefit was first bargained by our union in the 1979 collective agreement and has been increased once over the years. As contract negotiations ramp up over the next several months, it is in each member's interest to make wise financial decisions and preparations such as planning and saving accordingly. On top of using this cheque as a means of savings, I want to encourage each of you to consider taking out the Income Tax Assistance that is offered by the company. How does Income Tax Assistance work? It is the money the company will give you in advance from your January 2020 Savings Plan to cover the amount of tax you would pay on your 2019 Savings Plan company portion. Depending on how big your Savings Plan amount is and your current tax bracket, this amount could be several thousand dollars. Essentially you are getting some of your money in advance. Instead of waiting until January 2020, you will receive it in February 2019.

Why should you do this if you don't need help paying your taxes? The obvious reason is to set the money aside for the coming year. If we are locked out by the summer or fall it will be a very long wait until January to get that next cheque. Also, if we end up without a contract heading into 2020 the company may be able to tie up our Savings Plan cheques in red tape instead of paying them out promptly at the beginning of January like in the past. Having some of this money in advance will help us all to be better prepared and financially equipped. You will get the same amount of money paid out, you will just get some of it paid in advance, so there is literally nothing to lose. Several thousand dollars can make a big difference when you are on a reduced income. This is a simple and easy way to put a little more money away in preparation of the future. Income Tax Assistance forms need to be filled out in January and cheques get paid out usually by the middle of February. Food for thought.

In Solidarity,

Wade Schnell

Sec 1A Shop Steward/UCP Committee

Last Laugh



“The crude oil is on the left, and the refined oil is on the right.”

Stay Connected

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