



The Conciliator

UNIFOR Local594 | Canada

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

• EXECUTIVE

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Trustees:

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Amy Wisniewski (17)

Daryl Watch (18)

Volume 15, Issue 10

December 2015

The New Reality

When I took over responsibility for this publication almost two years ago, it had been in hibernation for over a year. Not because it was not needed, but because it is a daunting task meeting the monthly deadline consistently. With that said, even at a measly four pages, this medium is still very much an effective communication tool for our membership. The geography alone of our complex, and the addition of a second work location, makes delivering a common message difficult.

Since its resurrection, there has been 16 printings (including this one), and the feedback has been increasingly positive. I am always surprised when co-workers stop me to talk about the Conciliator. An article or cartoon that takes a jab at the Company is generally a fan favorite. To hear those types of comments gives me mixed feelings.

While I am pleased the message has resonated with the reader, I am disappointed I had to write it. To be regularly upset and frustrated with my employer is not a good thing. It means there are problems in the workplace and labour relations are strained. Those types of articles are birthed from low morale.

In all honesty, I appreciate my employer just as much as I appreciate my union. Together they have negotiated for me, and you, a competitive wage and benefits package to be proud of. They have also provided me with a second family. Go to any retirement function and that will be biggest thing you hear, the best part about working at the Co-op is the people. And like any good family, you look out for and protect one another.

In the past, this has meant helping our brothers and sisters go home safe at the end of each work day by protecting them from the hazards of the work site. Due to the nature of our industry, keeping people safe requires a high level of diligence. But as each day fades into the next the responsibility to protect workers is becoming more challenging. The multitude of process hazards still exist, but now you have the added worry of protecting yourself from the heavy-handed discipline hammer the Company wields.

The Refinery Leadership Team (RLT) has made it clear that they are not accepting anything less than 100% compliance to all safety rules and regulations. And in some cases employees are being disciplined for not going above and beyond. This is a change that has not been accompanied with education or notice to employees.

"If people are good only because they fear punishment, and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed."
Albert Einstein

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• SHOP STEWARDS

Section IA:

Nathan Kraemer

Section IB:

Charles Brittner

Section II:

Billy Hamilton

Section III:

Curtis Baht

Section IV:

Travis Parker

Section V:

Chad Thompson & Scott Girard

Building Maintenance:

Gary Gruell

MRP:

Rob Jenkins & John Cheeseman

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

Administration:

Charlene Rae

Lab:

Mike Fink & Ray Strueby

Pumpers:

Ryan Dzioba

Decokers:

Jon Javorik

Welders:

Jim Milton

Scaffolders:

Nelson Wagman

Construction:

Mike Pelzer

Boilerhouse:

Ricky Nygaard

Insulators:

Kris Atkinson & Luke McGeough

PDD Office:

Susanne Carpenter

PDD Loading:

Dean Warnke

The New Reality

When the majority of us employees were hired we were told by our supervisors that safety is the number one priority. It did not take much on the job experience to realize that statement wasn't completely accurate. As a Process Department we have seen production trump safety time and time again. Start ups and shutdowns, planned or not, are notorious examples where the expectations don't line up with the rhetoric. While everyone gains from returning to normal operation, minimizing downtime should not come at the cost of full safety compliance. And that's exactly what we are conditioned to do through our orders.

Deep down we know the mountain of paperwork assists everyone in performing our jobs more safely, it should not be leaned on as the sole determining factor. There are far more effective safety strategies that get ignored when valid concerns are brought forward.

The RLT favors signatures that shift liability to the individual workers, rather than entertaining safety strategies that may involve resources like manpower, time and dollars. Killing trees and creating yet another visually appealing form that looks good to regulators is their preferred method of hazard control. Hazard identification in itself is not hazard control.

So if this is the new reality we are subjected to in our workplace, the question is how do we survive, how do we navigate these disciplinary obstacles? That's a question with a surprisingly easy answer. Abide by their rules, every last one. And at the same time hold the Company to the same standard. Ask a myriad of questions before completing the simplest of tasks. It is not about slowing down or even stopping work. It is about being safe, and protecting yourself and others. Because even if the smallest mistake occurs, regardless of how innocent, during your work task, the Company is going to try and fry you.

Things have changed, but they also haven't. The Company doesn't show any interest in you following the rules to the letter, until there is an incident. Then they will dissect your every move trying to find any infraction or violation, big or small.

This is the culture that they have created, it is necessary that you become familiar with the Company's discipline policy, and all twenty-one major rule violations. As their policy states, all major rule violations will result in suspension, at a minimum.

The message is simple; be safe, stay safe.

In solidarity, Richard Exner

"I consider it entirely equitable then that all employees should be required to shoulder their portion of the burden of expense for administering the law of their employment, the union contract; that they must take the burden along with the benefit."

*- Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand,
January 29, 1946*

Know Your CBA - Letter 27 - EFAP

Eligibility: All permanent employees and their immediate family (spouse and dependent children), as defined on the Declaration of Dependents Form for group insurance benefits, are eligible. Construction Section employees are eligible after one year of service. Temporary employees and employees serving their probationary period may access the program with the approval of the Program Co-ordinator.

The Basic Activities of the EFAP Committee include:

A joint committee comprised of Union contact representatives and management contact representatives who individually receive and act on employee requests or inquires.

Referring troubled employees to local referral agencies that provide professional help to address the problems.

Providing a climate of recovery for troubled employees who have a sincere desire to work toward overcoming their problems and are able to maintain acceptable performance.

A guarantee of confidentiality of all information.

Leave of absence to attend counselling or treatment will be covered by sick leave.

The Company (CCRL) will pay for five assessments or counselling sessions for eligible employees and dependents within the current program.

**If you feel like the EFAP program may be of benefit to you,
please contact a member of the committee for more information.**

In Solidarity, Unifor 594 EFAP Committee

Union Christmas Party

The Union Christmas Party will be held on
Friday, December 4th
at the Italian Club (2148 Connaught St)

Cocktails 5:30pm

Supper 7:00pm

Dance to follow with entertainment provided by
THE TILTED KILTS

Tickets are \$10 and can be
purchased from your Shop Steward!



The Nuclear Option

From the top of the mountain to the front lines, many current out of scope employees at some point in their careers had the luxury of the protection of 594 and the collective agreement. They owe their benefits, pensions, and yearly savings plan cheques to their former brothers and sisters.

So why the hatred? Why allow the bitter grudge of one individual to permanently fracture what has been a tremendous place to work for the last 80 years?

Any competent management team would have a filing cabinet in some office somewhere filled to the brim with contingency plans for almost every possible scenario. Being prepared to navigate fluctuations in the markets, and maintain a consistently positive financial performance, is just part of being a successful business. Anything less would be a failure in leadership.

“Are you going to be a scab, or are you going to be a man?”

-Dropkick Murphys,

(Which Side Are you On)

So it really comes as no surprise the Company has a Business Continuity strategy. The surprise is that the Company thinks our membership is stupid. “Unforeseen Circumstances”? Is that referring to another major fire or explosion, because that better suits the definition. When strategy and policy are put in place that directly attack the principles of a unionized workforce, can it truly be considered unforeseen?

The timing was no accident, it was calculated. It was designed to cause friction and division in our solidarity as we near the start of bargaining. The only response I have seen from the membership is anger, and more anger.

If you have any awareness of the last two rounds of negotiations, and the current temperature of the workforce, you would know that the membership as a whole will not accept changes to the Pension Plan. That is the carrot we work for, day in and day out. To be able to retire comfortably after a long productive career. We sweat, we bleed, and we sacrifice for the Coop. All for that carrot.

So why even insinuate the idea, at the risk of setting this workplace back thirty years and forever changing the working relationship all because the interest rates are in the toilet? Our membership is not stupid, and certainly not weak.

Last Laugh



"We're going to keep your grievance right here in our top-priority file."

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.