



The Conciliator

UNIFOR Local594 | Canada

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www.unifor594.com

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Brandon Mang

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Brandon Klatt

Trustees:

Daryl Watch (18)

Daryl Nysten (19)

Amy Wisniewski (20)

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FCCU Incident : Letter To The Editor

On December 29, 2017, I received a text message from a friend at work that no one ever wants to receive, the message read:

“Josh has been taken to the hospital in an ambulance”.

On that morning, the Section II CAT tripped just after 7:00 am. With an outside temperature around -35 C, Section II operators worked hard and had feed back in to the FCCU and running in only a couple of hours. At around 11:00 am, H2S/LEL alarms started going off in Unit 24. Operators had just started a compressor and had first thought that the alarms were associated with that. Kevin Fogarty had previously seen an operator working in the Gas Con alleyway draining liquid off a vessel to flare, and decided to check back there to ensure everything was alright. When he came to the alleyway, a short distance from the compressor building, he saw the operator on the ground and a hose leaking to atmosphere. Kevin immediately called in "man down" over the radio, and blocked in the hose. Kevin next went to check on the downed operator. Kevin found him unconscious and not breathing, and instinctively started mouth to mouth. Richard Exner responded second with a SCBA and ordered the evacuation of the incident area as unit alarms were still sounding. He was able to drag the operator roughly twenty yards to fresh air, before a third operator, Will Kyle, arrived also wearing a SCBA. Together they pulled the operator to a clearing in the unit, placed him in the recovery position, and draped him in air core insulation until the ambulance arrived, and transported to the hospital. While the operator is expected to make a full recovery, it was a very scary and stressful situation and the quick thinking and actions of three individuals, and really the whole shift team, surely saved an operator's life that day.

“Nothing will prepare you fully for those intense moments, but there is so much more the Company can do to prepare their First Responders for these situations.”

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I'm writing this letter for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, Kevin Fogarty, Richard Exner, and Will Kyle are the definition of heroes. They thought quickly, responded properly and saved a life. I wish I could say they responded the way they were trained to respond but we all know that training at the refinery is brutally inadequate, and not one of us has been trained properly to deal with a situation such as this. Nothing will prepare you fully for those intense moments, but there is so much more the Company can do to prepare their First Responders for these situations. Paper training is not always the answer. There has never been a thirty question test on the other end of a unit H2S/LEL alarm.

• 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 & Ryan Morgan

Pipefitters:

Shaun Jenkins & Karl Dahle

Mechanics:

Derek Kups & Pete Thorsen

Stores:

Nathan Fafard & Dallas Allen

Electrical:

Les Bonkowski

Instrumentation:

Jaret McCloy & Dave Mushynski

Inspection:

Keith Britton

Fire & Safety:

Daryl Watch

Lab:

Mike Fink

Pumpers:

Ryan Dzioba

Decokers:

Jon Javorik

Welders:

Scott Wickland

Scaffolders:

Nelson Wagman

Construction:

Mike Pelzer

Boilerhouse:

Matt Wason & Jason Molnar

Insulators:

Luke McGeough & Brandon Mang

PDD Office:

Andrew Fowlow

PDD Loading:

Justin Farrant & Dylan Bailey

Packing & Blending, Warehouse:

Dean Warnke

Administration:

Amy Wisniewski

FCCU Incident, Continued

I'm also writing this to let you all know what went on that day. I don't feel the Refinery Leadership Team is putting enough emphasis on just how dangerous an incident this was, and are taking responsibility for their actions that allowed this incident to even occur. The problem is if they admit how dangerous this incident was they have to admit that their system isn't working. They still believe not calling an ambulance for an operator who was burnt in Section 4 was the right decision.

I believe you all should know what went on December 29th. If the Company is not willing to acknowledge the extraordinary actions of my three Brothers that saved a life, I believe we as a union should acknowledge their heroic actions.

In solidarity
A Concerned Member

From The President's Desk

When I look at what is going on in the world, I sometimes wonder what the future will hold for the working class. A company's desire for increased profits seems to be the only thing that matters.

Changes in Technology are eliminating high paying jobs. We see living wages being cut and corporations asking people to do more with less through lay-offs to improve the bottom line. At what point do we value skilled workers more than increasing the bottom line? What the board considers sufficient profit is always a moving target and is never enough. Maybe when those low wages restrict people's disposable income and ability to buy the products that the businesses provide, they will stand up and fight for what we have earned and fought for by previous generations. Generations that had to fight their way out of poverty. Most of the companies engaging in this kind of business model are very profitable, but still have a desire for more. Profits over people? It is nothing less than corporate greed. Pleasing shareholders is the sole objective. Sometimes improving the bottom line is not achieved through selling more products or increasing the value of the company. It is done by taking from the workers or decreasing the workforce to improve the company's share prices. The business community will argue that if the share price goes up, if even on the backs of the workers, the company is more valuable.

When I began working at the Co-op 21 years ago, the fact that I was working for a cooperative made me feel proud. It was a crucial factor in my decision to start my career in Regina. A system created to provide a service for members, not a system where money is all that matters. How times have changed. I enjoyed 15 years working my dream job for a dream employer and now I see my co-operative being turned into the exact thing it was created to combat, corporate greed. We are told it is about the co-op system and providing a service, but is it really? To some extent yes, the co-op refinery enables the rest of the system to remain viable. It not only provides fuel for the service stations, but also pumps hundreds of millions of dollars into the system. Some of that money goes to building the system and some is returned to the members.

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New Year, Same Old New Co-op

Grievances are accepted as an inevitable reality in a unionized environment, some would say industry standard. But why, though? Why would any employer consciously undertake business practices that are costly, labour intensive, and cause irreparable harm to workplace morale and unity simply because of this farcical myth that a power struggle needs to exist between unions and employers? Why in 2017 was your local union executive forced to file a record number of grievances, in our 75 year history, and today have more than forty-five active grievances? The answer to these questions are not exactly clear, but the disrespect the Company has shown to the collective agreement and to their employees, in and out of scope, sure is.

We've written about this issue similarly several times over the last couple of years as morale at the Refinery has plummeted, but nothing seems to change. The working environment stinks to be quite blunt. As unhealthy as the last round of negotiations proved to be, the Union Executive has done everything it can to put it behind them and move forward. But with the current contract expiring in thirteen months, there really isn't much of a break. Especially considering the BCP trailers are still parked on the outskirts of town ready to go, the "non-competitive" rhetoric hasn't stopped, our tradespersons are still handcuffed by a flawed planning system, and the Company constantly attempts to rewrite the collective agreement on the fly. This all points to the 2019 negotiations being even more tumultuous than the last.

As we have said before, and it continues to be the case, our collective agreement is strong. It may not be written with the clearest of language, but the over-riding principles of seniority, and protection of bargaining unit work are very evident throughout every page. In the past our cooperative relationship with the Company has helped provide interpretative clarity to provisions that suited the needs of the business without straying from the principles of our union. Just like the small group of farmers that founded this refinery, we found a way, we worked together toward a common goal. It wasn't industry standard in 1935 to build your own refinery. Taking a different approach and doing things the right way has allowed this complex to exist and grow to the Western Canadian behemoth it is today.

Part of the change in relationship has to be attributed to the change in players. The Human Resources Department, through which all labour relations and collective bargaining issues flow, has seen an unprecedented amount of turnover, and there's no telling when it will end. And with each new outsider coming in to a role that interacts with the collective agreement, they read it with a different set of eyes and (mis)understanding. But no one has any experience or context when it comes to interpretation of our agreement, and this is undoubtedly a main source of frustration and conflict for your executive. The forty-five plus active grievances are not frivolous or symbolic in nature, they are meaningful, and in some cases could have huge impact on our membership going forward. We've seen the Company try to weasel in changes to articles and letters, by twisting words or just simply ignoring decades of past practice, to suit their current needs. Well, I'm sorry, that's just not how things work.

It is our hope that 2018 will be quieter on the grievance front as we spent significant time and resources arbitrating three major cases this year regarding the protection of bargaining unit work; RBO Maintenance, working hours during turnaround, and priority work assignments during turnaround. We have yet to receive the arbitrator's decision on these three matters but are confident that we made fair, and valid arguments to represent the needs of our membership. Regardless of the outcome of those arbitrations our path is clear, we need to remain vigilant, ignore the race to the bottom, protect the collective agreement, and save our pennies. 2019 is closer than you think!

In Solidarity,

Richard Exner, Chief Shop Steward

From The President's Desk ...continued

With annual profits of around 500 million dollars, why are they hurting hard working Saskatchewan families in pursuit of increased profits? This is not how a coop is supposed to operate. People work, plan, and budget their entire lives with the goal of someday being able to retire. Having your employer take money out of your pocket are forcing you to change your retirement plan hurts. The part that hurts the most is that it is a cooperative doing this. They are trying to say that these moves are done for sustainability, but if that were the case we would not see over \$500 million in profit.

To me, if we are providing a service we are achieving our goal. We are providing discounted fuel to the thousands of members who belong to the coop and hundreds of small communities that the big oil companies have left behind. The hundreds of millions of dollars in profits are just a bonus, which should be returned to members in equity. I am not naive enough to think that we do not need profits. I know that we need to provide a return on investment to the members, but taking from the employees to achieve that profit is wrong. The workers at this plant are the best asset the cooperative system has. We care for this plant and want to see it be profitable.

We don't just work for a company, we work for an idea that has survived against the corporate greed of big oil for over 80 years by being fair and equitable. Large corporations don't care about these concepts, only profit. We need to remember who we are and where we came from.

In Solidarity,
Kevin Bittman, President Unifor 594

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Last Laugh

