



# The Conciliator

**UNIFOR** Local594 | Canada

200 Hodsman Road, Regina, SK.  
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Volume 18, Issue 7



December 2018

## Were they Sheep or Lemmings?

As another Christmas season approaches, many happy and grateful thoughts come to mind. Unfortunately, the festive Christmas carols don't exactly hide the turmoil in which we work. This time brings to mind something written a long time ago:

“That which has been is that which will be [again], And that which has been done is that which will be done again. So, there is nothing new under the Sun.” <sup>1</sup>

This reminds me of the 1914 Christmas season during the initial stages of the first major global conflict leading up to World War I. Conflict initially began over one country annexing a portion of another. Obviously, a disrespectful maneuver. While inspecting the troops in the conflict zone, the aggressor was assassinated. This solidified the conflict and with various military alliances the war was well on its way to encompassing Europe and spreading outwards.

The interesting part were the individuals brought into the conflict slightly later. These folks were citizens of the various country's at war, yet they chose to come together. Their true colors shone through as brightly as the stars in a clear summer sky. They were respectable folk.

This was demonstrated during Christmas in a very overwhelming way.

“On a crisp clear morning over 100 years ago, thousands of British, Belgian and French soldiers put down their rifles, stepped out of their trenches and spent Christmas mingling with their German enemies along the Western front. In the hundred years since, the event has been seen as a kind of miracle, a rare moment of peace just a few months into a war that would eventually claim 15 million lives.

It seems the sheer misery of daily life in the cold, wet, dull trenches was enough to motivate troops to initiate the truce on their own.... To this day historians continue to disagree over the specifics: no one knows where it began or how it spread, or if, by some curious festive magic, it broke out simultaneously across the trenches. Nevertheless, some two thirds of troops – about 100,000 people - are believed to have participated in the legendary truce.

“First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would song one of ours, until when we started up “O Come, All Ye Faithful” the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn in Latin. And I thought, well, this is really a most extraordinary thing – two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.”

The phenomenon took different forms across the Western front... Yet for many at the time, the story of the Christmas truce was not an example of chivalry in the depths of war, but rather a tale of subversion: when the men on the ground decided they were not fighting the same war as their superiors.

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• EXECUTIVE

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Kevin Bittman

**Recording Secretary:**

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**Treasurer:**

Kaleena Baulin

**Negotiating Chairperson:**

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**Process V.P.:**

Avery Riche

**Administration V.P.:**

Lance Holowachuk

**PDD V.P.:**

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**Chief Shop Steward:**

Richard Exner

**Information Officer:**

Ashlyn Heintz

**Guide:**

Brandon Mang

**Sergeant at Arms:**

Brandon Klatt

**Trustees:**

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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:**

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**Section V:**

Chad Thompson & Andrew Murray

**Building Maintenance:**

Gary Gruell

**MRP:**

Derek Empringham

**Pipefitters:**

Shaun Jenkins & Karl Dahle

**Mechanics:**

Derek Kups & Pete Thorsen

**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

## Were they Sheep or Lemmings? Continued ...

Indeed, one British soldier, Murdoch M Wood, speaking in 1930, said:

“I then came to the conclusion that I have held very firmly ever since, that if we had been left to ourselves there would never have been another shot fired.”<sup>2</sup>

I look at the parallels of the 1914 Christmas and our 2018 Christmas and wonder just how similar we are. At our workplace, a super majority of workers have no interest in any protracted labour disruption or BCP preparations. All they want to do is what they agreed to upon their initial employment offer. They want to come to work, do a respectable job, have a healthy perspective of their workplace and their coworkers, no matter the affiliation. Most workers desire to be respected and in that, be remunerated in a way that is arrived at mutually. A very wise person once said (however, their name presently eludes me):

“I don’t want to go into business with someone who is getting the shaft. I want to go into business with someone who is happy with the partnership terms. That’s a partnership.”<sup>3</sup>

It’s interesting that for a good part of my career we have had a very good partnership. A time reflected by the mutual investment to put up a sign proclaiming the partnership, however, as the sign has faded, so too has the relationship faded.

What can we learn from the souls of 1914 and their actions on Christmas Day? They ultimately did not want to fight the same war as their superiors. They allowed their conscience to guide their actions. If left to their own decisions, without coercion or intimidation, would have refused to fight and instead pursue a healthy partnership with others.

So, if we can agree that there are glaring similarities between now and then, apart from actual killing, what can we learn from the 1914 dispute? I see the only way to prevent the similar carnage of that era in our situation is to rise to the occasion, step up and be bold and not fight the same war as our superiors. If not, then the sober reality is really true, “There is nothing new under the Sun”

I believe if folks do not rise up with courage and gallantry and fight against their superiors to stop this conflict, then this is the last Christmas we will remember for years where we still have a partnership, even though extremely fragile at present. More cracks are presenting themselves every day. We had leaders who valued partnership. We often do not appreciate what we have and only when it is lost, do we appreciate the true value of what is lost.

Merry Christmas to all,

Lance Holowachuk  
Administration V.P.

- 1 – Ecclesiastes 1:9 AMP
- 2 – History on the Net – World War One Timeline
- 3 – Source Unknown

## Bargaining Update

The Union and company bargaining committees will be exchanging packages on January 15th, 2019.

There will be more information coming about a special membership meeting to discuss bargaining—date is TBD.

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## Movember 2018 Finale

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“Our fathers, partners, brothers and friends face a health crisis that isn’t being talked about. Men are dying too young. We can’t afford to stay silent.” -- Movember Foundation

I’ve spent quite a few years participating in Movember to raise money to try to make a difference. This year was huge. Everyone that participated in and donated to the Refinery Stache for Cash team did amazing. We raised just shy of \$15,000 in one month and that number is being doubled by CRC. That’s about \$30,000 going to the Movember Foundation from our workforce.

The Health and Wellness Team played a huge role in the success with organizing events (shaves and breakfast) to prizes for the participants. The whole refinery team was able to work together and raise a ton of money for a good cause. This is a great example of what can be achieved by working together. The winners of the \$750 health spending accounts were Dean Warnke (Creepier Stache), Matt Cooke (First Stache), Nicole Anderson (Mo-Sister), Paul Flaman, Mike Neigum and Richard Exner from the random name draws.

Mike Neigum led the charge this month with raising over \$3000 under his name. His pasta night fundraiser was a great time and he did it all with a bad wing. He’s now laid up after shoulder surgery.

Thanks to all that participated and donated this year. Know that you have all made a difference in the future of men’s health.

In Solidarity and Moustachery,  
Daryl Nylen

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## Top 5 things to know about Men’s Health

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- 1. Spend time with people who make you feel good** - Stay connected. Your friends are important and spending time with them is good for you. Catch up regularly, check in and make time.
- 2. Talk, more** - You don’t need to be an expert and you don’t have to be the sole solution, but being there for someone, listening and giving your time can be life-saving.
- 3. Know the numbers** - At **50**, talk to your doctor about prostate cancer and whether it’s right for you to have a PSA test. If you are of African or Caribbean descent or have a father or brother with prostate cancer, you should be having this conversation at **45**. Know your numbers, know your risk, talk to your doctor.
- 4. Know thy nuts. Simple** - Get to know what’s normal for your testicles. Give them a check regularly and go to the doctor if something doesn’t feel right.
- 5. Move, more** - Add more activity to your day. Do more of what makes you feel good.

- Take a walking meeting
- Park further away from work
- Get off the bus a stop or two earlier
- Instead of the elevator, take the stairs
- Cycle to work instead of driving



From: <https://ca.movember.com/mens-health/general>

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## Happy Holidays from the President's Desk

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Wow 2018 really flew by, it seems like yesterday we were at the Turvey Center celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 2018 was a year with many challenges. We continue to fight for the opportunity to do our jobs and do them well. We have always rose to the occasion when needed and 2018 was no different. Our workplace is always changing, but the one constant that I see are the great members of 594. We do what needs to be done, no matter what is in front of us.

As we see our numbers drop and management increasing staff, we continue to do our jobs the way we have always done them. Accounting, clerical, loading, distribution, dispatching, inspections, process, laboratory and maintenance have all pitched in to have a successful and highly profitable 2018.

I want to thank you and tell you that I am extremely proud to be part of Unifor 594. This family that we have is something great and our common goal to work hard and be the best is the what drives our Solidarity.

We sometimes forget while we are at home enjoying family time, that there are people that do not get to be home for Christmas. It is the toughest time for a shift worker, to not be home for the special moments. To all the shift workers that must work this holiday season, thank you for what you do.

Our families play a crucial role in us being successful. We spend long hours away from home ensuring the plant is run efficiently and safely. During this holiday season I hope everyone gets a chance to enjoy their family time. I would like to take the time to say Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and your families.

In solidarity,  
Kevin Bittman,  
President Unifor 594

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### Last Laugh

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### Stay Connected

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**Facebook:** Unifor 594

**Twitter:** @Unifor594

**Email:**  
info@unifor594.com

**Website:**  
www.unifor594.com

\*General meetings at the Hall  
will resume in January  
2019\*



*The real reason Rudolph got to lead the sleigh.*

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