

Pressure Point

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM CUPE 2081



Wait... What Happened?

What happened to the old layout? Where's Sukkie? This is all so different!

In Spring 2014, I was elected to serve as the communications officer for CUPE 2081.

"How's the water?" I asked, wondering what I'd gotten myself into. The only way to get the answer was obvious, so I checked the drawstring on my digital swimsuit and plunged in. Answer? The water is indeed warm, and the pool is full of friends.

Sukkie and the many CUPE members who took Pressure Point to national recognition many times over were there to make sure nobody drowned. Thank You!

This newsletter is yours. It belongs to you. Your submissions make Pressure Point happen. Together, our voices keep us strong, connected, informed, and enlightened. Your submissions are welcomed. Send an email, drop off your hand-written stories, and show us your pictures. I'm currently reachable at thompstone@camosun.bc.ca, working in room 314 at the Campus Centre, Interurban.

If you are using inter-campus envelopes, please send to Earle Thompson, Communications & Advancement, Interurban. You can also drop off submissions at the CUPE 2081 office on the second floor of the Young Building at Lansdowne campus.

Nobody in the office? Just slide your submission under the door.

- In solidarity, Earle Thompson

Thank You

I took the CUPE Retirement Planning seminar over two days on April 25-26th and very much appreciated the support from CUPE 2081 and the college in allowing me the time off work to attend this important event. Our first presenter was Moges Kebede, a 20 year veteran from the Municipal Pension Plan, who began the session Friday morning and walked us through the member's benefit statement and navigation of the MPP at http://www.pensionsbc.ca/portal/page/portal/pen_corp_home/mpp_home_page/.

Moges gave us lots to think about as far as the decisions we will need to make which may impact our future. In the afternoon, following a luncheon at the Helmut Huber cafeteria, we heard a presentation from Tzena Russell, an employee from Service Canada who reviewed with us the government pension plans (CPP, OAS, GIS) and a bunch of services which are now available online to most Canadians.

Richard Paul, our host for the two days, took the driver's seat on Saturday. We dug deep into the nuances of retirement including topics in the areas of legal matters, social, and psychological impacts. As a retired CUPE worker, he had many interesting stories to share with the group. There was a full house of 30 participants, and it was thanks to the many hours of coordination and event organization by the CUPE 2081 team of Myra, Ida, Tony, and everyone else who had a hand in the planning and execution of the presentations that it was a success.

*- In Solidarity,
Patty Meredith*

What's up with our website?

The new website is still under construction, but many of the important documents and links sent for posting are up at <http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/resources/>. Updates to the new site will continue as material comes in. Meanwhile, here's a list of useful links:

CAM-CUPE 2010-2014 CA with signature pages:

<http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/files/2013/01/CAM-CUPE-2010-2014-CA-with-signature-pages.pdf>

CUPE PD Application Form:

<http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/files/2013/01/CUPEPDApplicationFormJuly2014.pdf>

Multi-Sector Pension Plan:

<http://mspp.ca/>

BC Municipal Pension Plan:

http://www.pensionsbc.ca/portal/page/portal/PEN_CORP_HOME/MPP_HOME_PAGE

Respectful Workplace Policies:

<http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/files/2013/01/Respectful-Workplace-Policies.pdf>

Camosun Job Postings:

<http://camosun.ca/about/careers/employment.html>

Are you on social media? Next time you're on your smartphone, follow CUPE BC and add your voice!

@CupeBCNews
<https://twitter.com/CupeBCNews>



Making a Difference

It surprises me that I have had so much difficulty writing this article. So many times, I have started it, but instead of listening to the irregular tapping of my fingertips on the I-Pad keypad, I have become an expert at holding my right index finger on the backspace key. It's become a little game I play with myself. Can I correctly anticipate the nanosecond when the clickety clickety clickety of individual consonants and vowels disappearing from the lines becomes the steady clack clack clack of whole words vanishing like miles under the tracks? I have yet to make it past the end of the first paragraph, but this time, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.

I thought I could! I have pondered the reasons for my difficulty. Too many thoughts. Too many ideas. Too many ways to express them. What's a writer to do? According to the experts, the answer is – write! That sounds easier than it is. I remember several years ago I was chatting with a student during my bus ride to work. I was taking a creative writing course at the time, and was significantly and I thought, understandably anxious about my final story portfolio. I think I noticed him rolling his eyes, just before he smirked and turned away to reabsorb himself in the stiff, white pages of his extraordinarily thick mathematical textbook.

Passions drive us. Creative writing is one of mine, its ever-burning embers keeping fire in my heart. Soccer is another. And gardening. I even have a passion for something I can't put my finger on, can't salivate for, can't sniff at, can't hum with, and can't turn a blind eye to. It's called a Respectful Workplace.

In my perfect world, there would be no work. I'm all about fun. Yet we do have a work world. In my perfect work world, each person would be at peace with herself, or himself, and with each other. Is that the world we have at Camosun? I apologize in advance for my blunt answer: no. Could we have such a world at Camosun? I cannot answer this question on my own, because each of us possesses a part of that answer. For my part, my answer is yes.

Recently, I met with Barbara Severyn, Executive Director of Human Resources, to discuss an issue, which had arisen between the Employer and our Union. Initially, and on the face of it, the crux of the issue seemed to be clear, straightforward, and easily resolved. However, after much research, analysis, and critical thinking, I was shocked – and intrigued – to realize how very much more there was to this seemingly simple issue. I had thought that pinpointing where the difference lay would also pinpoint where resolution lay. I believe I did get that concept right. Getting back to my shock and intrigue, the “very much more” was realizing the multitude of places where that difference could possibly lie. I told you I'm all about fun. In my mind, I am going to consider such future resolution seeking opportunities, “Spot the Difference!”

It just so happened that while Barb and I were discussing the issue

above as we sought its resolution, the subject of a healthy and respectful work environment arose. I was heartened to hear Barb express a passion similar to mine for the Respectful Workplace initiative, and that since her first day at Camosun, with the assistance of her team, she has continuously worked at the creation, implementation, and promotion of this initiative. I offered some examples of where I felt her initiative was already making a positive difference. Training: a workshop and an online module made available to all employees. Support: external consultants contracted for more complex situations. Community: posting of posters, abundant literature, employees more and more engaged. Barb and I share a belief that unhealthy relationships can be repaired. Together, we can create a Respectful Workplace; a Respectful Workplace is everyone's responsibility.

Let's be frank. Actually, you can be whoever you wish to be. I believe each of us has the ability to do our part to foster a healthy and respectful work environment. I believe my perfect work world is possible. I believe we can make a difference. Do you think I am idealistic? Naive? Off my rocker? Are you rolling your eyes, or rolling up your sleeves? Do you need our help? Do you know someone else who needs our help, or yours? Are you sufficiently inspired (or have some other feeling) to write an article for the next Pressure Point? Do anything, except nothing, even if you do something as simple as know you can do exactly what that little caboose did.

-With respect, good wishes, and unity, Dawn Svendsen,



ChildFind BC/Michael Dunahee Slo-Pitch Tournament of Hope Champions!

On the weekend of August 8-10, 24 teams came together for the 23rd Annual Child Find BC/Michael Dunahee Slo-pitch Tournament of Hope. This is a labour sponsored event - this means that each team entered has to be sponsored by a union. Here is a bit of a backgrounder on Michael:

Michael Wayne Dunahee (born May 12, 1986) is a missing child from Victoria, British Columbia who disappeared when he was

four years old, and has never been found. He disappeared from the playground at Blanshard Park Elementary School, also known as the Blanshard Street Playground, in Victoria on March 24, 1991. Michael was last seen around 12:30pm, playing at the school playground as his mother, Crystal Dunahee, was participating in a female football practice event to which his father was a spectator. Michael disappeared metres from his parents, but no witnesses to Michael's disappearance have ever been identified.

Michael's disappearance spawned one of the largest police investiga-

tions in Canadian history and to date, over 11,000 tips have been received by police. The case was a major story for many years, being reported across Canada and in the US. Despite the large number of tips, and a \$100,000 reward, police do not have any solid leads in the case.

Your CUPE Local 2081 "Cubbies", coached by Brother Lou Isenor and led by team stalwarts Brothers Ken Whitehead and Keith Todd, had a record of 1 win and 2 losses in the round robin stage. That placed them as the 6th seed in the B Pool going into the playoffs on Sunday.

Playing in what turned out to be stifling heat, your Cubbies knocked off the 3rd seed in the quarter finals and the 8th seed in the semi-finals. The final was played before a boisterous crowd on the main diamond and your Cubbies were involved in an entertaining back and forth affair that went right down to the wire before eking out a well-deserved 7-6 victory!

This is the first time that Local 2081 has brought home the hardware and it makes it especially dear to our collective hearts since we have Michael's mother, Crystal Dunahee, play on the team each year!

Not only were the Cubbies successful on the diamond but they, and all the participants, helped raise over \$14,000 for Child Find BC. Congratulations all around on a job well done!

In Solidarity,

Tony Nelson
CUPE Local 2081
President



Meet Your Members:

Naji Khodashenas-Firouzabadi

With a birthday like 7/7/77, you just knew this fellow was going to be someone special! Meet Naji Khodashenas-Firouzabadi, one of the newest members of the School of Arts & Science Administration Office team. He moved to Canada on October 9, 2012 and on Day 100 of his new life, began working at Camosun College as an Operations Assistant. He grew up in a family environment where education was the first priority of both of his teacher parents. What a fitting place to begin his Canadian career!

Naji finished high school, and then performed military service, which is mandatory for all boys in Iran. After his service, he passed the university entrance exam to study mining engineering. With a Mining Engineering-Exploration Bachelor Degree under his belt, he continued with a Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), learning teaching principles and methodology.

Being able to communicate in English opened up extensive travel-

ling opportunities, and he has visited more than 20 countries, including 18 trips to China for business negotiation and contracting. One day, he accompanied a friend to his friend's enrollment into a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) Program. All of sudden, Naji was in the Program, too, as his friend had taken it upon himself to enroll Naji at the same time!

Naji felt Iran provided limited business and entrepreneurial opportunities due to an unstable economy, both politically and socially. After his son was born, he sat down with his wife to plan their future. They considered many things and made the decision to immigrate to Canada. When they had their visas, they packed up, voiced their difficult goodbyes to their friends and family, and bravely began their one way journey to an unseen town on Vancouver Island on the rugged Canadian west coast – Victoria! The paring down from over a thousand mobile phone contacts in his mobile phone to less than five was a shock. Keeping his father's motto in mind, Naji knew that working hard, doing the right

thing, and persevering were the keys to his success. He received the Inspiring Lives Recognition Award of Starting Strong Excellence – Support Staff, is the new Public Relations Vice President at Toastmasters, and actively volunteers in too many work, community, and social events to list here.

He believes change starts from within and in keeping with tradition, has his own motto, "When you change, things will change! Improvement has no end." Pop by for a visit one day, when you are in his "neck of the woods!"

With Unity, Dawn Svendsen

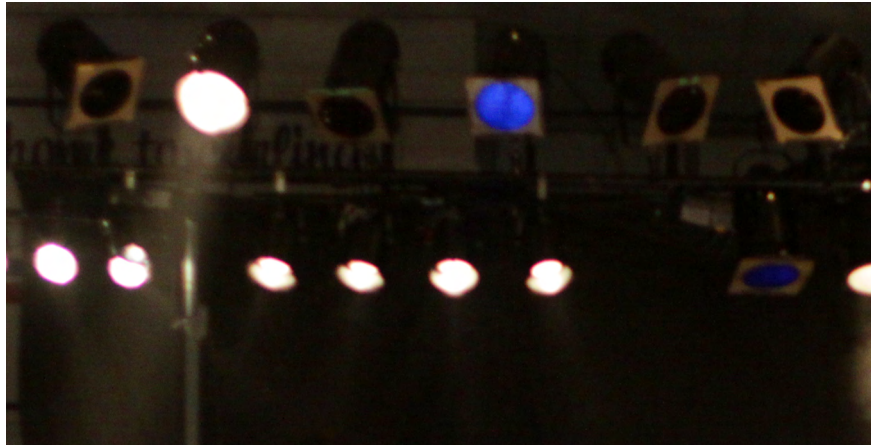
Spotted your name in 9 point Impact bold?

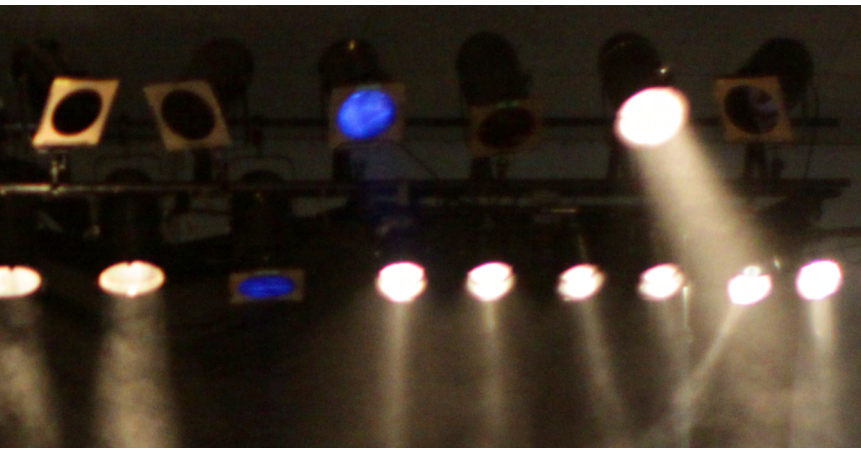
Email CUPE2081@camosun.bc.ca

Thank You

A huge thank you to CUPE 2081 for the opportunity to attend the 2 day Pension Plan Retirement Seminar, on April 25 and 26 at the Interurban Campus. I would also like to thank the College for agreeing to the paid leave for participants on April 25, and my department for supporting my request to attend this very informative event. I learned an invaluable amount of information related to the Municipal Pension Plan, CPP, and OAS in addition to the importance of having a variety of legal documents in order (Will, Executor, Power of Attorney etc.). The registration process, the speakers, the topics, the refreshments, and the invitation to have spouses attend – everything was extremely well organized and worth every minute of my time. If you were not in attendance, and are interested in hearing more, please don't hesitate to contact me.

*In Solidarity,
Nancy Ellen Mabey*





CUPE 40th ANNIVERSARY

CUPE
40
ON THE FRONT LINE

Dinner and Dance Saturday, August 23rd, 2014

Victoria Curling Club - 1952 Quadra Street, Victoria



We're 40 years strong and we're ready to celebrate.

Please save this date and join the celebration!

Live Entertainment provided by **The Midnights**

Doors open at 5:30 | Door/Raffle prizes | CASH BAR

Tickets \$10 - Advance only - Please plan for a safe ride home

Tickets available to CUPE members Spring 2014. For tickets or information please contact:

The CUPE 2081 Social Committee
Cupe40@camosun.ca



Jennifer Erwin's Musing

Could we have asked for a more beautiful summer in terms of sunshine and beautiful days? I am lucky in that I love to be outside and camp. I want to stress the beauty of our BC Provincial Campgrounds. The parks that I visited this summer were Goldstream, French Beach, China Beach, and Kettle River. These parks are staffed by friendly and professional public service staff and quite a few of these staff members seem to be young and look like this may be their first opportunity to enter the work force. Family a simple 6 letter word and I am constantly amazed at how Camosun has made my life so much richer. The definition for me is similar to the ingredients that make up a chocolate cheesecake. The cream cheese in my recipe is the direct relationship between generational bonds, for example grandparents, parents, partners, siblings, aunts/uncles children, and pets etc. The sugar are my co-workers, each of my days are sweeter by my personal and professional interactions with these super individuals. The salt of my cheesecake are the women that I exercise with on-site at Camosun at 7:00am on Tuesday and Thursday with 'Our Joel' instructor extraordinaire'. We are grainy at this time in the morning and it is interesting to see how varied we are in how we embrace the day, we shift from perky to barely awake. (Please note, one can still lift weights when half asleep!) The vanilla is my dance family, and this is a new ingredient for me but essential to my successful dessert. The chocolate, is the 'Iron Maidens' and these are the 4 women, Barb, Iris, Mavis and Nancy that always play better than me and I constantly amaze myself at the joy

they provide in my heart and my ability to 'celebrate my mediocrity'. Finally, there is the whipping cream and these are my friends that sit around the CUPE 2081 executive table and we are a varied bunch. One may think this would be the most 'like-minded' group; however, we are able to whip each other into many discussions since there are so many sides to labour issues. Basically, my family is YUMMY.

I was fortunate enough to attend the Naming Ceremony for the Indigenous Education and Community Connections (IECC) department at Camosun. We were fortunate to hear traditional songs and have the Lkwungen Traditional Dancers perform for us and also the Scia'new Youth Dancers. The new name is Eye Sqalewen and this term refers to 'good heart, good mind, and good feelings. 'Being in Na'tsa'maht was a delight to share in the above sentiment and while there are so many members of this, I must mention Janice Simcoe who embodies 'good heart, good mind, and the ability to generate good feelings - CONGRATULATIONS TO IECC.

Finally, 'DOGS ON BUSES!' - Till next time, in sol - Jennifer



photo: Patti Arlidge

Dear CUPE 2081,

I want to express my gratitude for the opportunities available to CUPE 2081 members through the CUPE Staff Development fund. In May 2014, the CUPE Staff Development fund allowed me to go to Beijing and live with a Chinese family for 2 weeks while studying Mandarin at a language school.

I am the Housing Coordinator at Camosun International where I provide Homestay placements, support, education and conflict resolution to international students and Homestay hosts. Most of our Homestay students are from China. I was eager to better understand Chinese culture in order to enhance our capacity to support our Chinese students and their local hosts.

This experience was life-changing for me. By "putting myself in their shoes" I learned a ton about Chinese culture and the challenges our students face when they move to live and study in Victoria, far away from everything they know. I am greatly humbled by the experience and have increased empathy towards our students. I have filled my toolbox with insights and ideas that allow me to better nurture and encourage our international students and Homestay hosts.

If you are interested to learn more about my China Homestay PD Experience please come to one of the Lunch and Learn sessions as follows. Please bring your lunch. Lansdowne campus: Wednesday, November 19, 12:05-12:55PM, Wilna Thomas Cultural Centre. Interurban campus: Tuesday, November 4, 12:05-12:55PM, location TBA. Thank you!

-In Solidarity, Louise Thauvette

Feed the Brain, Train the Body

Most, if not all, know that as a CUPE 2081 Support Staff Member, that we have the privilege of accessing funds to gain knowledge for our mind or fitness for our body/mind. Many bargaining sessions ago it was agreed that each member can access up to \$2,000 per fiscal year, April 1 – March 31, for education with \$500 of the \$2,000 that can be used for recreational purposes.

Steps that are needed for your application to be approved by the Labour Management Cooperative Sub-committee members; which include one member from the college and one member from CUPE 2081 are:

1. Fill in the form completely (will be sent back if incomplete)
2. Include documentation to show what you are interested in taking, can include print out of webpage, a brochure, printout of University/ College information, Recreational information (missing documentation can result in your application being sent back)
3. An official/legitimate receipt; if it is generic w/o documentation could be denied (due to possible audit)
4. The application for a course/ recreation/convention/conference has to take place within the same fiscal year or at least start prior to April 1 of the next fiscal year.
5. Send Original application form with documentation to LMCC c/o HR, Send a copy of “just” the application to CUPE 2081 and keep a copy for your files.

6. If you do not have the receipt when you first submit application, you can send it later to LMCC c/o HR with a copy of the application (w/ copy stamped/written on it), has to be submitted prior to March 15 to apply for the current fiscal year.

7. It is recommended that you submit your book receipt right away and not wait till the end of your course, especially if end date is after April 1st.

8. Any new application where the education/recreation took place prior to April 1 of the next fiscal year and you have submitted the application after April 1st then it will be denied.

If there is travel involved then you may want to submit a travel reimbursement form to show request for funds. This form is only signed after the education/recreation has taken place; supervisor if they are supporting with covering the costs or submit to LMCC for approval. Travel within Victoria is not covered.

Applications need to be submitted to the LMCC c/o HR – Lansdowne by the 15th of each month to be considered. Applications will not be seen earlier. On the Human Resource Forms webpage is the information for CUPE Staff Development which includes payment and reimbursement.

** Just to let you know that process changes can take place and we will do our best to keep you up to date.

We hope that you take advantage of your added bonus and train your brain and or body.

CUPE Staff Development Form
http://intranet/_hr_/employee_resources/documents/CUPEPDApplicationFormJuly2014.pdf

*In Solidarity, Myra Grypuik
Education Coordinator, Cupe 2081*

2014 Miners' Memorial Cumberland, BC



Joint Early Intervention Program Information: *Know Your Rights*

Since the Joint Early Intervention Program (JEIP) came into effect with the signing of the last collective agreement, it has become apparent that CUPE 2081 members need to understand their rights and how the program works if you need to be off work for more than 5 days due to injury, surgery or illness. There are a few things that we really want you to understand especially “Your Rights”. I would like to share just a bit of information first and then go into the reason why I am writing this article.

The JEIP Committee is a joint committee of the College and CUPE 2081; 2 members from each side make up the committee with alternates just in case one is not available to attend the “Return to Work” meetings. The Joint Early Intervention Program was designed to assist our members get back to work safely and in a respectful and supportive manner.

What the Union side is there for is to make sure that you are getting the important information that is needed if you are to go off work again for the same reason or if you need modifications to your work hours or accommodation to the tasks.

The JEIP information is located on the Human Resources Webpage under Health Benefits, Sick Leave and Disability Benefits, Cupe Joint Early Intervention Program. See http://intranet/_hr_/health_&_benefits/documents/CUPEJointEarlyInterventionProgramIntranetJuly2014.pdf

The Process starts when you have been absent from work for 5 consecutive working days or there has been a pattern(s) of absenteeism from work. If this is the case, you need to contact the Joint Early Intervention Program Committee (JEIPC) by email or phone. The JEIP rep will contact you, and if it is determined that you will not be returning to work in the immediate future (2-3 days), the JEIPC will initiate the intake process for the Abilities Management Access (AMA) program through Manulife, and will send you the necessary forms to complete.

One is for your Doctor and one from yourself which both will be sent to Manulife. The JEIPC will advise the AMA Case Manager at Manulife that you have been referred to the AMA program.

Important information: What we want to reiterate to you is that this whole process is “STRICTLY confidential”. The information regarding your sick/medical leave is “ONLY” to be shared between your AMA Case Manager, your Doctor and yourself. You do not have to share any information with the college nor your supervisor. The AMA Case Manager will inform the college on how your return to work will look.

Your union would advise you not give permission to the employer to contact your medical practitioners. The employer *can* ask you to go back to your doctor for more information. Any documents that are completed by your doctor are to be sent to Manulife directly and not to the employer. Manulife will then communicate with the employer any pertinent information i.e. return to work date, limitations, and restrictions, etc. Your medical information is confiden-

tial and between you, your doctor and Manulife.

The other important information is that there is a deadline of 30 *calendar* days, not work days, to be off work for any one reason, which does not mean in a row for sick or medical leave. If it goes beyond the 30 days then you have to do other paperwork to apply for Short Term Disability (STD).

This means that if you are off work for 10 days with an ailment, you come back to work and then a week later you have to go off work for the same reason for a 2 week reoccurrence period that takes you beyond the 30 calendar days, you will then you have to apply for Short Term Disability.

This means your pay will come from another source and not from the college. If not carried out properly, this can result in a loss of pay and we want you to receive the benefits you are entitled to.

The contact information to report that you will be away for longer than 5 days, or requests/inquiries is jeip@camosun.bc.ca or call and leave a message at (250) 370-4963.

CUPE 2081 and the College JEIP Committee members rotate months to be on duty and it will be the JEIP Duty Committee member that will contact you if you are away or to respond to any inquiries. All questions regarding sick leave, medical leave or return to work should be done through the JEIP committee.

In Solidarity,
Myra Grypuik &
Shirley Wendland,
JEIP Union Representatives

Zoe Philibert



Where Were You?

It's an indescribable feeling. You know the one. That feeling you get, when you invite the most important person in your world to your party, and that most important person doesn't show up. It's a dog's breakfast of feelings with disappointment, bewilderment, and sadness, plus several other feelings, intermingling into that one hollow feeling that defies description. Recently, it's how I felt. September 25th to be exact.

I was at a very important meeting. It was a meeting that could impact my opportunities to care for myself and my loved ones. It was a meeting that could impact my freedoms and my limitations. It was a meeting that could impact my finances on a daily basis, into the future, and even after my death. It's all about the money, right?

I can almost hear you say, "What an important meeting!" It was. I can almost hear myself say, "Where were you?"

Why would I say that? Because I was at a Special Membership Meeting held by CUPE Local 2081 for its members to approve its Bargaining Committee's proposals to present to our Employer. Did I just lose you as a reader?

If I did, then it won't matter what follows here, because you have moved on to something else that

has captured your interest. For those of you still reading, I thank you. It means there is a possibility I may continue to capture your interest and keep you reading, and reading in itself is a good thing.

Once upon a time, I learned one particular thing from a co-worker, no more, no less. Just the one.

As a creative writer, I had previously learned to recognize the value of drawing a reader into your story. If you don't, you may lose your reader, just like those I lost two paragraphs ago. That one thing is recognizing the value of asking a challenging, unexpected question.

Back to that meeting, yes, consensus on the intent of many bargaining proposals is a daunting task that may strike fear, or some other emotion, in our hearts. Apathy springs to mind. I think *That Canadian Guy* says it best, when he shrugs his shoulders, hangs his head, and mumbles, "Oh, well. Whatcha gonna do?" I believe a different, more rewarding attitude is possible, and I humbly offer a (cryptic) example from the meeting for consideration.

A proposal to modify the language of an article to expand its application was presented. I spoke in support of the modification, and then another member spoke against the modification. Both of us had valid points of view, and I appreciated hearing the other member's viewpoint as it was one I had not thought of. This example shows how the same information can be interpreted differently, simply because of who we are. Thus, while one may choose to be apathetic, instead, one may choose to expend the necessary energy to be the opposite of apathetic, whatever

that is for you. At the very least, hearing someone else's differing point of view will be a learning experience.

I am hopeful that we will see more than the usual five per cent of our membership at our future monthly meetings. The next one is scheduled for October 23. We all are living extremely busy lives. Indeed, here I am, writing articles wherever and whenever I can squeeze in a bit of "free" time. (Strange expression, given time is so valuable!) So, I write on the weekend when I don't feel like watching a fourth football game, or early in the morning when the rooster crows (another strange expression), or when my spirits move me (I can't get the thoughts out of my mind).

What is your hindrance? Is it something we might be able to help you with? Is it apathy? Please see above. Do you need assistance with child care or elder care? We can help. Do you need to arrive late, and/or leave early? That's okay. Meetings alternate between both campuses, so if transportation is a concern, there may be an opportunity to carpool. Do you need Union leave from your evening shift? We can arrange that for you. Please contact us by phone at 250-370-3665 or email cupe2081@camosun.bc.ca for our assistance with any of these, or other, needs.

Remember that indescribable feeling, when the most important person in your world didn't show up? You have a standing invitation to your Union's membership meetings. Imagine the very different feeling that will be created, when you, that most important person, shows up. Indescribable.

With Unity, Dawn Svendsen

What my union taught me

It has been less than 3 years since becoming active in my union. In that time, it is You who have taught me many things. Here are the ones that stand out most.

My challenges are not unique.

Hundreds of other workers face similar situations on a daily basis. That's why we have CUPE, our stewards, union schools, committees, and each other to show us the answers that have worked before and given the best results.

Respect works.

Regardless of how I feel about people or situations that don't seem fair, keeping my cool and waiting for a better moment to address the situation allows time for more constructive solutions. Sometimes, that pause allows the other party to return with their own after-the-fact realizations. When push comes to shove, the Collective Agreement spells out what is and is not acceptable.

Some people will love you, others will hate you.

Since identifying myself as a union supporter, I have lost a friend or two but have gained many. We are all free to choose who we associate with, and some people dislike unions strongly enough to end friendships. For others, the ideals of fair treatment, equality, and social justice serve to strengthen existing bonds and will often spark new ones. Being honest with people allows them to make their own feelings clear.

Your opinion matters.

Show up at meetings, cast your votes, and you will make a difference. It's your right.

-In Solidarity, Earle Thompson



Family Fun Day - photo: Patti Arlidge

On the Front Line

*On the shop floor amongst our members, the steward stalks
A voice of reason, the members learn, when the steward talks
To defend our collective rights, every day and every nite
A member's saviour, from the bosses rant, the bosses might
When the bosses come, for workers' rights, the call goes out
To the stewards about, to defend they must, the workers' shout
The bosses fury cannot deter, the unions power, or stewards clout
The language is clear, the steward loudly shouts, you cannot impose
Or attempt to violate, our agreed to clauses, those we will oppose
We will fight for justice, and our rights, every day and every nite
The union won't stand, or tolerate either, anything that isn't right
It's our agreed to rights, you signed on the line, you we will remind
That you agreed to abide, the clauses therein, are clearly defined
The heart and soul of our great union belongs to the steward
Without their courage, our working lives would soon be ruined
Workers are secure, in knowing what is, the boss's biggest fear
The cowards will retreat when the shop steward gets here*

-Jerry Oetting