

## Report of VIDC Stewards Conference

First I would like to thank the membership for the opportunity to attend the recent VIDC Steward's Conference held at the Nanaimo Conference Centre between November 23-25. I was able to receive health and safety training from a member instructor who works for the public works department in the City of Surrey. I really enjoyed the instructor's insights into health and safety as he was able to use real examples which he had personally been involved in.

Although I have been on the health and safety committee for many years, I have received little dedicated training and was really looking forward to this course. Ultimately, one of the things that proved most notable to me was learning about the hazard asbestos remains to workers in Canada. Some of the buildings at Camosun were built during the period asbestos was imbedded in many construction materials and it is likely that that deadly fibre, if disturbed, could pose a hazard to our members. Other aspects of the course included understanding the role of WCB, Primary contractors, how to refuse unsafe work, and how health and safety committees should function. I left the course wondering if some of Camosun's current health and safety administrative practices are fully compliant with the intent of the legislation.

The Stewards Conference also provided the opportunity to meet other stewards from different locals and listening to and learning from those experiences was invaluable. The conference was also a great opportunity to network with those taking other sessions and the organisers even planned some great organised meals and socials. I am also pleased to report that Cupe 2081 members showed great dedication in staying to the very end of the dinner/social on the Thursday night and even made good use of the photo booth.

Trevor Davies, CUPE BC Secretary Treasurer, gave the closing address for the conference and I was surprised to learn that he came from a health and safety coordinator background in View Royal. For those of us who received the health and safety training, Trevor's speech helped to make it all relevant and was a great conclusion to the conference. Again, I would like to thank the members for sending me and I am looking forward to utilising my new knowledge.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michel Turcotte