

April 2012

ON THE LINE

FINAL RESULTS OF THE SHIFT CHANGE VOTE



**ARE YOU IN
FAVOR OF THE
NEW PROPOSED SHIFT CHANGE?**

**NO – 583
YES – 180**

**The Membership has voted
not to change the current 4x4
Shift Schedule**

Treatment of Employees

Treatment of workers by some management staff has not changed, there continues to be some ongoing complaints at the Union Hall regarding how some of the Management interacts with their workers. We have complaints that a few of the foreman are sarcastic, and disrespectful when dealing with some of their employees. If you find yourself being treated or talked to in a disrespectful manner, contact the Union Hall and we will immediately investigate and if necessary conduct a meeting with the appropriate personal to correct this problem.

For the record most of the Management staff treat their workforce in a dignified and respectful manner, however a select few must believe that their sarcastic disrespectful approach in the workplace maintains superiority and power.

Many workers will leave their employment early, and find another job, mainly because their boss is a disrespectful arrogant unprofessional. In these labour times Company's cannot afford to loose their skilled workers because of some arrogant disrespectful boss who believes he is superior because he has a title beside his name.

The Union will no longer tolerate your behavior. We all have a job to do. "You have a problem with a worker, then you had better treat that worker with dignity and respect, and communicate in a calm rational manner when resolving it, or we will discuss your attitude in the Managers office.



"Mr. Batson, can I speak to you as a human being?"

Courageous Leadership at its Finest

On February 26, 2012 around 3.15 am, I and another worker pulled up to 56 bay to install a left front tire on a haul truck. We were not two feet out of the truck when the foreman of the shop Bob, started yelling and swearing and pointing at us in an aggressive manner. I told him what was all going wrong with the job, however he was not trying to listen at all because he was too busy interrupting me saying "I'm holding the shop up" "you'll see what will happen next, you'll see us", as he was pointing his finger at me. This foreman didn't even introduce himself as the foreman or get my name or position.

I have been working here for almost 4 years now, and have never been treated in such a manner. We are supposed to be professionals here. If this is what this Company is putting up for a leader, who wants to run the mine where their employees should be in fear of their boss. I don't see how he can be a Courageous Leader, when he can't even talk to his workers in a professional manner.

More Continued abuse by the same Foreman

I am a H.D. apprentice in the maintenance shop and showed up at work for a scheduled overtime shift. The foreman issued his job orders to the crew and then asked if anyone had been missed. I raised my hand and to that he commented, "I don't know who let you come in". He dismissed the crew without giving me a job, so I waited for the guys to clear out and then approached him and asked what he would like me to do. He then started to get mad and told me that he had no need for me, and that there was no room for any apprentices on his shift, he didn't have time to watch over apprentices like me, and that I don't do enough work to be worth his time. He stated that he only wants journeyman mechanics as they get more jobs done without needing to be supervised. I tried to tell him that I also get lots of work done for him. He just got madder, raised his voice and went on to tell me that I was absolutely the most useless worker in the shop and that he had no time to babysit dumb employees.

He told me that he was tired of seeing me on his shift, bothering his crew, walking around, and that I was not to ask for anymore overtime on his shift. He said that I was wasting his time, and the time of his crew, and that I don't know anything about being a heavy duty mechanic and that I should quit, as I'm wasting everyone's time including my own. I just stood there in shock. I thought that I had been doing a good job. No one else has ever told me anything like this before.

He said that he would reluctantly give me a job in 19 bay so that he could see me from his office, and if I stepped away from my bay he would make sure that I was taken off site immediately, and asked me if I understood. I couldn't even answer him as I couldn't believe he was talking to me like this. He told me he didn't care that I was scheduled for overtime tomorrow that he didn't want me there and not to come back, then he went on to tell me not to come back to his shift period and again asked me if I understood him. I just shook my head. I didn't know what to say.

It was then that it was finally sinking in that there was no way I could stay. I walked across to the dry and caught the bus downtown. I then called the General Foreman's office, but got no answer. I left a message stating that I had left the property after coming up to do an overtime shift and that I was told I wasn't wanted there because the foreman Bob said I was useless, and he had no time to babysit dumb employees.

I know that I am low on any priority list as I'm only a 1st year apprentice and that I have a lot to learn about my job, (one of the reasons I try to do so much overtime with so many different journeyman is so that I can learn more). But this is beyond what anyone (no matter who they are, or what position they hold), should have to put up with). I also understand that sometimes people can have a bad day, but I have been a boss and trainer at other companies with many different people below me and above me, and I would never have dreamed of talking to them in this manner. Bob's statement to me about being, absolutely the most useless worker in the shop is like a kick in the head, and I don't want to come back to that kind of environment.



ZERO Tolerance

USW Local 7884 Nominations for Local Union Office

The Results are as Follows:

President – Don Takala – Elected by Acclamation
Vice President – Fred Riehl & Andrew Klapp – An Election will take place.
Recording Secretary – Greg Hill – Elected by Acclamation
Financial Secretary – John Bradshaw – Elected by Acclamation
Treasurer – Jim Coutts – Elected by Acclamation
Trustee – Satch Mudaliar & Steve Tuck – Elected by Acclamation
Guide – Graham Pointer – Elected by Acclamation
Inside Guard – Rob Halldorson – Elected by Acclamation
Outside Guard – Otto Kliment – Elected by Acclamation
Grievance Committee – John Bradshaw / Graham Pointer / Don Takala
/ Otto Kliment & Fred Riehl – Elected by Acclamation.

There will be an upcoming Election for the position of
Vice-President USW Local 7884

Candidates Are: **Fred Riehl & Andrew Klapp**

The Voting Polls will be open April 10th – 15th inclusive
7am – 9 pm – Each Day at the USW Hall
12 Water Street Elkford BC

**BE SURE THAT YOU STOP BY THE
UNION HALL AND VOTE FOR THE
CANDIDATE OF YOUR CHOICE**

Article submitted by: Fred Riehl – Candidate for Vice President

My name is Fred Riehl and I am once again seeking your support for the position of Vice President of USW Local 7884. The position of Vice President is one of the most important positions in any Local Union. Under the direction of the Local Union President as well as the Executive and Membership, work is delegated wherever and whenever necessary.

The person must be qualified to step into the Presidents shoes when required to do so. The person must be able to work in a team environment and have the respect for all the various committees, Union representatives and each and every local Union member. I personally know that being Vice President of the Local, the job does not end at the end of your shift. The job demands that you must be available seven days a week, 24 hours a day and even when you are on vacation.

I am a resident of Elkford and have been since 1981. I often joke that I took a wrong turn in Sparwood and that I would never do that again. I actually love Elkford, although the town is in much need of services, it is second to none in its beauty and friendly citizens.

In 1981, I started my employment as an apprentice welder and progressed to journeyman. I became involved with the local Union in 1988 as a shop steward and a safety representative. Around 1985 there was a serious downturn in the coal market and a drastic reduction in the workforce occurred. These were tough times for all and the Union's relationship with Fording River went to an all time low. The fight escalated and produced an eight month strike in 1992. I was on the bargaining committee at that time and even though it was a tough round of negotiations the whole bargaining committee was bolstered by the support of all the Union members.

In 1994, I became the Vice President of the Union and also took over the position as Grievance Chairman and Occupational Health and Safety Committee member. In 1996, I was a member of the Bargaining Committee and have served as an advisory member on all subsequent Bargaining Committee's up to present date. During the 1990's I had also served as co - council for the Union and its members at all arbitrations. In the 2000's up to present I have had the pleasure of being lead council for the Union and have had several decisions referenced in leading Canadian Labour Law journals.

As W.C.B. Chairperson since 1994 I am proud to say that we have successfully represented injured workers with their WCB disputes. I have personally lobbied the Government and met with Government officials to encourage changes in the WCB system for the betterment of injured workers.

My vision for the future is to continue to promote and assist in education of our many new Union representatives to ensure that our local Union will be stronger than ever. This process does not happen over night as it takes several years to build the leaders for the future. We must continue to give great focus to our Health and Safety Committees so that they will have the tools to demand a healthy worksite at whatever cost.

I believe that we must continue to lobby the Government of BC to finally get rid of the Ministry of Mines branch and that it be replaced with WCB. It is WCB who has the tools, the funds and the regulations, that will enforce Safety in the mining industry in BC.

I would also like to see a better Labour Relations atmosphere from the pit floor right to top Union/Management relations. Unfortunately this is a direction that Teck Coal must buy into. I will continue to fight for our rights as described in the Collective Agreement, Human Rights Code, Canadian Charter, Privacy Act and any other Canadian Statutes of Law.

The above is just a sampling of the several key areas I believe we all must focus on, and that we must through education and training of our members and representatives be in a position to responsibly address any issue that needs addressing.

I must be honest I have found this letter difficult to write. It is not only me that will make for a successful future but the real power lays with each and every member, every shop steward, and every safety representative and all Union committees. Together we are a strong and powerful force.

It is in sadness that I give notice to Teck Coal that I have several years of employment left with our mine. I respectfully request your continued support for my bid for the position of Vice President USW Local 7884. I thank all of you for your considerations and look forward to serving you in the future.

Together we are strong

In Solidarity
Fred Riehl



National Day of Mourning — April 28

Commemorating workers whose lives have been lost or injured in the workplace

The numbers are staggering. In 2010, 1014* workplace deaths were recorded in Canada - an increase from 939 the previous year. This represents more than 2.78 deaths every single day. In the eighteen year period from 1993 to 2010, 16,143 people lost their lives due to work-related causes (an average of 897 deaths per year).

The National Day of Mourning, held annually on April 28, was officially recognized by the federal government in 1991, eight years after the day of remembrance was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress. The Day of Mourning has since spread to about 80 countries around the world and has been adopted by the AFL-CIO and the International Confederation of Free Trade.

The Canadian flag on Parliament Hill will fly at half-mast. Workers will light candles, don ribbons and black armbands and observe moments of silence. Businesses are asked to participate by declaring April 28 a Day of Mourning and to strive to prevent workplace deaths, illnesses and injuries.

We hope that the annual observance of this day will strengthen the resolve to establish safe conditions in the workplace for all. It is as much a day to remember the dead as it is a call to protect the living.

***Double Fatality at Vale's Mine in Sudbury Could Have Been Avoided:
Steelworkers' Investigation Report Finds***

Province Should Consider Criminal Charges

Sudbury/Toronto - Based on the results of a damning investigative report into a double fatality at Stobie Mine in Sudbury, the United Steelworkers (USW) is calling on the Ontario Government to consider laying criminal charges against officials and management of Vale, the mine's owner, and against the company itself. The Union says the government must also immediately establish a Commission of Inquiry into Mine Safety.

USW Local 6500 in Sudbury today released the results of an eight-month investigation into the deaths Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram on June 8th, 2011. The two miners died after a torrent of wet mud and ore flooded the tunnel where they were working.

The USW investigation found that Vale management had ignored on-going problems with flooding in the mine. The 207-page report shows the torrent of mud and ore was created by excess water in levels above where Chenier and Fram were killed. The water on those levels was four and five feet deep.

The International President of the Steelworkers, Leo W. Gerard says "Vale showed a reckless disregard for the safety of its employees at the Stobie mine, something that could warrant criminal charges. Following an explosion at the Westray Mine, the Canadian Criminal Code was amended making it a criminal offence to ignore workers' health and safety."

Jordan Fram's sister supports the union's call for a Commission of Inquiry into Mine Safety. "Jordan's death was a huge loss for our family, and for his large circle of friends," says Briana Fram. "My family and I want the Commission of Inquiry to make sure this doesn't happen again to any miner."

USW Local 6500 began its investigation into the fatalities after Vale management broke from past practice and put limits and restrictions on a joint investigation into the deaths.

The USW report found a number of other safety problems that management had ignored at the Stobie Mine.

- Workers described repeated hang-ups, or obstructions, in the ore-pass, or passage, that carried material down to the level where Chenier and Fram were working. Clearing these hang ups is one of the most dangerous jobs in underground mining. The USW believes Chenier and Fram were trying to do exactly that when wet ore burst out and buried them.

- Jason Chenier erected double guardrails, or barriers, to prevent the dumping of any more wet ore into the problem-plagued ore-pass. The company has provided no explanation for the removal of the guardrails.

"We believe Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram would be alive today if Vale management had followed Chenier's warnings," says USW Local 6500 President Rick Bertrand. Bertrand and Wayne Fraser, the Director of USW District 6 (Ontario and Atlantic Canada) say the investigation uncovered so many problems with health and safety at the Stobie mine that it requires a full Public Inquiry into safety at Stobie, and into mining safety throughout the province.

"It's been 30 years since the last significant health and safety inquiry," says Fraser, "and the mining industry has gone through some very significant changes since then." Rick Bertrand noted that since a Public Inquiry may not complete its work for several years, action is required now to safeguard miners' lives.

"Steelworkers across Ontario demand that the Ontario Minister of Labour, the Minister responsible for worker health and safety in Ontario, must also immediately appoint a Committee under current health and safety legislation, to review whether the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act, and that Act's enforcement, are actually safeguarding workers in underground mines and surface mining plants in Ontario."

The USW report made a total of 165 recommendations to improve safety at Stobie and other Vale mines in Sudbury as well as mines across Ontario. The USW recommendations range from changes to health and safety rules, improvements in drainage practices and blasting procedures, to a ban on the dumping of wet ore.



Your Pension – Is It At Risk?

NO - One of the things that separates us from other big industry operations in Canada is we have a non-contributory Defined Benefit Pension Plan. Simply put, the employer pays 100% of the premium and assumes all the risk.

For most in Canada it is a warm handshake and if you're lucky a gold watch when you reach retirement. In today's workplace it is rare that Unions are able to negotiate Defined Benefit Pension Plans. Only those such as Politicians and CEO's can expect to be so lucky. That's only because they get to make up the rules. Defined Benefit Pension Plans are like annuities in that they pay a set defined monthly payment retirees can count on no matter how long they live, and after their death their spouse will receive $66 \frac{2}{3}$ of that pension amount for the rest of their lives.

With our pension the amount is tied into dollars on the base per/month per/year of service. We also have a \$25 bridge that is included in the calculation if you choose to retire early, and ceases at the age of 65 when you collect your Old Age Security. Also included is indexing, that will commence 3 years after retirement or at age 65, with Health Care and Extended Health Benefits, (\$20,000.00 each) and a Card.

Plans such as ours, the gurus (even right wing gurus) tell us are great for workers but a major burden to employers. Employers are responsible for honouring the "Pension Promise" whether or not the market co-operates. Many companies offer no pensions at all but encourage workers to maximize their RRSP's or buy into a defined contribution Pension Plan. If you have a choice between a defined contribution and a defined benefit pension, without a doubt, the latter is the better buy. Like RRSP's defined contribution plans require employees to make their own investment decisions. Unfortunately, study after study has proven the average worker is ill equipped to make good investment decisions.

With markets the way they are today, I would take it a step further, it is a role of the dice, regardless of where you are getting your investment advice. Money purchase plans are tied directly to the fortunes of the stock market. Defined Benefit Pension Plans put the risk on the shoulders of the company sponsoring the plan. Even if you consider yourself a knowledgeable investor with a risk tolerance hardy enough to stay in it for the long term, there are no guarantees. Talk to those who during the most recent stock market crash invested aggressively. Most lost 50% plus on that investment! Our Defined Benefit Pension Plan is as close as your going to get to guaranteeing yourself a fixed income when you retire.

DO You Need Your Pension Calculated?

Are you looking at retiring and need an estimate of your Pension entitlements? Including CPP at age 65 or early CPP at age 60? And when you loose your Pension Bridge at age 65 and start collecting your OAS entitlements.

Call Don at the Union Hall or e-mail me at usw7884@telus.net and I will set up a time to meet with you so that you are able to clearly understand all of your Retirement Benefits.

We also have information sheets and application forms at the Union hall for applying for your CPP and OAS. These forms will walk you through the steps of applying for these benefits. You should apply for your CPP six months in advance of when you want your payments to start. You should also apply for your Old Age Pension 6 months in advance of your 65th birthday so that your government benefits arrive with minimal delay. You can apply for early CPP on line, and collect a reduced Pension anytime after the age of 60 and continue working full time.

**Visit Your Local Union Website @
USW7884.com**

Membership Meetings
Every third Wednesday of the month at 5pm
#12 Water Street Elkford BC

You Want to Rent the Union Hall?
\$150.00 for Members
\$300.00 for Non-Members