
CUPE BETWEEN THE LINES

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38
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My Role (Life) as a Shop Steward

When I first started with The City of Calgary, I didn't know much about Unions. I had mixed feelings with thoughts that working in a Unionized environment could be both positive and possibly a negative. One day, a co-worker came to me and asked if I would consider taking on the role of Shop Steward in our Business Unit as she was stepping down. I agreed to think about it and decided to contact the Union office to discuss the role and responsibilities. The Union officers advised me that the role of the Shop Steward was to enforce the Collective Agreement in the workplace. I was advised that I should contact the office with any concerns or to receive answers to questions that I could not answer. I was reassured that my role as a Shop Steward was to be the first contact for members in my workplace. Although I was still hesitant, I decided to let my name stand as a nominee for the position. A Union representative held a workplace election and I was elected by my peers as their new Shop Steward.

Initially I found the responsibility a bit overwhelming and stressful as I was approached by my co-workers with a lot of questions and concerns. Initially, there were moments when it got stressful because you're dealing with different people and a perception that some managers don't exactly approve of the Union and don't approve of employees approaching the Union. As I got more comfortable with the role and because of the assistance from the Union officers, I became more confident and less apprehensive when approached by the members. I found that I was able to ask questions and seek the information required to answer my co-workers questions. Since assuming the role, I have met a lot of interesting people involved with Local 38 in similar roles. I have also taken it upon myself to get more involved and started to attend steward training

sessions and the monthly regular membership meetings. I have discovered just how much the Union and its full time officers support the membership and work on their behalf.

The most rewarding part of being a Shop Steward is when you can assist a member and then have those same members thank you and praise you for your hard work as they walk away with a smile on their face. You then realize that you've changed someone's day, perhaps even their work life.

If you think becoming a Shop Steward isn't for you, think again. When you discover how good it feels to assist the members it is very rewarding. I have gained more confidence in dealing with people I've never met and it has helped me "come out of my shell". I am glad I decided to take on the role. I would recommend the position as a way of becoming more informed about my Union and the Collective Agreement. What do you have to lose? You'll feel rewarded in the end, I know I do.

Thought for the Month

We are not here to see through each other, but to see each other through.

REGULAR MEETING**Tuesday, MARCH 25, 2008****7:00 p.m.****Union Office****1439—9th Avenue South East****BUSINESS: Regular****ELECTIONS:**

- 1) Two (2) delegates to Prairie School for Union Women, Waskesiu Lake—June 15-19/08.**
- 2) Six (6) delegates to AFL Membership Forum, Edmonton—Apr. 25-26/08.**

ADVANCE NOTICE**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****APRIL 22, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.****The following positions will be up for election:**

- 1) President—2 year (full time position)**
- 2) Treasurer—2 year position**
- 3) Chief Steward—2 year position**
- 4) Warden—2 year position**
- 5) Five (5) Executive Members at Large**
- 6) Trustee—3 year term**
- 7) Trustee—2 year term**