



**TEAMSTERS
CANADA**

Rail Conference
Maintenance of Way Employees Division

Pacific Region

Newsletter

Summer 2007

Pacific Region

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Dear Brothers and
Sisters,

I want to welcome all of you with this newsletter. It has been a trying period of time for all of us and I have not been able to get anything out for a while now. Thanks for being patient out there.

Well, here we are after our strike against the Company. I know that it was a hard time for all of us and I wanted to start out by saying how proud I am of each and every one of you who stood up against the Company to make a difference. Together we fought a tough fight and we won a contract that

we would not have gotten, had we not fought so hard to get it.

Together we stuck it out and even after the Company's demoralizing attempts with lying and false information as well as pitting some of our former Brothers against us as Supervisors; we were still able to come out of this strike ahead of the game. Let us never forget the way that we were treated by such an arrogant Company and its leaders who chose to ride a wave of lies and deceit instead of negotiating a decent contract for all of us. It was clear, right from the start that the Company did not want to negotiate a settlement with this Union and wanted to push us all the way to Legislation, but we did not allow that to happen. We stood our ground and did it right and when the Company ran out of options, they had no choice but to return to the table to bargain.

I want to personally thank all of the Strike Captains who gave of their time endlessly during the strike. Without all of them, it would almost be impossible to make this happen and they fought for all of you daily with leadership, pride and Brotherhood that held us all together throughout this fight. Thank you so much for

your devotion, time and efforts. You are deserving of much more than I can give, but please accept my sincere thanks for everything that you all did during the strike for all of the members out there who walked those lines.

I want to also thank each and every one of you who stood up to fight when it was needed. Nobody likes to go on strike and you can never regain what you may lose financially. Perhaps over time you can recoup what was lost but the fact of the matter is that this was over more than money and everyone who walked the lines should know this.

This was a strike of principle not money as the Company would have you believe. All you ever saw in the press from the Company was that we wanted 13% over 3 years and the Company would only give 10%. It was much more than that and we all know that. The Company did not ever bring up the work issues that they wanted to take away from all of you. They did not speak of the unfairness of wage disparity between the M/W Dept. and the

other unionized groups in CP Rail. There was a reason for not speaking about that and the reason is that the Company wanted to make this a fight about money and that is not all that we fought for and we all know that.

The Company was out to show everyone that they would not allow a leader like Brother Brehl to fight for what we wanted. They maintained that it was a fight with "this leader" right up to the end. The fact is we elected this leader to work for us and to fight the fight for us. He didn't just arrive one day and say, I am the boss. We elected him. We chose Brother Brehl by a very high electorate ballot we overwhelmingly elected him to lead us. Not the Company, us!!

I am so proud of Brother Brehl that he took up this fight for us and that he fought so hard along with the negotiating team and the rest of the Executive Board, to make the tough decisions that had to be made. Brother Brehl knew that there was much more to get for all of us than just money and the Company did not want you or anyone else to see that. All you have to do is look at the March offer and what we ended up getting to know that what the Company was trying to do was break or cripple our Union by doing this to us.

The Company came out and said that this strike could have been avoided. Why wasn't it avoided then? Where was everything that we ended up with in the March offer? It simply was not there and that is why we had to fight. It is clear to me that the Company knew that this was a tough Union, not like the last one that had so much concessionary bargaining. We did not take the "pattern" even though it looks like we did by the wage offer that was finally agreed to in order for the Com-

pany to save face.

We ended up with much more. We got an extra 1% each year that, in my mind, breaks the "pattern" and we kept our work issues that were fought for years ago that the Company wanted to take from you. We got increases in all expenses and benefits including pension with no additional cost. We did give up the co-pay, but that can be fixed down the road. That is the only thing that we gave up in this deal.

This fight was about breaking us and our will. This fight was about putting our elected leader and his committee down and trying to make them look like they were not doing what we sent them to do for us. This fight was about Company greed and their own greedy leader, Mr. Fred Green, who until the end, still maintained that the fight was about our leader and money. We know better and we will never forget the treatment that this Company has shown all of us.

Do not ever forget how Fred said that we were not needed and that

this Company could run without us. Do not ever forget how loyal we all were before this strike and how you feel now. Do not forget when it is time to vote for President and CEO when the time comes to exercise your rights as share holders. Do not forget the cruelty and punishment that was doled out by the Company and their private Police Force. Do not forget how they made you all suffer when they could have been good corporate citizens and negotiated a deal that would not have put us in a strike position. Do not forget.

I know that there will be many questions that need to be answered and this will take time. Please be patient and all questions will be answered. I know that everyone cannot have what we all wanted but this is a decent contract and it will get us through to the next one. Please check the website regularly for updates and answers to questions and do a little bit of reading so that you better understand this new contract.

In closing let me say once again, that I am so proud of all of you who walked the lines of freedom with their Brothers and Sisters during this strike. We all helped in our own way and it really showed when we needed it. This is solidarity and I hope that all of you had a proud moment when you were on the line with your Brothers and Sisters so that you will know what it means to be a proud Union Member.

The Union is only as strong as its members and I must say that what all of you have shown me is that we are a force to be reckoned with as we did not lie down and take the scraps that they tried to give us. We fought and we won a contract that we should all be proud of and generations that will come behind us will also be proud

of. Hold your heads high because you all deserve that pat on the back. Remember that we did this alone, with no outside help to shut things down. We were successful in showing the Company that we could hurt them as much as they hurt us and we did this ourselves.

There will be Local Lodge meetings coming up soon. Please contact your Local Chairpersons to find out when your meeting will be held and attend those meetings to be better informed. Remember that the Ballots will be coming out shortly and that you can read the full agreements online at our website. If you can, print out a copy so that everyone who doesn't have access can read it as well. Thank you all again for standing up in this fight.

There are too many people to thank in this letter and I don't want to miss anyone. You all know who worked hard at organizing and keeping things together on the lines. Take the time to thank them as they really deserve it as do you all. Thank you again from the bottom of my

heart and remember, United We Stand, Divided We Fall and we stood as tall as any tree on this earth. Well done.

We are all now starting to return to work. Remember to work safely and diligently. Do your job properly and by the book. Do not take shortcuts and do everything safely. Come home to your loved ones so that they may also enjoy the fruits of your labour with you.

Stay safe, strong, and united...

Fraternally I remain,

H.L. Helfenbein
Director
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