



CUPE LOCAL 4500 NEWSLETTER:

ON THE FRONT LINE

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT—ROB WOODS

On behalf of the CUPE Local 4500 Executive, best wishes for a wonderful Holiday Season and a New Year filled with Peace and Happiness.

Reflecting on 2011 and Looking Ahead to 2012:

As 2011 winds down it's a great time to reflect on the year and to take a glimpse into the coming New Year. This year was yet another hugely eventful year, some good, some not and some downright terrible. As we consider new technology changes that have (and continue) to impact our jobs, new departments springing up, expansion everywhere with the exception of TCOMM and Transit Supervisor Departments and the impacts we are seeing in our jobs, it's generally been another busy and challenging year for CUPE.

We have had to defend our work, our members, our safety and sanity at a frequency and level that has hugely surpassed any previous years. I believe that because of this, we continue to grow as a local with more members coming forward and expressing interest in getting involved in Union activities. We continue to provide Union Educational opportunities, improve our communications to the members through newsletters, web forums and have moved from bi-monthly Union Executive meetings to monthly meetings and we commit to carry this trend into 2012. All this activity is helping us grow as a local which is fantastic.

With all the increased activities and our workloads increasing as a result, members are reminded to try and go through the various Property Representatives first before advancing an issue or concern to the Union Executive.

This practice allows the proper levels to work more efficiently, allow the Property Representatives the opportunity to try and resolve the issue/concern and thereby gaining valuable experience as they develop. If the Property Representatives are unable to resolve an issue/concern, it will then be advanced to the Union Executive. Of course serious, urgent and sensitive issues/concerns can always be brought to the Executive anytime as always.



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED.....

So some of the challenges we've faced this year? Well for the first time in many years, we've had to re-establish semi regular communications with the Senior Executive Management staff (above Department Managers) at CMBC and Translink because of the numerous violations of the Collective Agreement, negligence in what we feel is fair business practices, breaches of safety compliances and the list goes on. This has been very unfortunate and very damaging to the working relationships between CMBC and CUPE but having said that, our voices have been heard and we will remain persistent and diligent in the hopes things can turn around for next year in the area's/departments that have caused us great concern.

As our current Collective Bargaining Agreement will expire at the end of this year, work has been going on in the background as we prepare for bargaining. We ask all members to stay strong, healthy and focused. We have a lot of work ahead of us but we are making grounds in some areas. All Union Representatives have been very busy behind the scenes in trying to build a better work place that is sometimes faced with a lot of resistance from the employer. I'd like to thank all who have contributed time and effort throughout the year with the best interests of the membership in general.

In Solidarity,
Rob Woods
President, CUPE Local 4500



VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT— NEIL PEPPER

The end of the year is upon us, and we can look back to see how the year went. We can also look at what is heading our way in the future.

The past year has been challenging to say the least, and we have been busy. Many issues at all locations have come up. From Trolley Overhead to Engineering, to Maintenance, to Bus Services, no department has been spared from controversy of some sort. I would like to say we have been successful at most issues, but for some only time will tell.

In Maintenance, we have seen some retirements and some expansion, as managers seem to have recognized the importance of the work of CUPE members. We have more supervisors at OTC, and more reliefs, although we are definitely not at the levels of relief coverage we would want. More work will be needed on this, but I have to say that all of us have demonstrated that our work is valuable in the organization, and this is the chief reason we are seeing this growth. Despite the claims of other unions, we can do a lot more than others, and more effectively run the shops.

We have just undergone a mini- sign up for shift supervisors, and done our annual sign up for service supervisors. Both went quite smoothly, and thanks to Dan Staschuk for helping out.

Bargaining is expected to begin shortly, and we are working to ensure the concerns brought up in the bargaining survey are addressed. As you are aware, we cannot get into the specifics of our proposals, but I don't think there are a whole lot of surprises there. The zero mandate, the Translink audit, the world economy and the political situation in the Province all come into play. Our National Representative David Fleming has brought a lot of resources into the process, and we feel well equipped. I can tell you we will bargain hard, and zero is a number we will work hard to eliminate, except in terms of givebacks.

With bargaining underway, we will be looking for others to step in to help out, as our resources will be stretched. We have some pretty talented individuals in our midst, and we are calling on some of our activists and leaders. **Paul Richards** has been attending Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness workshops, **Randy Gilbert** has been helping out with our Emergency and Disaster planning, **Lori McDonald** is taking on Workplace Harassment Investigations, **Dan Staschuk** is doing whatever he does, and we have many others helping, like **Darren Collins** in Bus Services, who did a really good job negotiating an innovative set of AV sheets for the group. **Geordie Robinson** will be working on the Job Evaluation Program, and will be undergoing training for this important role. More help will be needed, and we need to train the leaders of tomorrow. Many hands make light work, and we appreciate all of those who are “voluntold”.

The issue of seniority for new hires is being discussed, and we should have a resolve, which will be decided by the Executive Board, and applied from this point on.

It will be busy next year, and it will be challenging to do the work, but we are certainly capable of taking it on. We have challenges, and lots of possibilities. I want to take this time to thank the membership for your good work, which makes it so much easier to justify having more of us. I want to thank everyone for keeping us informed, and providing feedback,



VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED.....

Another thing coming up - the Labour Community Christmas Dinner, at the Maritime Labour Centre, and the Whalley Legion will be happening Christmas Eve. Financial donations and volunteer help are appreciated. Hundreds of families are brought to these sites by volunteer drivers, a nutritious meal is provided, and care packages of food are given, along with gifts. In a time of economic restraint, it is good to see this dinner grow every year. Between this, the United Way, and through individual acts of charity, our members are generous.

On behalf of your Union Executive, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, a Happy Chanukah, or just a great season.



DONATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS

Another year has come and gone—well almost! It is December 18, 2011 as this is being typed. There are always many people in need at the time of year. CUPE 4500 is proud to have donated \$ 200.00 to The Maritime Labour Christmas Dinner and \$ 200.00 to The Whalley Legion Christmas Dinner this year. Brother Dan Staschuk has been involved in this cause for many years—thank you for your efforts!

During this time of year whatever you may believe in—think of those in need and donate money and or time to make someone's life a little brighter even if it is only for a day!



EARTHQUAKE PLANNING WORKSHOP – PAUL RICHARDS

I was fortunate enough to be able to view the inner workings of Translink as it takes steps to do something that is very difficult. That is planning for an earthquake event that has no time frame, no warning and with a scenario that has thousands of different permutations.

The meeting took place in Coquitlam Nov. 16, 2011. It was with mild curiosity that I wondered how this was going to be done. First off, in the lower mainland we know there will be an earthquake, how, when and where exactly remains unknown, but it will come.

So with this in mind Translink has started preliminary investigations into its level of preparedness throughout its affiliate companies at all levels. Peter Borgmann was the point person on this assignment and gave us a overview of the different scenarios as projected by NR Canada experts of which 3 geographical faults were of direct concern to inhabitants of the lower mainland.

1. We had representatives from the Provincial and Municipal government present as well as some resident experts in the natural disaster fields.

We were split into 4 work groups to represent different areas of interest throughout the organization, These were:

External stakeholders (Federal, Regional, Municipal & First Nations) group – responsibilities for each to assist in major disaster
 Infrastructure Group – to keep Translink rolling in an emergency
 Procedures Group – to provide education, preparation and resumption of service policies for Translink
 Staff Group – to provide information/support to employees and their families in a major disaster.

2. It was quite interesting in groups to see all the different levels bringing out points that other departments would have completely overlooked. CMBC has a “ what to do in the first 10 Mins” earthquake leaflet. The situation after the first 10 mins. is what is of interest to all of us as; that is the part that has not been developed to any great degree of certainty.

However what we were looking at were two recent earthquakes in Japan and in New Zealand.

So lots of ideas were thrown about during the day and towards the end of the afternoon we had to summarize in each of our groups what was important to move forwards on and what to discard. The question in my mind in these days of fiscal restraint, who was going to pony up for some of the points raised?

Nevertheless some points to ponder:

What happens if you are at work after an earthquake, do you stay after first checking on family until relieved ? How long could you be expected to work for in this situation?

How would we cover and maintain service if staff go home to families or staff cannot make it into work for up to 3 days ?

How could different properties assist in sharing resources, could you report to the nearest depot for work? Would our CUPE contract override a provincial emergency or visa versa?

Where would you go if you could not get home for a few days? How prepared are you and your family for an earthquake?

The people that I met on that day posed those and many more questions and offered up different proposals that Translink needs to get going on to provide some reasonable plans to lay as groundwork for us all. It is only the beginning but we have been assured that there will be reviews of the workshop and bulletins being put out for training and educational purposes.



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - GORD DIENO - 2003

I've experienced Christmases over the years. My family has their own unique traditions as well as many that we share with countless families around the country.

And I have read about some very different traditions practiced in Europe and the rest of the globe.

None of those traditions compare to the arcane, backward customs I stumbled onto just last year.

On December 24, I was on my way to a gathering at Uncle Dave's and Aunt Ruth's in Medicine Hat, Alberta. I wasn't looking forward to it but that's another story in itself. I was driving through a heavy snowstorm in the Kootenay area when my SUV coughed, sputtered and inexplicably died.

I turned on my "INSTAR" communications system and waited for the operator to respond. Instead I got a message on the tiny screen: "Server Not Available." It struck me what a thin façade there is between my smug yuppie sense of civilization and anarchy.

It was very cold out, probably – 15 Celsius, the kind of evening you wouldn't dare to put your tongue to metal, even when you were a kid. It wasn't more than an hour before the cold began to bring panic. This could be serious; visions of newspapers' headlines crept into my mind. "CITY SLICKER FREEZES TO DEATH IN FANCY SUV" I was more than grateful when I realized there were yellow flashing lights behind me.

A moment later a big red-faced man in full winter garb appeared at the door and motioned for me to lower the window. He said, "Pardon me, little feller, can I help you with something?", he said in a deep easy voice. I explained what had happened and he offered to look under the hood for me to see if he could locate the problem.

The man tinkered under there a while and when I stepped outside he got in and tried to start the engine. No way. One of the modules was blown the man announced. He introduced himself as Ed Grisley and I told him my name, Tom Burdy.

Ed was the local tow-truck driver so it was only natural for him to ask if I wanted it towed to a garage. He said it would have to go to a shop to be repaired. I agreed. That's when I discovered the "shop" was his backyard. "Why does this sort of thing happen to me?", I thought. So he hitched us up and we headed for his place.



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - CONTINUED.....

It was getting close to 10:30 by this time and I politely inquired where the motel was at. Ed had a good laugh at that question and told me it was about 45 miles back where I came from and asked if I would like a cab. Money was tight, but I had to have a place to stay and so I gulped and said yes, where is the cab? He says, "You're sittin in it!"

I could tell from the wide grin and the subdued heaving in his chest he's having fun. This hillbilly, Ed, is playin with me. He's got me by the short and curlies and he's playin me. My mind wanders again and the headline appears above my head like a caption in a bad comic book. "FROZEN BODY FOUND ½ MILE FROM TOWN" –*Feet on body "like mincemeat" from 45 mile walk in Florsheim loafers.*

About this time Ed started to feel sorry for his city slicker victim I guess because he lowered his voice and turned towards me. "Don't sweat it" he says, you're welcome to stay with me and my family until we get your vee-hicle fixed up. Heck, it's Christmas Eve, it's time for the Grisley's to do something for the down and outers. It'll be a nice warm Christmas story for us down the road.

Half an hour later we pulled into Ed's driveway. It was like a field of broken dreams. Old cars, trucks and a couple of motorhomes and trailers in various states of disrepair decorated his five acres. The sight of it made me wonder about Ed's mechanical ability. I always thought whoever worked on my SUV would be a highly skilled technician in a neatly pressed set of coveralls with a suitable nametag. This was obviously not Mr Goodwrench's home.

The wreckage was covered in snow now, with gusts of wind revealing some of the detail. A lot of the cars were old Studebakers; either Ed liked them or they just broke down a lot and he ended up with them.

Two German Shepards strolled out to the truck as we approached the tar-papered house. We got out of the truck and the dogs began to bark when they saw me. They say the bark doesn't mean much if their tails were wagging, which they were, but I'm not so sure. Ed told them I was ok. The biggest one, Gilligan, jumped up with his paws on my chest. He stared into my face and began to lick me. Ed said, "Let 'im do it, Tom, he gets ornery if you don't let 'im." Blackie dropped a slimy stick at my feet and pushed his nose at my hand repeatedly.

After a few minutes of me ignoring Blackie, Ed said, "Let's go inside, it's gittin cold out here. Gilligan and Blackie never came in the house apparently. Their duties were outside. We entered the mud room and shook our things off. The interior door opened and a heavy set woman greeted us.



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - CONTINUED.....

Ed introduced me to his bride of 15 years. Stella was about 5' 5", had dark red hair, freckles and muscular arms coming from her denim coveralls and t-shirt. She wore a welcoming smile and was using it on me now. I put out my hand and she brushed it aside and gave me a bearhug. "I love it when Eddie brings folks home. "Will you stay for Christmas?"

I hadn't thought of that, but it looked like that was my only alternative and not a very appealing one at that. I felt a wave of guilt at not being more grateful for the way things were turning out. After all, if it hadn't been for Ed I would still be in my lifeless vehicle, slowly freezing to death. They say when that happens, just before the end comes to you, you begin to feel warm and comfy; and that most freezing victims are found with smiles on their faces. Ignorance is bliss in that case. "I'd love to, Stella, thanks for asking!" I replied.

We went into the spacious kitchen and Stella brought some soup to Ed and I; it was delicious. I said, "What type of soup is this? "Varmit!" she said quickly. I gulped and sputtered just a bit as my imagination ran wild again briefly. I managed to regain my composure and tried not to look at what I was eating, fearing recognition of little body parts. I couldn't upset Ed and Stella; I didn't want to end up outside making that futile trudge into town.

I began to take notice of the house and its contents. It was not adorned with the usual comforts I was familiar with but it was certainly clean and Ed and Stella were clearly proud of their home. It was obvious there were children living here too from the few toys and sports items. "Tell me about your children," I said to Stella.

"Tom, that's sure nice of you to ask. Marilyn is our little girl; she's 6 now and a real feisty one. Ed Jr., he's the spittin image of his Daddy, he's 11 next month. You'll meet 'em both in the morning. Christmas morning is very special in our family, especially with the turkey wrassle.

I ignored the last remark; I didn't need any more strange thoughts disturbing me. I said, "I'm looking forward to meeting the kids." They could see I was as tired as they were. "Your room is just behind the curtain over there in the corner of the kitchen. The bathroom is just down the hall." Ed told me I could make a phone call in the morning after the wrassle to my folks in Alberta. Another remark to ignore. Maybe if I crawl into bed, I'll wake up and find out this was all a weird dream.

I woke up near 5:30. There was a hushed commotion in the kitchen. Ed's was one of the voices, but I detected at least 2 other men and perhaps 2 or 3 children. They seemed excited. They were headed out into the yard and I could hear motors running out there. As they left I heard Ed say, "Don't worry, in a couple of hours, Tom will be hangin by his feet in the corral just like every year."



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - CONTINUED.....

Hearing that was like the time I discovered that the water I just drank was contaminated with e-coli. It didn't sound good. But it's Christmas morning! How could they be planning some ritual death on Christmas Day? More importantly, how could I escape? Just then the door from the mud room opened again and I heard footsteps coming toward me. I broke out in a cold sweat. There wasn't even a window to crawl out of, just the cot I slept in, a small night table and the curtain.

The curtains drew back and Ed stood there, an imposing figure silhouetted by the dim kitchen lights. "Tom, you awake?" he said. I pretended not to be but he was shaking me now. "Uh, yeah, Ed, what's up?" I figured playing along with them was my only chance to surprise them with an escape. I'd need a car; there was no point in sneaking off, they could easily track me down, bring me back, and hang me up as planned.

Ed seemed to be in a good mood, perhaps he was just looking forward to his plan coming together. He was smiling at me, sizing me up. He said, "You're the last one up Tom. It's time to start the wrastle, everyone is here." He handed me a sausage in a bun. "Stella made this for you, Tom. C'mon out to the corral, you can eat on the way."

When we got to the bottom of the stairs and to the courtyard, the aroma of the sausage got to me and I **gobbled** it up. When I had finished, Ed said, "I got a big surprise for you Tom. Now close your eyes." There was no way, in my state of fear, that I could keep my eyes shut. Ed figured that out right away, so he took off his scarf and blindfolded me. "C'mon", he said, "nuttin to worry about."

Ed guided me a few hundred paces away from the house. I could smell the barn and murmurs of people; even some subdued laughing. Had these backward country folk no shame? No sense of responsibility to the standards of western civility? Why had they developed into savages?

Just then the blindfold gave way to a blinding mercury vapor lamp Ed had installed on his barn. I began to focus on my surroundings. There were perhaps 10 children, more than 25 men and women. The men were all standing and the women sat warming themselves next to a fire blazing in a stone pit. The kids were darting back and forth playing a form of tag. Four young boys, about 10 or 12 years old, stood nervously off to one side, stomping their feet in the cold.

About midway between the barn and the fire there was a corral about 25ft across. It was about shoulder height and made of wooden rails. Chicken wire was fastened to the lower 3 feet of it. And there, in the middle of the corral, were two 6 by 6 posts about 12 feet high. At the top they were connected by another post. In the center of the cross-member a set of glistening chains hung down on a pulley to about 4ft above ground. At the end of the lengths of chain there were sharp V shaped metal pieces and clasps.



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - CONTINUED.....

This is what I feared most. And then the chanting started slowly. Six am had arrived. “We want Tom!, We want Tom!” I was so terrified at this point I couldn’t come up with an appropriate headline. Not good for a journalist. I had lost my objectivity, my reason. Who could blame me, I was about to be sacrificed to some little known backwoods god. “We want Tom, We want Tom ...”

Ed approached me and explained, “We’re gonna start the wrassle in a few minutes, Tom. Seeing as you’re the guest of honour, I guess I should let you know how the wrassle works.” I’m thinking, why don’t they just shoot me, why do they have to go through this blood curdling ritual killing?

Before Tom could go on, a pick up truck with a large canopy backed up to the corral. Two men with a Grisley family resemblance got out and headed for the back of the truck. They exhaled clouds of steam like the rest of us, but I think I was feeling the cold. I wanted to head to the fire with the women but Ed seemed to be guarding me.

The chanting began again; “We want Tom, we want Tom....” But no one was even looking at me; all eyes were on the truck. The men opened the gate to the corral and then the canopy. One of them climbed inside. The chanting got louder, “We want Tom, we want Tom... Just then, I saw what it was all about. A large regal bird; a turkey. No, wait, there are 3 loudly protesting turkeys and they were forced into the corral. So, I thought with relief, I wasn’t the focus of a ritual killing; the turkeys were. Isn’t that reassuring!

Just then Ed began to finish his explanation of the proceedings. “Tom, there’s three birds in the corral. They have different coloured bandanas around their necks; red, yellow and blue. See those young fellas over yonder? One of them is Ed Jr. He raised the yellow bird. They must be 25 lbs to be in the wrassle. The trick is to raise the smartest bird there is and Eddie has been teachin this one to avoid being touched at all. If you do touch them, they’ll fight you and they can be mean; they go for the eyes. The other boys, Ned and Brad, are my nephews and they raised their own birds. My brother tried to teach them the same things.”

“The wrassle happens when all three boys and birds are in the corral. Each boy tries to catch the other’s bird and be the first to hang it upside down by it’s feet. Once the feet are cinched into the clasp, the judge will pull up the chain. But it’s not over yet ‘cause the bird is really struggling now and needs to be killed quickly. The boy has 20 seconds to wring its neck. If he fails, the boys’ daddy will finish him off. If that happens, the boy is disqualified. The wrassle starts again with the other boys. One year, we had no winner but we had 3 birds for cookin. Most years we send one or two birds back with their owner. The girls get involved too, once the Tom has been wrassled and had its neck wrung, you’ll see later.”



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - CONTINUED.....

It was still very cold but I wasn't shivering so badly now, I was so relieved not to be the object of their murderous ways. I mean, I know the turkey we eat every year is a dead bird. I just never had to face the death of a turkey before.

A bell rang and suddenly the boys and the turkeys were together. There were about 40 people gathered around the corral. The boys had already worked out their strategies. Brad and Ned seemed to be working on cornering Ed Jr's "yellow" bird and Ed Jr was chasing Ned's "blue". All three boys were talking "turkey" talk trying to confuse them.

Brad and Ned suffered a minor injury when they both lunged for "yellow" and banged heads instead. Ed Jr suddenly stood quite still, facing "blue". He then crouched, began with soft turkey talk and extended his closed hand as if offering food. Eddie knew that Ned had foolishly fed his bird this way. "Blue" went for it. In moments, the bird was squawking furiously, hanging by his feet in Ed Jr's hands. The boy struggled to get "blue" over to the chains. His eyes were popping with exertion but he was determined to win. The wrastle is the defining moment for a boy in this neck of the woods.

Blue's feet were cut and bleeding when Ed Jr finished securing him to the chains and the magnificent bird was hoisted by the pulley to the 6 feet level. Blue's neck was directly in front of Ed Jr now and blue was still fighting, trying to peck at his face. Ed Jr was tired; holding him and hanging him was hard on a boy of ten. He mustered all his strength and positioned his hands on the neck just like his daddy had told him. The crowd was dragging him on, "wring Blue, wring Blue" It was like a scene from Ben Hur. Ed Jr knew his stuff and Blue soon gasped his last breath. Fluid drained from Blue's mouth and his eyes had that icy stare. The crowd cheered long and hard. Ed went into the corral and gave his son a man's handshake and then proudly hoisted him to his shoulders. Ed Jr was grinning from ear to ear.

Stella entered the corral with a jar marked off in ounces. Names were next to the ounces. Ed's brother Daryl walked over to Blue's lifeless body. He drew his buck knife from its leather sheaf. Stella held the jar and Daryl swiftly cut Blue's throat. The blood began to flow and all the little girls gathered around. Little Marilyn shrieked with delight and her cousins began to cheer for the blood. Ed explained that the girls had drawn names from a hat to secure a position on the jar. The closest one without going over won the right to bake up this years blood pudding with Grandma Grisley. There was a full 14 ounces of blood in blue; that made Kelly the winner. She was so proud to have this year's honor; Grandma was a revered figure in the family.



A GRISLEY FAMILY CHRISTMAS - continued.....

Ed rang the bell to get everyone's attention. "The Christmas Tree is all lit up, there are presents for the kids, coffee and a farmer's breakfast. Ya'll come in and get yourselves warmed up" Everyone headed for the house. I stayed behind. The cold had ceased to bother me. I was in shock. I tried to digest what had happened. When I approached the corral, Blue was still hanging there. The jar was gone now and the corral was littered with feathers. I could hear the dogs in the distance.

Ed Jr had taken his bird "yellow" back to his coop. There was motion in the corner. Red stood there quietly. He hadn't really been a part of the struggle. I made my way inside the corral and Red moved away from me; out of the shadow into the direct light. I could see his stoic face. Oddly, he reminded me of the First Nations Chief in a TV commercial who was reflecting how his people and land had suffered at the hands of colonization. And like the Chief, there was a tear rolling down Red's regal face.

Every year countless turkeys are raised and brought to slaughter. Until the experience I had last Christmas, I never gave it another thought. It's a brutal, savage act. We hide the blood, chop off the heads so we don't think about it as a dead animal. No, I haven't turned vegetarian, not yet. But it got me thinking. Is this the spirit of Christmas? Can we measure the depth of our humanity by our compassion for the animals that depend on us? Will a tofudebeast ever replace a slaughtered pig, cow, turkey or chicken on our banquet tables? Maybe not, but it makes you think.

Epilogue

A few days later, I left the Grisley family farm, making my way down their unfamiliar driveway. Ed had managed to replace the burned out module without a struggle; although \$600 seemed a little steep. As I pulled onto the highway back towards Vancouver, I reflected that this experience had changed me. It was the last thing I expected from my Christmas hiatus.

Now, I wondered what to do with my sudden impulse buy? Sometimes I do the stupidest things. Just then, Red poked his head up from his bed on the back seat., as if sensing my dilemma. It wasn't the \$25 that bothered me, but where to take him? No room for him in my apartment.; besides, no pets allowed. But who would take him as a pet without thinking of him as well..... meat?

Of course, my deepest fear was *me* thinking of him as meat. My thoughts turned fondly to Easter. I glanced in the rear view mirror and Red was staring at me now; a tear rolling down his cheek.



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS—WASHBOARD ABS EDITION

Red and green decorations are out, nostalgic tunes fill the airways and the kids are hard at work on their letters for Santa.

I know what's on your list this year and it isn't found at your local department store.

You're wishing for washboard abs—so I've put together "The Twelve Days of Christmas – Washboard Abs Edition" just for you.

On the First Day...Give yourself the gift of Burpees.

Created in the 1930's by psychologist Royal H. Burpee, the burpee is an intense full body exercise that helps burn fat and tone muscles. A burpee is done in the following 5 steps: 1) Stand with feet shoulder width apart. 2) Drop to a squat with your hands on the ground. 3) Kick feet back while lowering into a push-up. 4) Return to squat position. 5) Jump up with arms overhead.

On the Second Day...Give yourself the gift of Fiber.

Stocking up on fiber will do wonders for your abs. High fiber foods are nutrient dense and low in calories. Try these high fiber favorites: raspberries, pear (with skin), artichoke, peas, apples (with skin), broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and carrots.

On the Third Day...Give yourself the gift of a Medicine Ball.

The first medicine balls were created in Persia over 3,000 years ago, made with sand filled bladders and used by wrestlers as part of their conditioning. Today you can get the same rippling abs by incorporating medicine balls into your exercise routine. Do a sit-up holding a medicine ball at your chest then throw it to a partner as you raise your chest toward your knees; or hold a medicine ball with arms straight up in the air as you do crunches.

On the Fourth Day...Give yourself the gift of Reduced Salt.

Too much salt leads to water retention—and that spells disaster for your six pack. Pay attention to the sodium content of your food. Limit salt intake by not eating packaged foods and by putting down the salt shaker.



12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS—CONTINUED.....

On the Fifth Day...Give yourself the gift of Oblique V-Sits.

Who really wants a muffin top? You don't, so incorporate Oblique V-Sits into your routine in 3 simple steps. 1) Lie on your side with legs straight and hands behind your head. 2) Raise your arms and legs simultaneously, while exhaling and squeezing your obliques. 3) Repeat on the other side.

On the Sixth Day...Give yourself the gift of Lean Protein.

Along with fiber, your meals should be packed with lean protein. This will help support muscle growth while controlling blood sugar – all important factors when it come to washboard abs.

On the Seventh Day...Give yourself the gift of Sprints.

The days of long slow cardio sessions are long gone. We now know that short intense bursts of cardio is the ideal way to melt fat. Run 60-90 second sprints in between resistance training sets to really kick your fat burning mechanism into high gear.

On the Eighth Day...Give yourself the gift of No Sugar.

Sure, sugar tastes good, but indulging in it causes your body to store layers of fat. Enjoy fresh fruit, rather than refined sugar. If you really want washboard abs, then say no to sugar.

On the Ninth Day...Give yourself the gift of Hanging Leg Raises.

This is one of the most effective ways to strengthen your abdominals. 1) Hang from pull-up bar with legs fully extended. 2) Exhale and drive your knees up toward your chest. 3) Inhale as you slowly lower your legs back down.

On the Tenth Day...Give yourself the gift of No Grain.

If you're serious about that six pack then put down the bread basket. Grains are full of insulin-spiking carbohydrates—the perfect combination for fattening you up. Learn to love grain-free meals that center around lean meats and vegetables.

On the Eleventh Day...Give yourself the gift of Mountain Climbers.

Here's another intense exercise that really targets your abs while also burning fat. 1) Get into push-up position. 2) Exhale as you alternately drive your knees in toward your chest, keeping your back flat.

On the Twelfth Day...Give yourself the gift of Washboard Abs.

Contact me about my tummy flattening programs that will get you those washboard abs that you're wishing for! Mike Dirks—778-997-1890

Brought to you by <http://www.westcoastfitness.ca/>



OUR NOVEMBER TRANSIT SUPERVISORS- PHOTOS BY JOHN KNECHTEL



MY TRADITIONAL BRITISH CHRISTMAS CAKE RECIPE

No British Christmas is complete without a classic Christmas Cake. My Christmas cake recipe may look complicated but is easy if you prepare and weigh all the ingredients and line the tin before you start.

A Christmas cake can be made 2 months before Christmas for it to mature and to be fed at regular intervals with brandy. If you are making it later, don't worry, it will still taste good.

Note: If you have time, you can also soak the dried mixed fruits the night before in a little extra brandy and proceed with the recipe next day. Creates an even more moist cake.

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 4 hours, 30 minutes

Total Time: 5 hours, 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1lb 2oz/525g currants
8oz/ 225g [golden raisins/sultanas*](#)
8oz / 225g [raisins](#)
4oz / 110g mixed candied peel, finely chopped
6oz / 165 glace cherries, halved
10oz/ 300g all purpose or plain flour
Pinch salt
½ level tsp [mixed spice **](#)
½ level tsp ground cinnamon
½ level tsp freshly ground nutmeg
2½ sticks / 300g butter, slightly softened
10 oz / 300g soft brown sugar
Zest of ½ lemon
6 large eggs, lightly beaten
3 tbsp brandy, plus extra for feeding



MY TRADITIONAL BRITISH CHRISTMAS CAKE RECIPE—CONT.....

Preparation:

Heat the oven to 300°F/150°C/Gas 2

The temperature is low as the cake needs a long slow bake. It is packed with sugars, fruits and brandy and if the temperature is any higher the outside of the cake will burn and the inside be undercooked.

Line a 9 inch cake tin with 2 thicknesses of parchment or greaseproof paper. Tie a double band of brown or newspaper paper around the outside. This acts as an insulator and to prevent the cake from burning on the outside.

In a large roomy baking bowl mix the currants, sultanas, raisins, peel and cherries with the flour, salt and spices.

In another large bowl cream the butter with the sugar until light and fluffy. Stir in the lemon zest. Add the beaten egg to the butter mixture a little bit at a time, beating well after each addition - do not try to rush this process as the mixture could curdle. If it does curdle simply add a tbsp of flour and mix again, this should bring the mixture back together. If it doesn't come back together, don't fret, the cake will still be delicious.

Carefully fold in half the flour and fruit into the egg and butter mixture, once incorporated repeat with the remaining flour and fruit. Finally add the brandy.

Spoon the cake mixture into the prepared cake tin making sure there are no air pockets. Once filled smooth the surface with the back of a spoon and make a slight dip in the center (this will rise back up again during cooking and create a smooth surface for icing the cake).

Finally, using a piece of paper towel clean up any smears of cake batter on the greaseproof wrapping, if left on they will burn, and though it won't affect the cake, it doesn't smell too good.

Stand the tin on a double layer of newspaper in the lower part of the oven, if you have a gas oven ensure the paper is well away from the any flame, and bake for 4½ hours. If the cake is browning too rapidly, cover the tin with a double layer of greaseproof or parchment paper after 2½ hours. During the cooking time avoid opening the oven door too often as this may cause the cake to collapse.

After 4½ hours check the cake is cooked. The cake should be nicely risen and a deep brown all over. Insert a skewer or fine knife into the centre of the cake. If there is sticky dough on the skewer when you pull it out it needs cooking longer, if it is clean, the cake's done and remove from the oven.

Leave the cake to cool in the tin on a wire rack for an hour, then remove from the tin and leave to cool completely. Once cooled prick the surface of the cake with a fine metal skewer and slowly pour over 2 - 3 tbsp brandy. This feeding should be repeated every two weeks up until Christmas.

The cake should be stored wrapped in greaseproof or parchment paper in an airtight tin.

By Elaine Lemm



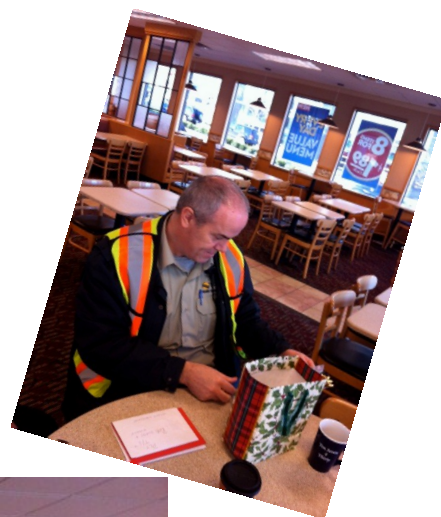
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Here are a few pictures of CUPE 4500 members showing their appreciation to our President Rob Woods on Thursday Dec. 22/11—surprising him with a Christmas present a few days early!

Thanks to all members who contributed to Rob's present—it truly is a "magic" time of year if you want it to be. It was a great touch having TComm announce our appreciation over the air as the feeling is had by all!

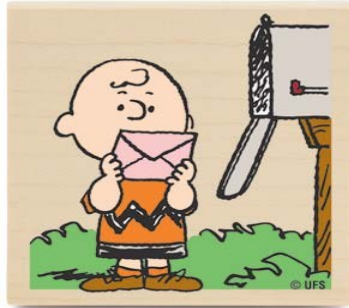
Rob you deserve a little break away from it all—we all wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year filled with an abundance of health and happiness!



Articles Wanted

Do you have something you'd like to share with the local? Your thoughts, opinions, concerns? Or, just an interesting off topic story? We'd be happy to publish it in the next newsletter. Just forward it to either Rob Woods, Joy Horan or any Property Rep.

(We reserve the right to edit in order to maintain integrity and correctness of our newsletter).



We're on the Web at
www.CUPE4500.com

CUPE 4500 Contacts:



President: Rob Woods

Vice President/Maintenance: Neil Pepper

Recording Secretary: Karl Dvorak

Secretary Treasurer: Gord Dieno

VTC Property Rep: Joy Horan - Transit Supervisors

Neil Pepper - Maintenance

Dan Staschuck - BTC Maintenance

RTC Property Rep: Dave O'Rielly

NVT Property Rep: Gord Elgar

BTC Property Rep: Greg Peters (Working out of VTC)

PTC Property Rep: Glen Hoffman

STC Property Rep: Ken McFayden

Holiday Block/Random Rep: Dan Christensen

TComm Rep: Tony Madrid

Victoria Rep: Neil Henderson