

SO LONG AND FAREWELL

At the end of March my contract is up; after almost 19 years I will be stepping aside.

I don't know where 19 years stands on the rarity record for Business Managers / Business Agents for a Canadian film union but I imagine the uniqueness of the achievement is strengthened by the fact my leaving was neither the result of a coup or the collapse of the organization. In fact it is quite the contrary.

Your union local is in solid financial shape. You have a top notch benefit plan that, if managed properly, is well funded for years to come. Although the membership has increased several times over since the new millennium, with the accompanying services that requires to maintain, I take much pride in the fact that your operating budget remains essentially the same as it was in 1999, the year before I took charge. This frugality has allowed your dues to decrease dramatically during my tenure.

Staff stability is another source of achievement that I take pride in. When I started as Business Manager the average staff member had only worked for the union local less than six months. Upon the decision of my leaving the average length of service to the union local by staff members in our office was 17.5 years. I sincerely appreciate the staff's loyalty and hard work. In fact your Chief Steward, Daryl, is slated to be my replacement. That is another rarity, having a trained replacement ready to take over.

As for signed production, in the last two years the gross pay of crew we represented through our contracts were among the highest years in our history. This year is shaping up to continue that trend. In fact, our production level at the end of March will be at or near a high for this time of year.

I am very happy with the numerous achievements this union has accomplished during my tenure as Business Manager. This in no way could have been possible without the assistance of a lot of people who are too numerous to mention but the "thanks" would always start with the members.

A thank you to the members who ratified my contract 18 times. The most gratifying moments of my time at the union were when I thought I did something that helped a member, especially those who did not even know they were being helped. I always tried to recommend policy that helped those who might need it the most, even if they were not the most vocal.

A special thank you to those who served on Council. Their time spent helped shape our union local and I appreciated their volunteered time and support.

So there you have it. Many days of wondering if the glass is half full or half empty now turns into, hopefully, a glass with a little umbrella and a slice of pineapple on the side.

Greg Chambers
Business Manager