

# FRONT LINE FLYER

Mine Mill Local 598/C.A.W

www.minemill598.com

May 2008

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## Strathcona Mill Report

By: Marcel Charron, Chief Steward

The Mill has been facing many issues lately, and the main one seems to be morale. Morale at the Mill is at an all-time low.

Richard Paquin has held meetings with most of the crews to obtain information as to why morale is so low, and there will be a Mill focus group formed comprised of P&M workers, Union leadership, and management to address these issues.

The Mill has also seen a mass exodus of people from the mechanical crew, who have moved to other sites for various reasons, i.e., shift schedule, traveling and supervision, just to name a few, and the Company seems to be dragging their feet on finding a happy medium.

Communication and lack of employee input are other big issues here. It seems that everything is a "big secret" around here, where very little information makes its way back to employees, and when it does, it's usually copies of e-mails left in the operators shack or on a table outside the shifters office. There is also a lack of employee input; we make suggestions, and give opinions, but most of the time it falls on deaf ears. We are the people running the equipment on a daily basis. It would seem beneficial to listen and consider our input, but it seems like management is afraid that our ideas might be better than theirs.

Training at the Mill has been an ongoing issue for some time now. Management here has said no more "peer training", and this has taken away valuable field experience in terms of training. Our Training Supervisor also has the duties of being part of the hiring team and interior decorator, which adds to the trainer's workload, and slows the process. We have a large group of new employees with less than two years service, who deserves proper training in their respective postings. Proper training is the key to employee development and reaching Xstrata Nickel's goal of zero harm.

Hats off to the group of guys who stood up for their rights and refused to write a "pre-screening" test to qualify for an opportunity to train posting, as management and HR figured they could re-write the language in the C.A. on opportunity to train postings. With HR being involved, you can almost guarantee this "pre-screen" testing would have eventually gone Company-wide, and been used to place people they want in certain positions. With this

refusal to write this test and pressure from the Union, the Company has backed down from this sort of testing.

In closing, there have been instances where management at the Mill has said the Union or Jack and Marcel have agreed to this or that. If you're not sure, don't be afraid to ask us and we will make sure the record is set straight.

## Central Services Report

By: Reg Berthiaume, Chief Steward

Hello Brothers and Sisters:

The changes in Central Services management have made a big improvement in the morale in the work place. Things are going well with communication between the work force and management.

CMS group and students are coming in the work force in big numbers. Let's help the workers to work safe and have a good summer of work.

The Nickel Rim move will be in June and most of the labourers in the CMS group will be placed in the open vacancies at the site. They are going ask high and place low.

We have had more discharges with workers on probation for AWOLs and sleeping on the job and there is a rumour that if you pass the probation, you cannot be discharged. This is false. The Company follows the discipline policy. You can still be discharged. Work safe and be at work on time.

I would like to wish all the workers a safe and fun-filled summer.

## Smelter Report

By: Brian Castelloux, Chief Steward

It has come to the Union's attention that the Company has and will be introducing a number of new programmes like Drug and Alcohol, Reportable Injury Frequency and now, Absenteeism Policies.

Supervisors are telling or implying that the Union is in agreement with these new policies. But we certainly do not agree with them. As a matter of fact, we already have dates set with an arbitrator on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 for the Company proposed Drug and Alcohol Programme and we will be challenging the Reportable Injury Frequency Policy and the Absenteeism Policy as well. If you have any



questions regarding these policies, come and see me or call the Hall.

One issue we had when we attended the Relationship Building Programme with the Company was work that we normally performed at the Old Lab., i.e. maintenance. We have been told a number of times that this issue would be addressed and time and time again, the Company has failed to do so. We also had a Letter of Intent at negotiations that the Company would have our people do the maintenance. Again, this did not happen.

If this does not happen shortly, we will grieve this again and let a third party decide whether the Company has failed to follow the collective agreement. It seems the only maintenance we get there is when we raise the issue or when the Lab is in dire straits – one example – when the drain line froze this winter from the Lab to the pushing pond and the Lab was in a bind. Only then did they call the Smelter to un-thaw this line.

In my mind, this does very little to improve a relationship if when you bring up contractual issues that were agreed to at bargaining and other time and all we get is lip service and broken promises.

We have scheduled Med/Arbs on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and have four cases from the Smelter being heard then.

As many of you are aware, the Company is not awarding jobs on time or is not posting jobs as per the collective agreement. We will monitor these problems and grieve when necessary.

It has been reported to me that some supervisors are performing maintenance work. If these supervisors would like to become tradesmen, the Company is now offering apprenticeships. If these supervisors can pass the tests, maybe they would be considered for an apprenticeship, as we have a shortage of skilled tradesmen.

If you observe any supervisors doing maintenance or other work that we perform, let a Steward or myself know and we will grieve. It appears some supervisors don't have enough of their own work to do, so they do ours.

In closing, if you have questions regarding policies ask a Union Rep or call the Hall.

**Thayer/Lindsley Report**

By: Jan Romo, Chief Steward

Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to welcome and thank Guy Desloges for taking up the position of Chief Steward at T/L as I will be moving to Nickel Rim on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

An ongoing issue at T/L is that workers are working out of their job class and the Company is failing to post the job. This has improved lately because of the difficulties with ground control in 3 Zone and therefore less blast-hole work of mucking and trucking (Miner "B").

We have a steady stream of contractors coming in. We are still having issues with the Company with what are unseeded contractors. This may be because senior management was not at the meeting that was held and do not understand what an embedded contractor is and what steps have to take place when an embedded contractor comes on site. This meeting was regimented by the RBP.

Also, problems with contracting out in general as outlined in Letter 4 of the collective agreement include monthly contracting out meetings (two to date in 2008) and notifying the Union of future contractors coming in.

Another big issue is the overtime lists – how overtime work shall be distributed as equally as practicable among those employees who would normally perform such work within their respective first-line supervisors group (Article 24.04 of the C/A). I have also had complaints of training being done out of seniority on the crew, and I am waiting for a response from the company.

The time it takes for the Company to get back to a worker or Union Rep for resolution of a complaint can go on for months and is very frustrating for both the Union and worker.

As for the Skilled Trades, the time it takes for a request to post to a job posting and being awarded, in some cases taking up three months and also is very frustrating for everyone involved.

Students will be coming to the work sites shortly. Take time to help them out and teach them to work safely, as they are our future.

**JUNE 2008  
MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 p.m – MINE MILL  
CAMPGROUNDS  
BARBEQUE – 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 26<sup>th</sup>  
1:00 p.m. – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Board Room  
Union Offices**