

**Peter Neuschafer**

May 27, 2009            Neuschafer Residence, Edmonton

Interviewer: Winston Gereluk            Camera: Ron Patterson

PN: My name is Peter Neuschafer. The position I held with the union at one time was acting president and various other positions, like vice president, and of course, all kinds of committees. I was a trustee, also. I was on various committees, from the Social Committee. In fact, I was on one committee that was the starting of it under Lloyd Egan, and that was the Grievance Review Committee, which was something that got started because the labor standards board needed to know what kind of appeal positions do we have in place if somebody has a grievance and it doesn't go further.

Q: Tell us about your background and some of your early influences.

PN: I was born in West Berlin, Germany, in 1946. I was born in the area that after the war was broken into, Berlin was broken into four sections, which was the communist section and the Russian, well that's communist anyway, the French, the British, and the American sector. My area where I was called Tegel, and that was the French sector. I was there until I came to this country in about 1952 when I was about 7-1/2 or 8 years old. It was an interesting time at that time in Germany, after the war. There weren't too many things to be had. Starvation and hunger was there, but I was lucky enough never to really experience that, because of my dad's position at that time. He was an atomic engineer and a rocket man. There was some food available but it was hard to get. But as far as I recognized, it was a fun time.

As kids, I remember my grandmother even today saying, "Don't go play in those buildings because they're going to fall down because they're half bombed." We'd say, "Yes grandma," but off we'd go. None of us ever got killed or hurt. Go figure. So much for listening to that. Then we came over. There was no union influence, because my dad being a professional, there was never any talk about unions or anything even at that time. Even when we came to this country there was never any talk about unions. When you take a look at Germany now, a lot of the major companies are highly unionized. Major unions in Europe overall compared to here in Canada and the United States.

And of course, when we came here we came to Grande Prairie. That was basically my Canadian hometown. My dad ended up working as a machinist, but nothing was there in those days, private industry unions. I don't even know, when he ended up working for Grande Prairie Power, if there was a union. As far as I'm concerned, unions were never in the picture even in the '50s. We moved around. We ended up in Dawson Creek for a while. There he had an engineering position, and then we ended up here in Edmonton working for the provincial government. That was in about 1955. Again, there was no discussion of unions or anything else like that. Understand, the premier at that time was

Ernest Manning. I ended up getting to meet him and I ended up meeting, through my dad also, J.J. Bowlen, who became the governor general later of Alberta. It was interesting, My dad worked at the provincial parliament building, so I had basically in the summertime the run of the place. So that was my playground during the summertime out there. Basically in the playground I knew all the nooks and crannies, made a lot of friends. And the greenhouse, hung out a lot in the greenhouse that was there. Again, nothing about unions. My understanding is later that Premier Manning actually encouraged and forced the provincial employees to start a union for their own good. When I heard about that, that was quite unusual to hear something like that, that he encouraged and got the people unionized, those that should be unionized - probably a good thing, because that's AUPE now. In my overall going to school, etc., of course you'd hear things about unions and their strikes, especially in the States, where it got quite violent, and in Eastern Canada violent. When we talked about it at home, it was sort of like, they should know better. It was basically anti-union in a lot of cases. Professional people, etc., so no interest in it. I didn't have any interest in it either. I sort of said, well what you see is what you get. I figured, let them do whatever they want to do, because I'm not interested. Of course that continued on.

I ended, of course when I graduated out of high school, I ended up also going to private college, College St. Jean. My parents thought that was good for me, to learn languages. Of course we took Latin at that time, which when I went and finished off at Jasper Place Composite, well I was there to play football, because I had most of the credits. I ended up on my first what you call full time job, with the Bank of Montreal. In between prior to that going to school, etc., I ended up working in the construction industry. Of course this was private construction, no unions of any kind. But I remember working at the Mayfair Golf Course, with a construction company there. We were adding on the Mayfair, which is a very elite golf course. There were some union people came over and they wanted to unionize us. I had no interest and most of us didn't – we told them to get lost, get out of our life. I said, I'm not interested. Anyways, I says, "I'm only here for the summer to earn money and then phhht." So they left.

The Bank of Montreal, of course, and all the banks, are non-union. So there was no union influence there. I was there in their management program for three years. Then I finally left and went to university for a while, then of course went out looking for a job again. I got my first taste of some union, and it was sort of a bitter taste in a way. I ended up working as a night auditor at the Hotel MacDonald. The Hotel MacDonald of course was completely different. It was one of the elite hotels run by the CN. Of course there was the Westin and the Chateau Lacombe, and I ended up in all three of them. The Chateau Lacombe I understand is still unionized. I followed one of the banquet managers around, so I got a good taste of the hotel. But as a night auditor I had to use the union ones. The shop steward there, after I explained things three or four times, totally frustrated the heck out of me and I told him where to take his union and where to put it, because, I says, I'll fix it myself. So I solved the problem myself. He wasn't too happy about it. I remember him saying they wanted an initiation fee, and I can't remember how many dollars, and I told him to get lost. I wasn't going to give him a cent.

Q: Which union was it?

PN: I don't have any idea what the name of that union was in the Hotel MacDonald. I'm not sure, I think it's a Christian type union that's in the Chateau Lacombe. So from there, working the 11-7 shift is a killer. I ended up applying and I got a call one day from Edmonton Telephones on 104<sup>th</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> for an interview. I totally forgot about it. The gentleman at that time, his name was Stan Spiel; that was my boss, a very nice gentleman, called me the next morning, where are you for the interview? Of course I played a little dumb and said it was probably my roommate that took the message. He says, when can you be down there. I said, give me half an hour. So I ended up having a good interview, and I got hired that day. I was told in the orientation at that time, (they had a good orientation at the city, and of course that was over at the Wentworth Building, where HR was at that time, down on 97<sup>th</sup> St. and what is it, 102<sup>nd</sup> Ave. I believe it is, right across the street from the old City Market.

At the orientation there he said, well you're going to be paying union dues and all that. I said to him, okay whatever, whoopee doo. I was only there for two or three weeks. I found out it was CUPE national that was the union of choice at that time for Civic Service Union 52. All of a sudden one afternoon everyone walked out. I sort of heard; I didn't pay any attention, because I wanted to pass my probation. Three months probation, you don't want to make any waves, etc. There was a walkout. I started in 1971, so it would've been about August 1971. I guess they had negotiation problems that had been dragging on for some time. They walked out for an information session, I guess is what you'd call it, for the afternoon. Then later on all the employees came back. I didn't really understand what this was all about. I wasn't going to take any chances of leaving or walking out or doing anything like that. Shortly after that, about September, I guess they ended up with a contract. I remember that contract. The increase wasn't bad but that was the one and only time that we ended up getting an across-the-board increase, I think it was \$250 each; that went on your base. Then of course on top of that was your percentile increase. I know in future years we tried to pull that and get it, and it never ever happened again. So that's how I basically got involved, slowly of course, in the union. The chief leader at that time in Ed Tel was Pat Puff. Patty Puff was quite the character.

Q: Describe him a bit.

PN: Patty Puff was a short little blonde, full of vim and vinegar and energy. She was quite the character in that sense. She was not a pushy union individual. But she let you know who was in the union and what some of the rules were and what you can or can't do, and so forth. Of course working in Ed Tel on 104<sup>th</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup>, I found it sort of funny in a way. Some things were very structured. One of them was, I can still visualize it. They had a little cafeteria deal. I think at that time, and I used to work for these people at one time, Jiffy Lunch Catering. Used to do catering there. There'd be hot lunch at lunchtime and there was a little setup for cafeteria style tables. It was the Coffee Wagon. Of course they'd go one way in the morning and the other way in the afternoon. It was really funny, because smoking was allowed at your desk on those days. I didn't smoke. I had a fellow next to me, his name was George, I'll think of his last name. He was there

until he retired. George of course liked his cigarillos. I kept my mouth shut; I still wanted to get my probation. The way the desks were set up, we didn't have cubicles. It was wide open setup, so desks were side by side or face to face and all of that kind of situation. George Kennedy, that's what his name was. George Kennedy. Everybody put their pens down, everything stopped. You'd get your coffee and cookie or whatever it was, everybody would light up their deals, and we'd just chat or get in a group and chat for exactly 15 minutes.

As soon as 15 minutes was up, everybody picked up their pen again. Remember, no computers, right? The closest thing to a computer instrument was your calculator (because I was in the accounting section at that time as an accounting clerk) and your telephone and pen and paper and ledgers. That was going on and I ended up doing that for a year and a half, close to two years.

I met my wife at Ed Tel and we got married in '72. Again, I'm not involved in a union of any sort or anything else. Of course one of us had to leave; those were the rules. If you were married with an employee and that, you could not be in the same department. I said to Donna, "I'll go." So there were a bunch of positions and I ended up taking the one in the department at that time known as Edmonton Utilities at City Hall main floor.

Q: What is Edmonton Utilities today?

PN: Edmonton Utilities doesn't exist, it's gone. The reason being, what has happened is, we had all kinds of departments in the city at that time besides Edmonton Telephones. We had Edmonton Power. We had Edmonton Utilities, where people paid their utility bills, water, sewer, and even their telephone bill, on the main floor of City Hall - the old City Hall that got killed off in about 1989 I believe. Then there was the finance department separate, and they had an IT department even. Some of it in the basement and some of it upstairs, which was basically key-punching and then feeding the computer. That's an interesting story too. They had Water and Sanitation, they had a Planning department. They had Edmonton Power and all of these. So I ended up at the Edmonton Utilities as a collector, because some people didn't pay their bills. I had to go phone them and do the heavy hand. After a while that made me sick. I didn't like it; in fact I didn't even last three months. I got a lateral transfer because with the whole situation the way it was that I couldn't go back anyways. It was actually pretty good. HR was pretty good in those days in a lot of the things they tried to accommodate, because now I was already permanent. I ended up in payroll. That was another department, payroll. I ended up in payroll upstairs looking after WCB claims and some special projects and I can't remember what else. But it had to do with payroll. Oh, and doing some payroll auditing.

Q: What was the process?

PN: An example was journal vouchers. Those did a lot of corrections of your books or money getting transferred over to different accounts, etc., of course you wrote it out by hand. Of course in Edmonton Telephones there was also a deal where Patty was working, known as the steno pool. There were at least four to five ladies in there. Then you took

your handwritten stuff, gave it to them, and then they typed it on those forms. When you got it back you proofread it, and usually with a lot of them it ended up with two people proofreading, because otherwise you'd go brain silly. After that was all done you had to take it over to City Hall. That was one of my jobs. I was the little courier boy, I guess you'd call it. I was the lowest one on the totem pole at that time. We would take it over to

I believe it was the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall, and there was just one hell of a racket in that room. Those fingers, when you take a look at it, there must be 20 or 30 ladies in there, and they were just a pounding away. I don't think they came up for air. It was very strict in there, because they had to do so many keystrokes and had to get so much of certain items done. Of course when they did all that keypunching it came out on cards. Those cards then went downstairs and fed to the computer and then the computer did its word bang and you got computer printouts of general ledger and auditor reports. You could match one to the other to figure out how those figures came. It's all numbers. There's some verbiage in there but not very much. In a lot of cases, if you really wanted to analyze something, you had to go back to your file somewhere and hopefully the document number was properly recorded, and then you had to go and photocopy that and put it all together, and then you gave it for the auditors. You had an annual audit.

Q: Much more labor intensive than now.

PN: Oh it was very labor intensive. Of course that slowly faded away in the late '80s when we ended up with what you call desktops now, but they were actually dummy computers. They had the screen and keyboard, you could do certain things with it. Of course then you had to wait either overnight for these transactions to take place, or weekly transactions. It was never when you key stroked it in the action happened, like today. You ended from what you called the old card index to now what you called desktop and real live action every time when you do something. That sort of faded away, so the ladies ended up going into other areas, and others retired. I'm trying to remember who the lady was who was the head of it at that time. Maybe I'll remember it.

Q: Gradually that desktop process was further automated.

PN: Yes, the dummy terminals were there for a fair amount, about 15 or 16 years. We had an accounting system known as FIS at that time. It was getting old. After 15 years you can only do so many patches. In between time, I was now in IT, computing resources department. That broke away. I was the accountant for that department. I was the only accountant, then we had two people in payroll and so on. That department was created because we had what was known as, first of all there was mobile equipment and then we had building maintenance, which was Larry Dinsmore at that time. I still remember that gentleman well. Computing was in limbo; it wasn't a very big area, on the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall at that time. It was by itself too. Then when Don Osmond became general manager of a new department known as Central Supply and Services. Central supply of course included building maintenance, mobile equipment, and the computer people. Of course the computer area now got bigger, we got more programmers, systems analysts. In

1980 or '81 we got broken out as a separate department known as Computer Resources. Don Osmond became the general manager of that.

Q: How did you gradually become involved in the union?

PN: I ended up going into Mobile Equipment in 1976. Yes, 1976. I guess things really hit the manure on those days, because we went on strike in the fall of 1976. Alex Sczechina was the leader out of that.

Q: How did that develop?

PN: I didn't pay much attention to it in the beginning. I went to the meetings and listened to it and said, yes whatever, and thought about it and looked at it. Of course being down on 95<sup>th</sup> St., Mobile Equipment was an office over a hardware store at that time. Right next to the York Hotel was our offices. That was fun. I think part of it was wages. The other one had to do with a lot of clauses. And also, benefits. It just festered more and more. I'm trying to figure out who was the mayor at that time. ... Cec Purvis, that's correct. He was I guess a little stubborn. The City of course later on, with me being involved in negotiations, I found out the HR people were really stubborn. Of course we had Alex Sczechina, who was a real firecracker.

Q: What do you mean?

PN: He used to call them the 'whatevers of Ivory Tower.' He never minced words. He wasn't afraid of them; he attacked them left and right and forward. Sometimes I don't think they knew it was coming. I sort of smile when I think of all of that kind of scenario that was taking place in those days, and what you could get away with as a union. Of course the members were a lot more in the union mind and mode than today. We're looking at a different couple of generations. In the fall of 1976 we ended up going on strike. I was in MES at that time and I decided, well maybe I'd better get involved here a little bit. So I checked around with people and they said, yep, go ahead, be whatever you want to be. So I attended the meetings and of course I ended up going on the picket line.

The funny thing is, a good friend of mine just started with Water and Sanitation a few weeks prior, and here the poor sucker's going on strike, and of course we don't get paid for anything on a strike. So I remember my first day on the strike. We were out at Westwood yesrd in the evening, by the bus area. Here come the buses, cursing at us, driving right through. I didn't realize there was some kind of animosity between 52 at that, or CUPE, and the ATU transit people. I never really quite understood what that animosity was. So that was fine. We stayed there that night. I found it sort of adventurous at the time, something different. There was no violence or anything like that. It almost was a party atmosphere for a lot of us. This is only going to last a couple of days, so let's enjoy. Well it lasted a little longer than that – 10 days. I remember my friend and I would go and sign up for picket duty. Coffee, tea and donuts, and that was forever and a day. Donuts were always around. After a while none of us wanted to see a donut. In fact, I

didn't eat a donut for the next five years. It was more than enough, thank you. We'd sign up for that and we'd also end up getting ourselves a job. That was actually pretty funny.

We'd go on picket duty and then either after or before, mostly after, and we'd be early in the morning at this place beside Inland Cement making cement caskets and culverts and septic systems. Then come home, my wife and his girlfriend at that time screaming at us that we stink, take your clothes off outside, take a shower, and then we'd be gone again on the picket line. Then we had a big rally again, Alex Sczechina getting everybody there. I think it was at the Victoria Comp gymnasium. There were a lot of people that showed up, because now this was about the eighth or ninth day. Of course you got your last two weeks paycheck and there's no money coming.

I don't know about the others, but my friend and I ended up saying, well we don't know how long this is going to be, we're going to get a job. And we got it in a very short time; in fact, the same day that the strike was called. Got us all riled up, etc. I think there was also talk that those that had loans with the credit union, not to worry about the civic credit union, but to let all your banking and all the others know that you're on strike, etc. But most of the private industry or the banks, if you had loans there, there was no mercy given. They didn't give you any concessions in those days. I don't know if they even to today. There was one gentleman that got up, it was in Italian. In a way when I look at it, it was funny. But it wasn't funny. He comes up and puts that Italian accent like he's one of these big loan shark type deal. If you have money problems come and see Tony and he'll take care of you. Well he got booted out. So that night we made a secret deal.

At that time the communications was CB radios that we had. My friend had one in his car. The deal was, I believe at midnight, we went out. Nobody knew about it, we didn't tell anybody. It was only certain groups. We went to all the bus areas, the bus transit garages. We picketed and shut the buses down so they didn't go the next day. Shortly after that we ended up with a contract, which was really nice and dandy. That was the 10<sup>th</sup> day. The irony of it all was, all the work that we put in as far as trying to get more money as a raise, got blown out of the water because Pierre Eliot Trudeau put a wage and price control on. We got a 10% increase, because that was the maximum that he allowed, and I think we got some clause changes. And we all went back to work again. Basically, we had a windup dance at the Polish Hall. Of course dessert was donuts again. I remember seeing Lawrence Decore there. I can't recall if he was already a councilor or if he was lobbying to become a councilor, and wanted our vote. I remember him coming to our table. I smiled and said to Lawrence, I says, are you sure you really want to do this, or are you doing this for another motive? He says, what do you mean? I says, you're a lawyer, aren't you. He says, yes. I says, "How many volunteer or other political positions do you have to be in before you get a QC after your name?" It was a year or two later that he ended up becoming Queen's Council.

Q: Did the strike have something to do with you people leaving CUPE?

PN: What happened afterwards, I really started getting more involved. I ended up starting to go to the meetings. Of course the meetings at that time, it was a weird hour in

a way, 7 o'clock in the evening at the old City Hall in the cafeteria upstairs. I'm up there, we're waiting, and all of a sudden a big brouhaha goes. Of course we had some of our big boys, like Gary Ahlstrom and Jim Cox. I think Marion was even there. And Paul Hawryshko. I didn't really know the people at that time. And these people from CUPE came. They got to the elevator and they basically got shoved back onto the elevator and told to get the hell out.

Q: Do you remember who they were?

PN: No, I have no idea who they were. I can't even remember, in fact there was no mention... I think Lloyd was the president at that time.

Q: Why did that happen?

PN: My understanding of the whole thing is that, number one, of course the strike was under the leadership of a wonderful man by the name of – and I remember him only as – Strike Pyke, under CUPE 30.

Q: What kind of guy was he?

PN: I have no idea; I never met him. But he seemed like, his name being Strike Pyke, he loved strikes. That was his forte. And that wasn't just with the City, with areas too. Because I think he was a national rep at that time. My understanding out of the whole deal is that we paid them \$250,000 a year in dues and really got nothing in return during the strike. We got paid, by the way, great big dollars for the first nine days, and the first day we didn't get paid, \$10 a day. That was a great deal; for nine days you made \$90. We never got any money from CUPE at all for our strike, and the money that was paid out for the people that walked the picket lines came out of CSU 52's coffer on money that they had built up. There was no intention of giving them any money. Apparently, the comment was that if you wanted money you can borrow it from us. Well that did it. So if that is true or not, that's the way I know it. Of course, we basically said, "You're gone!" We walked away from them and we never ever sent them any money down east again. It's been about five or six years ago or so, there was a lawsuit, they filed a lawsuit against us, CUPE, to try and recover it. But it never hit the courts or anything else. It was sitting there and sitting there and sitting there, so finally I guess CUPE just dropped it, because who knows how much money that would've cost 52. So it got dropped. So we ended up becoming totally independent. So that would've been about 1976, in the fall of 1976 or '77.

Q: Had you been involved in any CUPE stuff before that, or just at the local level?

PN: Just in the local. I was never involved with CUPE or CUPE national or anything national, because there was nothing to get involved with. After that I got more and more involved by attending meetings. I got elected as a shop steward, later on still at City Hall. And then of course attendance fell. Sunny Wuschenny was the treasurer, Lloyd was the president, and Steve Sumka was one of the vice presidents. Steve Sumka Sr. Somewhere

along the line a decision was made that if you're a shop steward, you're going to get paid some money. For attending the meetings you'd get paid at the end of the year, I think it was \$20 or something like that, to get attendance. Well the attendance went up a little to get more shop stewards out, for a little while. Now of course it's more than that. I think like myself I'm not a senior shop steward, because we don't have an assistant chief shop steward, just a chief shop steward and then senior shop stewards from various areas, to oversee things or to help the shop stewards if they have a question. I think it works out to about \$980 a year that we get paid, approximately. But the attendance really I think has declined. We're averaging right now approximately 53, 55, maybe 65 on a good day, on a general membership meeting, and the majority of that are shop stewards. Basically that's about the same number that comes up for the shop steward meetings.

Q: What did you do as a shop steward?

PN: You got the training, which was really good. Alec was still involved and we had various shop stewards training on what we should be doing, and so on. Of course that was to be a visionary and actually to watch to make sure that the people in the jobsite are treated properly, the managers don't go over bounds, etc. But being in the area where I am, in accounting, etc., and professional, the majority we never have really that kind of problems. Sometimes somebody come and ask something about a vacation day and I'd tell them, or bereavement or something about their benefits package. Once in a while there would be, and I remember being called into some grievances, etc. So I would be sitting in the grievance, depending on how serious it is.

I would try to tell the people, if you get called in and it is a disciplinary nature, you can say "no" and get your shop steward involved. Some of the members did and some of the members ended up not, and then of course crying the blues a bit. Of course then I would tell them, better get hold of the business agent, and so on and so forth. There were some interesting ones, more in this latter part, especially with the computer and the internet, going into the happy channel, as I call it, and the shopping channel, on City time, which are no-nos. The shopping channel is "Steal on work time". It's considered stealing when you're doing it on work time. If you do it during your lunch break, that's not so bad. But you're tying up a lot of computer and computer memory and so on. And what are you doing? You're supposed to be there to do your job, not to go in there and try to find out where the best deal is for a house or a cabin or a car or whatever else on work time. It's considered theft, and people have been fired. That's the same with the happy channel, which is the porno, people going into that. I call it the happy channel, trying to be discrete. But that's the porno. We've warned the people many a time and explained it to them. Even if you delete it, etc., they can recover it, the way things are set up at work. Some people just don't get it. I understand some people got let go.

Q: After you became a shop steward, how did you become increasingly involved in the union?

PN: With attending the meetings, all these various committees came up and so on. Of course I figured I'd like to get on some committees. I figured that's the way to get

yourself broken into, not going for the high stuff. I know I tried to run for the trustee the first time. I was basically told, you're not running this time. That sort of upset me and I'm trying to figure out, what is this, it's supposed to be democratic. But I'm not going to mention who told me not to do it, but it came from the higher executive area. So I didn't. I ended up running for the first committee, and that was the grievance review committee.

Q: What is a grievance review committee?

PN: The grievance review committee was there if somebody filed a grievance. It went to the business agents first to look at it and see the viability; i.e., if it should go on to arbitration or whatever it is after they did certain steps. The business agent would tell them then, "That's it, we're not going any further." The individual could then go to the grievance review committee and they could then hear the story from the individual that's the griever, and also hear from the business agent. With the information compiled on both ends and getting some legal advice - sometimes we'd have a legal advisor there too - then make a decision on yes if it gets advanced or not. This was part of a step put in basically to also address things through the labor board. They also wanted to find out if we had certain steps in place for somebody to continue their appeals. So that came in.

Then I got involved. There was a conference in Vancouver. I sort of was talking to someone and it was sort of funny. Steve Sumka Sr. says, so you want to go to this? He says, don't worry, you'll get elected. So I got nominated and I know Marion went to that one, Zonia ended up going to that one, Gary Ahlstrom, Jim Cox. They were business agents at that time from the union office. And I'm not sure who else, but myself. There were some others nominated. By luck I ended up going on that trip. It was an eye opener because it was on drug and alcohol abuse and a whole bunch of stuff that really comes in handy for our position. From there I ended up getting more involved and getting committees, different committees like social committee. I got on the negotiation committee, which was quite interesting. There were many a time that I had to shake my head on the battle that goes back and forth, the City HR people calling us parasites across the table. I said, is that proper? Are they allowed to do that? I was told they can call us worse than that if they want. It always ended up that the majority of them that I was on in. I think I was on the negotiation six or seven times on various areas. The majority of them, we always ended up going to mediation to finally get a contract. They just kept dragging and dragging it out. That's very frustrating and time consuming, and money. It cost money for both sides.

Q: What gains did you achieve during that time?

PN: There were gains later on; the health spending account that we got.

Q: Explain what that is.

PN: We ended up with a \$500 health spending account that you can spend on anything that is not covered under our plan, ie eyeglasses, contact lenses, physiotherapy, anything that is covered under CCRA rules, which is the government taxation area's rules. That

was tax free money, \$500. So you could either use it every year \$500 in whichever way. If you didn't use any of it for eyeglasses and that, you could use it to offset your premiums that you paid for for your major medical. We got improvements in our major medical and various things. We got improvement on vacation, more vacation time, six weeks after 20 some years. There were clause improvements too for provisional employees that finally at least got a little bit of seniority, that they were senior over temporary employees. It was just small concessions, and those were all hard fought. And of course we also gave things up. For one, we gave up the half day that was always paid for exhibition time. I think we got another percent on that, but we gave it up, just for that half day. I think all the other unions did, and 52 was the last one that held out until the bitter end on that one. It was a couple of negotiation years afterwards that we ended up giving it up for pennies.

Q: Did you get the feeling that the membership appreciated what you were doing on the negotiating committee?

PN: That is a good question because being in the group that I was in as shop steward, which was computing resources, these are all computer geeks. A lot of them complained and mumbled, "We don't need a union or we should have our own union." I would tell them, "Excuse me. When you got hired on, you knew the terms and conditions was that you belong to a union." And I said, "And if you don't like it, and you figure you can do better outside, leave by all means, nobody's stopping you." Some did, and then I saw them back again a year and a half or two years later. They were always complaining about taking too long for the contract and not getting enough money. The inflation rate is this high and we're only getting this much money, and so forth. I challenged them. I says, "You have a problem with it, show up to the meetings, get yourself elected, and participate." Then they'd go away for a while. Then they'd do it again. It's an ongoing thing from year to year. I wasn't even involved in negotiations this year and they came to me, what are we getting for negotiations? How's the money, etc.? I says, "Phone the office, I don't know, I'm not involved."

Q: So it's kind of thankless. What was your motivation? Why were so you so interested in getting involved in the union?

PN: I figured I could make a difference. I guess I'm an A personality and I figured for me to complain or bitch, I need to get involved. Once I'm involved I can complain and bitch if I'm not happy with something. That's the way I've been. If I don't like something, I figure I'm going to get involved and see if I can make a difference and help improve it, and also get my voice heard that I have something to say. If you agree with it or not, that's fine with me. But at least listen. A lot of people that I notice at the meetings, I don't do as much talking anymore at the meetings like I used to. Zonia and I used to be the big mouths. After a while you could see, oh Jesus it's Zonia again, oh Jesus it's Peter again, and they'd tune you out even though we had something important to say that we don't agree with what's going on.

Q: So after the social committee, you went further.

PN: I ran twice for vice-president, but didn't succeed. The third time I got in as vice president.

Q: What year was that?

PN: 1990, the same year Shirley Wood got in as the first female president of the union.

Q: Talk about that period of time.

PN: Shirley ran against Frank Zaprawa. Of course Frank was in for two terms and it was total turmoil. Everything Frank did, he was sort of a bully, and that really upset a lot of people. A lot of them are what you call silent complainers, the silent majority wouldn't say anything. Then there were the others that went after him all the time on a lot of things that were not proper union methods and so forth. He ended up basically, well one of them was, I'm not sure if you're aware of it, was that they charged Zonia for fraud, which was not true. Mind you, I told her afterwards when I had a look at it that she shouldn't have done it. But she put the name on this cheque, but printed it, didn't sign it. But it's such a petty deal. They tried to nail her with that and it was a big battle. I know she ended up with lawyers, etc. The police came and did a fraud investigation but there was nothing found, it was not true. Then he did all kinds of other things, charging for overtime for his pay, etc. We said, you're in a position you do not get any overtime; you're in a management position in the union. He got paid out a whole bunch of overtime money and did all kinds of other quirky things.

Q: So there was a lot of internal dissension.

PN: Yes there was, big time.

Q: What kind of person was Shirley?

PN: Shirley, overall she was an okay person. But I think she lacked the experience. She didn't have the experience on supervising people or being able to look after such a mass. I think that got to her. Then people started playing games with her. Certain things I heard, I'm not even bothering. It's basically silly things, and she'd lose her temper a little bit. Then of course the other thing she started doing is she wanted to see all the mail before it went out to the business agent. She set up a schedule for them. I talked to Shirley many times and said, "You shouldn't do that." I says, "There are other ways of dealing with the people. If it's mail addressed to one business agent, let them deal with it. If they have a problem they should be coming to you to deal with that."

I think Shirley was overpowered on some of that, unfortunately. But her heart was in the right place. I think her heart and soul was in the right place and it was unfortunate what happened. I think some of it also happened with the people who were in the office that did a number on her also. There was some internal stuff going on in the office. With that happening, the office ended up certifying, actually requesting, a union to come in. The

union was the Steelworkers of America. Now our union office staff is unionized and represented by the Steelworkers of America.

Q: What do you think about having a union within a union>?

PN: I was trying to tell Shirley at that time, and I can't remember if it was Shirley and somebody else, I says, we should have them unionized. They were at the mercy of the president. A new president was in, and the BAs were either in or out. They were basically out-of-scope employees. I says, why don't we make another 52 local within our 52 for the office staff? I don't know, it just went over the peoples' heads, they didn't want to listen. They figured it wasn't necessary, because people like Gary Ahlstrom and Jim Cox were there. Yes, but you were there because of Lloyd. Well Gary Ahlstrom and Jim Cox were basically out the door when Frank got there. He made sure of that eventually, and he got his kind of people in, which makes sense. So they ended up with the Steelworkers. I had no problems with it because I think other unions also have different unions within them. It's good; they need protection also.

Q: When she quit, is that when you ran?

PN: She put in a resignation and that's when I got in. I didn't run, I ended up taking over. I got in as acting president in March of 1992. My term went until the end of November of 1992, and then Marion got in on an election.

Q: So you took over at a time when there was some turmoil.

PN: Yes, and I tried to, I think I steadied it down. The office staff, I removed all of those rules and says, I'm not going to pull those kind of rules, because I expect them to be professionals. But I said, I expect them also to keep me informed. So that seemed to have worked.

Q: What development happened with the janitors when Shirley was president?

PN: Apparently there was a petition going around. Somebody in the janitorial area did a petition to the labor board or to CUPE, saying they don't belong in CSU 52 because of their job, and so on. There's no real job opportunities of moving up in 52 because we're clerical and professional and semi-professional. There was a meeting set up, and I was involved in that meeting with Shirley and Marion in the library. There was Ken Balkwill and I can't remember who else from local 30. They had their discussion. I think there was also a representative from the labor board sitting in the middle to hear. They were organizing it, because you could have that debate to hear why for and why against. Then there was a vote taken. In June of 1991 the vote went in favor of CUPE local 30 and that's where the janitors ended up. I think there was about 100 or so that moved over. Of course that really upset Shirley in a way. I told her, "Don't take it personal; just that's the way they want it, let them go." Marion was upset, I was upset too out of the whole deal.

Q: Was it a raid?

PN: No. I don't think it was a raid, because it was the janitors themselves that decided to do the lobbying to get the labor board involved.

Q: Do you recall losing any other units of employees?

PN: Ed Tel. Ed Tel of course, going into that kind of story. Ed Tel of course became a separate arm, just like EPCOR is right now with the City. Then what happened after a period of time, Ed Tel of course got bought out by AGT. I can't remember what they were called then, I can't remember if they called themselves Telus at that time, I can't recall. It was they wanted a common employer and one union. I remember my wife was involved in the union office, I was involved making phone calls to all Ed Tel employees to tell them to stay with us. The other union at that time was 1007. Of course I got an earful there. Ed Tel always frustrated me, even when I was president. They were raided a couple of times prior to that. They were raided once under Frank and I believe we went 1007 again, and we were successful in keeping them.

So there was that raid under Frank and we were successful. Then it ended up again when AGT and Ed Tel, because of the councilors voting to get rid of Ed Tel, privatizing it. Of course the common employer, 1007, basically beat out CSU 52. The unfortunate thing is there were a lot of people in Ed Tel that I talked to, lobbying them to make sure they show up to vote in our favor to keep CSU 52 in there, basically complained and said, you guys never do anything for us. I answered the question back, what do you do for yourself, never mind for the union? What is it that you want the union to do? Of course a lot of times there was silence. I said, well you haven't told me anything, so can I get your support? Oh maybe I'll think about it, I don't even know if I'm going to vote. So basically we lost it. So that was about 1,500 employees that we lost that went to IBEW 1007.

Q: What was the membership of the union then?

PN: We were close to 5,000.

Q: What is it today?

PN: It's about 3,500.

Q: Who comprises the membership these days?

PN: The membership is comprised of the Telus Space and Science, the library, and EPCOR, and the main City employees. That's all, about 3,500. It might be a little bit more, give and take, because of seasonal.

Q: What kind of work do your members do?

PN: They're still anywhere from clerical to basically professional. You're looking at from clerical to accountants to engineering techs to assessors, planners. So it's quite a variety of jobs that our union still looks after and represents.

Q: In what way are these people vital to the operation of the city?

PN: That's a good question. It is, because of the experience and knowledge and education these people have. Not only that, they know the city and the layout of the city. They know the culture of the city. Geographically, they know the city. It's a very important part of running the city, our employees. It's not just 52 but local 30 and in 1007 there's about 60 of them. You've got the outside workers, which local 30, you've got us, and of course the transit, that's very important too, ATU 569. I think we're all a very important entity in making this city run viably and economically.

Q: What do you remember about your time as president?

PN: It was interesting because it was one item after another, after I took over from Shirley. There was a little bit of breathing room, so I could get my feet wet. What was the first thing we hit? Oh yes, it was before I even took over as president, as the VP. Shirley got in in December of 1990 I believe it was, and about January or February I got interviewed by the *Journal* as the vice president, because I was the new kid on the block, and they wanted to know something from the other group. Of course at that time, maybe I'm still that way, I opened up my mouth and said, "Yep, that group never missed a meal. They ended up, basically every lunch hour, the president, the two vice presidents and the treasurer, were in Tan Tan Restaurant having lunch on the union's money."

I brought it up. It hit the newspaper as a big article. I never kept it. I remember Shirley laughing seeing that, because we ended up going through the books and there were things we couldn't identify. But I figured, what the heck, it's over with. The lawyer at that time, we had Nestor McCook and ... do you want to cut it for a second? ... He was the president at that time and the other lawyer that showed up at the meeting was Rostic Sadownik. He laughed and said, that'll probably be the comment of the year. He says, but in the future, don't say anything like that. So fine, I took that under advisement. I know Frank Zaprawa and some of his cohorts were even upset and they even threatened me with a lawsuit. I said, "Go ahead, make my day." But it never happened.

I took over in March of '92. Things were peaceful for a little while because we got the office straightened out and everybody was content. We had to hire for a business agent, which was fine. That's one of the things I was involved in so that was a bit of an experience for me. Then the issue came up, oh yes, the City came and said they wanted to do a clerical review, and they wanted to do it now. A total clerical review of all the City employees in 52; the Clerk I's, the Clerk IV's and Clerk V's at that time. The intention was to bring these numbers down, the clerical series down. Of course we never had the staff to do all of that, and they wanted to do it immediately. Of course they came just before quitting time to our office. Marion was with me and we had a bit of a deal telling

them, we don't think so. As it turned out, I talked to the executive and got the permission to hire two temporary business agents.

Q: Who were they?

PN: I can't recall. I cannot recall who the two of them were. But one of the ladies we interviewed ended up coming from the provincial government as a business agent. The funny thing was, the provincial government had a clerical review the year before, where the majority of the clerks either got moved up or got a raise of some kind. We're in the City, so the concept was there wasn't going to be any raise, there was going to be cutting. I believe there was an intention of cutting something like \$1 million or so. This lady was involved in the provincial government review. That was a bonus for us. She had experience on that and we grabbed her, and there was one other lady we had. We assigned them full time on that. When my term ended the majority of it was done, and it ended up being reasonably peacefully done. When Marion took over there were still hiccups on certain ones, but I think those all got settled eventually also.

Q: At one point you teed off on the news media for following members around. When did that incident happen?

PN: That incident happened in the latter part of, in the fall I believe, around August. I was still the president. What was happening is I guess you could call it a union workers witch-hunt going on by the news media. Apparently I found out it started in United States. I'm not sure who the individual is, never seen him on CFRN after that, but it was CFRN TV. They were doing these reports. It seemed like almost a daily report going on. They ended up following some City workers in a truck, and it happened to be surveyors. They said they followed them all day long and these boys never got out to do any surveying work. I got really ticked off about that. Virginia Kinbowli was the business agent. She took care of it, doing if there was grievance or anything else on it. I took care of what you call the PR stuff.

I teed off on CFRN and said, "Excuse me. First of all, how do you know that these instructions weren't given to them by their supervisors? Have you done your research? Go to the supervisor and find out about these people before you spill the beans." I says, "On top of that, the way you're presenting it, you're painting all the union members in the city of Edmonton, especially our 52 members, with the same brush, and that's not fair." That afternoon or the next day I ended up on an 8 ½ by 11 that went out to every individual union member that said, be careful out there, you are being watched by the news media. Of course somebody sent that to CFRN. CFRN came to the office with their camera and interviewed me, and I told them the same thing. The layoff, and you can't paint it with the brush, and why did you do that? I said, why not? I'm warning everybody to beware out there, that you're out there. I also challenged them. I said, "How about the other governments? How about private industry?"

I believe they did go after some feds here in Edmonton. I'm not sure about the provincial government, but definitely nothing like Imperial Oil or anything like that of the higher

and private industry. The other one was, we were in the midst of negotiations, and here the councilors were badmouthing 52's members again that were being overpaid and everything else. We don't deserve a raise, and the whole thing. Being in negotiations, one of the agreements was that both sides agreed on that we will not negotiate in public. This all stays here until it's time to either sign or whatever the case may be. I think it was Ron Hayter at that time and I'm not sure what other councillors were on there, were basically doing their spiel again. In the news media I basically told them, "Tell Jan Reimer to put a leash on her people, because we are not supposed to negotiate publicly; the least she can do is put a leash on them and keep them quiet." I ended up running into Jan Reimer in her office, because at that time things were already happening with the Ed Tel scenario. There was a vote on to get rid of and privatize Ed Tel. I mentioned to her Ed Tel us not for sale. She told me she didn't like what I did in the media. I said, well I don't like when you can't keep a leash on your people, either. That was the end of that.

Q: What kind of mayor was Jan Reimer?

PN: My opinion of Jan Reimer is that I think she had good intentions, but she was really hung up a lot – mind you we can thank her for it – on all this recycling. But sometimes I'm wondering on even though she came from a union background, because of her dad, how union she was supportive. I never got the feeling that she was 100% supportive of the unions. That's my opinion. But one of the good things is I think Jan never took it personal. I ended up helping her in her first campaign. Her campaign manager was that one lawyer that's a judge now, Sheila Greckul. I ended up getting a call from her if I'd go and help her again on the second team. I figured, well I couldn't have been that bad, as far as it goes. I used to see her over here at Superstore shopping, and we'd chitchat for a few minutes. In a lot of things she was a very pleasant lady, and I believe she's a very bright lady. But I think some of the things she wanted to implement, the citizens of Edmonton weren't ready for.

Q: What happened after you ceased to be president, in '92?

PN: In '92 what ended up is I could've gone back. I still had a year left as my vice president position. I gave that up and ran as a trustee and got in as a trustee on the executive. I wanted to do something different than vice president. That was basically auditing the books; that's one of our jobs as a trustee. So I ended up as a trustee, shop steward, and I think I was on a couple of committees, I can't remember which ones. One of them I got back on was the negotiation committee. Then when that term was up, I didn't run for trustee again. I figured that was enough. I believe I ran for main bargaining rep and I think I got in on that one. Of course I was at the bargaining table and the usual kind of stuff, hitting mediation to get a contract. It was the same people again across the side of the table. We knew right off the bat what their arguments were, we're not comparable to Calgary, so on and so forth. The same old stories, but eventually we got a contract, which in those days ended up zero, zero, zero. I think we ended up with three or four years of zero; those were the hard times.

Q: Why zeros?

PN: No increases at all, as far as percentile increases. I think in one of them we got a \$1,500 signing bonus, but it did not go on your base. But there was no percentile merit increases.

Q: Do you recall what was happening in those days, that you got zeros?

PN: Those were pretty mean times. Unemployment was high and the City was hurting. Everybody was hurting. So to keep job security, that was the priority for us in negotiations, and have the least amount of layoffs. The only attrition would be through retirement as the best way to go. I think the members understood that.

Q: Were you around at the time the coalition was formed?

PN: Yes, I was. The coalition was very interesting. When I was in as president I was talking to Marion about it, and we kind of 'buried the hatchet.' Marion couldn't make it at that time so I had coffee, I called in all the unions. Local 30 came, ATU came, and mine, and I don't think there was anybody from 1007. We ended up with a coffee clatch in the coffee shop down below the Centennial Building at that time. There was a coffee shop there, and we talked on seeing how we could get together. I says, "We need to work together to be able to take on the City. We've got to start singing off the same song sheet, because they're playing one against the other."

That's all the time I had with it, and Marion carried on from then on, and I think that was a very good thing. It gave us all bigger clout, The City learned that you can't play anybody against anybody, and that included the fire people, fire department. And the police, they were sort of in it, but not in it because of the way their union is set up. But there was always conversation and material changing hands, and we agreed on certain things when it came to negotiations. We would not low ball anybody and we'd keep everybody informed. I think it works well. Is it going to see an end of the day someday? I don't know. It depends on who the leaders are and what the atmosphere is like. In my opinion, unions are hurting big time.

In Canada maybe 37% of the employers are unionized, and going down. In the United States it's 27% and going down. If you notice, a lot of unions are merging to stay alive. That's the thing that's the scary part. I believe that the unions are making a big mistake, and they have made that mistake for a long time. When you went to school in history class or social class, was there ever anything taught about unions? They taught you about the Riel rebellion, the north and south American revolution, World War I, World War II, the battle on the plains of Champlain, and all of that. But there was never anything ever taught about unions and how they got formed and the hardships, except what you see in movies, and mostly in movies they made unions look like a bunch of gangsters. Today still nothing, absolutely nothing.

The funny thing is I ended up making a presentation at St. Kevin's Junior High School when my daughter was going there. The principal asked me to speak, and it was on

unions. That was the one and only time. Nobody teaches that. If we don't teach this, unionism is going to slowly die. You take a look at the generations coming in, I see them at my workshop, they couldn't care less. All they're asking is when are we getting a raise and how much. Unless their butt is in a sling, then all of a sudden. Otherwise there is total apathy, when you take a look at the voting that happens. And that's the same in the elections, federally or provincially or civically, it's apathy. That's what's happening with our unions, and that's going to hurt.

Q: Why is there so much turmoil within unions?

PN: I think some of it has to do with personality, some of it has to do with power. I'm now the president, I want the power, I have the power and you're nothing. Some of them still don't know to play as a team. That's the same in politics. You take a look at our provincial politics and you take a look at it federally, they become bullies, the ones that are in there. Don't you dare oppose them, don't you dare question anything that they do, because I am the power. That is turning people off.

Q: So you don't think that local 52 has any more turmoil than other locals?

PN: No, I'd say local 52 probably has a lot less than some of the others. Like local 30, I understand, a few years ago was under the jurisdiction of the actual trusteeship. We being independent, there wouldn't be anything like that. That's the first time I ever heard of something like that. I don't know what the problems there are, but that's theirs and I'm not interested in it; I'm more interested in ours.

Q: You guys are facing a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. How would you like to see it played out, so people can see that it's a significant event?

PN: That's a hard question. I've never really thought about how it would be played out. I figure doing a bit of self-promotion that we've been around 100 years, and where we started, and how we started, and where we're going and what the future is. That would be a good start, letting them know we've been around for a while, we're not just a new kid on the block.

Q: If you could have one wish for this union, what would it be?

PN: For its future, that it doesn't lose any more membership and it increases membership. I'm afraid we're going to lose more membership, and that has to do with EPCOR. EPCOR of course now has split. In June it will become private as far as Capital Power goes. My understanding is, Marion said in the last meeting, about 200 of our people go into Capital Power. I think we've got 1,000 members in EPCOR. He also mentioned that there was a raid going on by 1007 on some local 30 positions. So that's sort of strange, but not strange, because 1007 has been renowned to do raiding. Now here's the question. EPCOR itself has got local 30, they got 1007, they got CEP, they got 52. Capital Power will probably have something in that kind of a range too. I can see them doing the same thing as TELUS did – we want one common employer union to deal with. Then there'll be a

bidding war out there and whoever's got the most membership is probably going to end up getting those people. I can see the same thing happening at EPCOR, the leftover EPCOR, which is the water and waste water part that they're going to be looking after.

Q: What do you think about the way the privatization of EPCOR happened? Why should the union be taking such a strong stand on privatization?

PN: I'm puzzled, because I don't know; here's the deal. You've got councilors that are shareholders of EPCOR representing supposedly the members. They got the voting. We as the citizens can't vote so they do the voting for us. They're representing us as the shareholders. At the same time they can say, we're not councilors but shareholders, and therefore we can vote to say to split and adios.

Q: Why did they vote the way they did?

PN: I don't know, because I don't know the mentality of these councilors anymore. I don't know if they've got two brain cells to rub together, to tell you the truth, among all of them. But I think they were told, see I wasn't there, I would've loved to have been a fly on the wall to hear what EPCOR told them as far as putting out the stocks and bonds to the shareholders. There had to be some big dollars mentioned, because they're saying money is going to flow from the power area into EPCOR and EPCOR of course can do their thing for the water and waste and then we get a certain amount of money.

Of course, it is drawn in stone that they can never leave Edmonton, the head office has to stay in Edmonton. Then I look at it and said, "Well, that was something like that with TELUS too. But I think the TELUS deal was about a five year deal where nobody got laid off and everything else." Then the headquarters, after it was gone, people got laid off and headquarters ended up in Burnaby. I'm not sure what kind of goods the councillors were sold. The same way as all the things that were told to them to give the Gold Bar waste treatment plant a transfer of assets to EPCOR for peanuts. I'd like to have a deal like that, I want to be involved in that. As a citizen of Edmonton I'd like the opportunity to get that kind of a deal too. You don't get that in the real world. So I'm not sure what all is in there. What was the second question again?

Q: Why do unions oppose privatization?

PN: The reason being because privatizing is, "what is going to happen?" They run it to the ground. The object is to make as much money as possible for shareholders. This is my experience, what I see, is make as much money for the shareholders as possible, just keep it running, the maintenance part, etc., is probably just standard, in a lot of cases. And two things will happen, either build it up really strong and there's somebody else that's going to buy it. They've done their five years and said, thank you very much, and it's sold to somebody else. The people that are working there are just pawns. In a lot of cases private people don't have unions, so you have no protection and no rights overall. The only positive out of the whole thing is you might be paid more than you do in a provincial or civic or federal government employee job doing the same thing. But your job security

isn't there. Of course what you're doing also is diluting the unions. Like I said before, 37% of the companies in Canada are unionized, 27% in the United States, and slowly dying.

When I was president, also I remember, I talked about Zonia being charged under Frank Zaprawa and so on. When I took over I ended up making a motion at our executive meeting to exonerate Zonia, because we had to clean her name up. Then when our next month was the general membership meeting, I made the motion on that and we got her exonerated. Nobody else was going to do it. My understanding is Zonia asked Shirley to do it and Shirley did not do that. I even suggested Shirley do it, because I said there's nothing there to prove that Zonia did anything wrong. In this case here, we did it and that was the end of that, so Zonia has a clean slate. Otherwise she would've had that hanging over her head forever, and it bothered her quite a bit. I know Zonia is straighter than an arrow when it comes to any of that, because she would never do anything that was contrary to the union.

Q: How have women's jobs changed in the time you've been in the union?

PN: That's a good one. There are now presently, as far as I'm concerned, there's about 65 or 70% of the population of CSU 52 is female compared to men. Before, there were an awful lot of men in an awful lot of positions. Steno pool, the photocopier area, were all run by ladies. Certain areas in marketing – I had to go downstairs a few times in Ed Tel on 104<sup>th</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> where they had the Yellow Pages and the marketing part to get the advertising in – were a fair number of ladies. As far as seeing lady supervisors, they were never that high, I'd say a Clerk III or Clerk IV position. There weren't very many or any that ever remember being in management at that time in the early '70s and mid '80s.

That slowly happened; actually it started picking up a lot more under Jan Reimer's era. I have no problems with it. If a female is qualified, by all means make sure she also gets paid equally too. The jobs were basically typing, administrative, being executive assistants to the general manager or the administrative manager that we had in those days, and a few in accounting. I remember one working in stores, which was unusual. As far as finding women as mechanics, I don't think you ever saw that in those days. Here's another one I remember working as an employee, there used to be surveys going around. I remember one survey going around wanting to know how many indigenous people we actually hire, or in other words first national people. The only ones I remember were one or two in the mobile equipment mechanic shop. Otherwise there was never anything.

When you look at it today you see – I don't want to be a racist, I get along with them all – you take a look at it now, we're very diversified when it comes to nationalities. The other thing was, somebody told me once, the only way you could get a job with the City of Edmonton is if your last name was a chuck of some kind, a Ukrainian. Especially, they said, during Hawrelak's era. If you weren't a Ukrainian or you didn't have a Ukrainian sounding name, you had a hard time getting in to the city as an employee. You've got to remember, there was another thing in the city. If you wanted to work for the City of Edmonton you had to live in the city of Edmonton. Now you can come from anywhere and work in the city of Edmonton. Still once in a while you hear some grumbling about

that, especially if it's a manager or general manager, he should live in the city and have an understanding of this city's needs, instead of living in Ardrossan or wherever. I say, it's his choice where he lives, so long as he does his job. We had also something interesting that I forgot to mention.

Basically ... about the end of the '80s early '90s, we used to be a very happy, I'd say the end of the '80s, a very happy group of employees. We used to work hard, drink hard and play hard. We used to have the men's civic bonspiel in February or March. The largest bonspiel in Canada, 164 rings. It died, it's gone. The city was a big sponsor of the trophy. I don't know how old that trophy is, it's close to 50 or 60 or 70 years old. Civic Credit Union, that was one of the sponsors at that time, now it's known as River City Credit Union. And 52 was a sponsor, and I'm not sure who the others were. I think Auto Rescue was a sponsor at one time also. If it wasn't Auto Rescue it was Cliff Towing. Then I remember we also used to have in computing resources our own Monday night curling at the one by the High Level Bridge, what's it called? The Glenora. It used to be Monday night curling, and we used to have something like 24 teams, if you can believe it. We weren't a super big department at that time. And 52 used to show up and give us door prizes and things, and Zonia always was there. She was always complaining, why isn't there one with women? I said, Zonia, get the women together and start one. She'd laugh. Finally one day, we moved in here in 1980 so it was about '81 or 1982, I said to Zonia, come over to my house, let's talk. We started a civic service mixed curling. Two women, two guys, it didn't matter. You could have your wife on your team, but it had to be at least three city employees.

We had as many, it started out with 32. It was a heck of a deal because Carling O'keefe, I have connections with Carling O'keefe because I also had a touch football team and they were my sponsor. So I got Carling O'keefe, his name was Randy, quite the character. He was all interested and excited, and they were a sponsor. The union was a sponsor and I think the credit union also was a sponsor. We had four events and we had a heck of a time. It went as high as 64 teams for mixed. It would go all week and then we'd have a banquet on the weekend. John Barry was our MC from CFRN in those days, and Allan Mitchell was also one at that time. In fact John Barry was also the men's MC for that one. So we had those events that brought people together. Then we had the manager's cup, which was the hockey one. You know there's still something happening but very poor advertising. That all has disappeared. I don't know if that is because of the different people that we've got now. And the other one is of course nobody wants to do it anymore. If somebody doesn't look after it nobody picks it up again. Under Jan Reimer, somebody told me, she refused to donate money towards the A event, which was the city's trophy, and that was it. I guess she just didn't believe in that kind of stuff. Those things brought us together and did a heck of a morale boost.

That's the other thing. I think the city's morale has gone down quite a bit, unfortunately. The union morale, to a point, but then again you look at the demographics. I think the demographics, education to try and get these people involved. One lady always complained to me, why do I have to pay the charitable dues? I says, you got any children? She says, yes two. I says, you're probably going to get that money back when

they both go to higher learning, university, I think you get \$1,700. I says, for two of them that's \$3,400, that's more than you'll ever pay into that charitable. I says, but if you really have a problem with that, show up to a general meeting, make a motion, and see where it goes, and voice your opinion. I'm not going to do it for you. So those are the kind of things that are happening now, and I think it comes down to education and maybe doing better PR. I don't think the unions are doing a good enough job on that. All you hear in the news media a lot of times, you take a look at what's happening to the auto workers. What are people's comments? Let the auto industry go in the tank, why subsidize them?

[ END ]