

**Leslee Stout**

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CSU 52 Office

Interviewer: Winston Gereluk

Camera: Ron Patterson

LS: My name is Leslee Stout. I work for Edmonton Transit System. I'm located at Ferrier division. My position there is a clerk II. What our department does, our section is called resource management. We look after all of the bus operator files. We're a personnel oriented area. We look after all their performance records, we provide information to the supervisors of bus operations, we provide statistics, and anything to do with the bus operators. My job is to enter in an edited form information onto a computer program, and the hard copy is filed. It's a very good job, I love it. It has to do with editing. I love to be able to take a three page essay or report and edit it down to a couple of paragraphs. I really enjoy that.

Q: Who writes these reports?

LS: They come from the inspectors, the bus operation supervisors. We receive customer concerns, which is a different department of Edmonton Transit, and those are all our complaints and commendations. Those are all entered onto the bus operator files. My position in the union is a shop steward and I'm also a chief shop steward. I'm also chair of the history committee, which was newly formed a little over a year ago.

Q: Tell us about your background.

LS: I was born in Whitehorse, Yukon, to a working class family. My father worked for the department of transportation, which is the reason we were up there. They were married and living in Calgary when opportunities arose in the Yukon. My father worked for the government. For a while there, we lived in a house that was supplied by the government. They wanted to get workers up there, so that was one of the perks – just bring your suitcases and you can move right in. Shortly after that my father left the government position and decided to go out on his own on various different jobs. At that time we moved out to a subdivision called Crestview, which was quite rustic. Since then of course everything has changed, it's much more modern. But that was different, because we had foxes coming into the yard.

A memory that I really like is we used to take in aboriginal children, my mother would look after them. We had one girl stay with us, named Irene. My mother treated us like sisters. If she sewed a dress for me she would sew a dress for Irene in a different color. She would take us downtown and parade us around like we were sisters. It was so nice, because I grew up with such an open-minded way. You look at a person for who they are and nothing to do with where they come from, their background, their race, anything like that. That's one of the earliest memories I have of my parents teaching me that people are to be treated with respect, kindness, and always make them feel like they belong. That's

one of my fondest memories. My father became a carpenter by trade. So I come from a working class family. My father wasn't in a union, because he was out on his own. But this whole idea of fairness and respect comes from my childhood, because that's what it was all about. You treat people with respect and fairness. In the Yukon in the '50s and '60s the population was predominantly aboriginal, so I came to grow up thinking they belong with us. What's the difference between us and them? I went to school with them, I had friends that were aboriginal.

When we moved to Calgary the first thing I said to my mother, where are all the Indian children? Back then they were called Indians, now it's aboriginal. That's the first thing I said the first day of school, where are all the Indian children? That was quite a shock to me, moving to Calgary. Calgary was a large city when we moved there in the late '60s and it was a real eye opener for me. It's like, whoa, this is a totally different world. Everybody had a phone in their house, everybody had a television. It's like, wow, this is very different. We lived there for a few years and then I moved to Kelowna where I grew up as a teenager. It was very good, because I went to a high school which had people of all different economic levels, which was good because you went to school with kids who were very well off and kids whose parents were struggling economically. I had friends from all different walks of life there.

Eventually I moved to Victoria on my own, lived there for about a year and then came to Edmonton, where I've been since 1977. I first worked, my first experience with a union is I worked at Northwest Industries as an aeronautical, they deal with, what do they call them, military aircraft. They did the repair work on a lot of military aircraft, and their union was the union of, help me with this, International Association of Machinists.

The clerks upstairs, which I was one of them in the accounting department, were not unionized. But the floor was unionized, where all the machinists were, the people who dealt in parts, all of that. So there wasn't much talk about the unions in that building. It was almost like an "us and them", which I didn't really like, because I thought we were all in this together. Shortly thereafter they had a massive layoff in Northwest Industries and I was one of the first hired and first to be let go. I was very sad about that. I enjoyed working there. But actually it was a good thing because then I was hired by Edmonton Transit System and have been there ever since. I was hired in 1983 as an admin clerk out at Mitchell division. I was on the main floor there and I got to interact with the bus drivers and the supervisors and inspectors. I loved that because it was none of this "us and them" attitude there. It was all about, "we are all in this together." I knew that there was a union that looked after the clerks but I was so new on the job and the number of clerks in that division at the time was very small.

I felt I was being treated very fairly there. I had good supervisors. I never thought anything of it. I was there for about two years and then we had a re-organization and a lot of the clerks from Standard Life Building came to Mitchell division to work upstairs. They opened up the whole upstairs area into offices. I think the person who got me started thinking about being a shop steward was one of the clerks came downstairs and said, we need a shop steward in this garage. They were used to having a shop steward at

Standard Life. She said, I don't want to be a shop steward, I would like someone else to take it over; why don't you look into it? So I contacted the union office and said, I've been asked to be a shop steward here. It wasn't at the election time. I think it was in the summertime, because we usually have our elections in November.

So I phoned up the union office and I don't really recall how I became one. I'm sure there was not an election; I think I just put my hand up and volunteered. The rest is history. That was in 1987, and I've been a shop steward consecutively since then. Even though in 1989 I moved over to Ferrier division, I took my shop steward status with me. For a very brief time I was also looking after Mitchell division until they elected a shop steward over there. For the longest time I looked after mainly the Ferrier people, control center, Westwood and Davies. I just recently have had some new members come under me in security, which is still all part of Edmonton Transit. I think I have about 21 members that I look after now. I really enjoy it. I love to help people out. I have sat in a few meetings with supervisors where the clerks felt that they weren't being treated fairly. I was very professional about it. I brought in a human resources consultant every time because I wanted everything to be very open.

I didn't want a member to feel as if she was being singled out or anything like that. I did get IA commendation. She came out to me one day and said, "you sure know how to do your job." I'm never one to go around forcing things on people. When I have new people come to the workplace I say to them, "I'm your shop steward, I'm here for you if you ever need me." I said, I don't go actively recruiting people. Usually people go, "oh this is great," and they come to me. I find that's the best way – let them come to you. And they will.

I have taken some courses in dealing with difficult people and dispute resolution, which I took quite a few years back. They were just offering that to anyone regardless of whether they were a shop steward or not. Since then I've made myself become very knowledgeable through documentaries. I have kept myself on top of human relations by watching documentaries, by reading books. The thing of it is, not everybody thinks the same way, not everybody reacts to the same situation the same way. What might bother one person would not bother another person. If the person comes to me and they are bothered or disturbed or concerned about something, I always try to put myself in their shoes. I try to say to myself, okay, put yourself exactly where they're working, the supervisors that are under them and how do they feel. It's not how I would feel about it, it's how they feel about it. I've had situations where a clerk has been very upset with a supervisor and I've known the supervisor to be a very fair-minded person. But it's how she felt about a situation that was very important. He was very open-minded when we brought this to his attention. He was quite taken aback by how she felt and was so willing to sit down with her, with me present and his supervisor present, and try to rectify the situation.

I've been very lucky that we have never had a supervisor come to me and say, I will not attend a meeting that you are holding about this clerk, I will not have human resources come and meet with me. They've been very open-minded. I think the reason is that I deal

with it very professionally. I will phone them up and say, this is the situation, I would really like to resolve it; can we please meet? What is your schedule like? I then contact the human resources consultant and indicate I've set up a meeting with the supervisor, I would really like it if you could attend the meeting. I've been very lucky that way. I've never had a situation where I've come up against a brick wall.

Q: Who are your members? What's their attitude towards the union?

LS: The members that I represent are predominantly clerical. We have some system analysts in our security section, which I now represent. But the large number of the membership that I look after are roughly in the same position that I am, mainly clerical, looking after files, assisting supervisors with information management. My members have been for the most part quite satisfied with what the union does with them. They pretty much leave it up to me if they have a question. I have my trusty shop stewards manual and my collective agreement always in my desk ready to bring it out at any time to help. I've even had supervisors come to me and say, I want some clarification on this. If I can't answer the question I phone the union up and ask to speak to a business agent for assistance.

The only thing I find a little bit dismaying is my members, I guess because they're so satisfied, sometimes they feel the need not to have to go out and vote, like if it's for the president or on the collective agreement. This is where I have a little bit of frustration. Sometimes I joke with them and say, well you have to vote, you're women, and remember we did not have the vote at all not too long ago. Sometimes I can guilt them into going that way. But I think the problem is that if there was a real issue I'm sure they would be out there voting. That's usually how it is. If there was something where it might end up as a strike vote, then I think they're more inclined to come.

Most of the situations I've dealt with have been mainly with supervisors and clerks maybe not seeing eye to eye on things. I've never come across a violation of the collective agreement, where someone is not being paid overtime, or I know some people prefer to take time in lieu. I've not had a situation where that's being violated or there's a safety issue. I'm also a worksite health and safety representative at Ferrier division, so I tell them to come to me if you have any problems with the office equipment or there's a problem with the building that you find unsafe. But usually I'm always walking around checking the stuff out myself. Lots of times they assume, oh well, Leslee's looking after that anyway - which is good I guess, that they have the confidence in me that I'm looking out for it.

That's another thing. For us it's predominantly air quality, because we work in a garage. Whenever we have these toxic smells coming up, there is another clerk now in the garage who is the go-to person who will report to whomever would be looking after it, whether it's diesel fumes or paint fumes coming from the paint shop in the garage. That's really our issue, is air quality. In the situation with supervisors in the union, I've never had a supervisor say to me, I don't know why they have a union here, why do you need a union? They're very respectful towards the union 52. I think they realize there are two

unions in there, ATU 569 Amalgamated Transit Union local ... The attitude of the supervisors toward CSU 52 and the other union that is also in our garage, Amalgamated Transit Union local 569 has been well received. I've never had a supervisor remark disparagingly on either union. Also, the presidents of ATU 569 and our president, Marion, who's been our president for a long time, have always had a very good relationship. I've never had any situation where there's been a conflict between the two unions. In fact, one of the agreements that we have had in the past, not written in our collective agreement but in an agreement between the unions, is when bus drivers have been injured on the job, if there is some help that they can do for us that doesn't violate FOIP issues, which is the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy, they've been allowed to come and work in a clerical vein.

I've always explained to any of the union members that I represent that no, they are not taking away a position, this is strictly a temporary situation until they can return to their jobs. I've been always very cognizant of that and ask people to make me aware if you are bringing in a local 569 bus operator and they're seen to be doing a clerical position, please let me know, because it does create a bit of friction between the clerks and maybe even the bus operator. I've always rushed to quash any feelings of, oh here's somebody walking in from a different union taking over one of our jobs. Lately it's come to, where in my area, because of the highly sensitive nature of our work, we have always hired either someone from our clerical pool for the city of Edmonton, or we hire an outside agency to bring in someone in our clerical pool. We cannot have bus operators working in our area, because it is definitely a conflict of interest. They would be filing documents into another bus operator's file, which is definitely a FOIP issue. So normally what the bus operators do is come in and clean running boards or maintain the route maps. We have a whole wall full of all the route maps in each of the divisions. Some of them have done parking patrol, which is not a clerical position at all. This is usually a security issue where they go out and check the parking lots, like Park & Ride at Clareview, for instance.

Q: What has been your experience with the bus drivers?

LS: The bus operators, we always have a running joke. I know of few of them have said, god, I could never do your job stuck in an office all day in front of a computer. I go, I could never do your job all day long driving around in traffic with crazy drivers and maybe people who aren't so respectful toward you. For the most part, the bus drivers like being on the road and meeting people. Most of the bus drivers, this is a job that you have go through a lot of testing to be hired for. This isn't just a job where you are hired just because you're going to drive around and pick up people. There's a lot more to it than that. A lot of people don't realize that. I have the utmost respect for these bus operators who go out every day, take a bus out. You never know what's going to happen, whether you're going to get someone having a seizure on your bus or some youths who are less than respectful, and you have to deal with the situation. They are not required to get involved, they are required to call control for assistance. They will send out peace officers to help if it's escalating to where the operator could become hurt physically.

Q: Are you the one who gets to vent these reports?

LS: I read them after the fact. We have what we call an IIDC report, an incident investigation data collection form. It's a form that is filled out by the transit inspectors when an operator is perhaps injured on the job by a person or if it's a situation where they simply stepped off their bus and twisted an ankle. It's everything and anything. But there is a serious issue going on out there in the public with spitting and slapping of the operators. I feel for them. Some of them are just politely saying, I'm sorry sir, that's not the right fare, you're short 50 cents. Even Edmonton Transit says, never get into a confrontation over a \$2.50 or \$2.75 fare, because it's not worth it. But some operators get a bit frustrated. You get enough people on your bus not paying or simply walking right by the fare box. I can see that they're out there to collect the fares and they're just being diligent in their job, but it's to the point where they say never force the issue, it's not worth it, your life is worth far more than a fare. They said if it's a chronic fare evader, you phone us and we'll deal with it. The peace officers will come out and deal with it.

What I like in the garage where I work, I get to interact with the bus operators, and I love the stories they tell. They sit down and they'll say, I was driving the 151, I had a night run and a day run. I'm sitting there and I know exactly what they're talking about. I love that. I take the bus every where, I don't own a vehicle by choice. So when they talk about bus routes I know exactly what they're talking about and I'll say, oh, where does that route go? I learn a lot that way about what goes on out there. I learn a lot about what goes on out there through the commendations we receive and even through some of the complaints we receive. I would say for the most part a huge number of our operators are just out there doing their jobs and everything is going fine.

Q: What changes have you seen in Edmonton Transit over 25 years?

LS: I started in 1983. The number of women bus drivers was very small. In fact, if you saw a female walk into the garage in uniform it was, oh, there's a bus driver who's a woman. We didn't have the number of ethnic groups driving bus either. Over the years, transit has really become what I like to call the United Nations of departments. We have a large number of women driving buses now, everything from what we call big bus to our smaller community service buses. We have a large number of people from all ethnicities, which is great. The garage that I work in, we have a largely predominantly East Indian population. We are getting a lot more people of the Latin American population coming in. I love this, because you get to sit down and listen to them talk about their life. A lot of them have come from India. There's been a few actually born and raised in Canada, but a large number have come right over from India. They're very open-minded with telling about the stories when they were kids in India and what brought them over here. They're very hardworking people as well.

Q: What sort of changes have you seen in the service?

LS: I would still say there is an issue with not enough service in the outlying areas. What I mean by that is the new subdivisions. We have a problem in transit that's been ongoing. It's a cycle. The people perceive the transit service to be poor in their area so they go out

and purchase a vehicle. You have less people riding transit so transit says, we have to cut back in that area, there's not enough ridership. The people in transit that make the decisions know this, it's very frustrating. How do you get more people to ride the bus? You've got to at least provide every 15-minute service, not just in peak hours, and you can't have the service shut down at 6 o'clock in the evening if people want to go out at 10 or 11 o'clock at night.

One of the services that they have been investigating is almost what we would call 24 hour transit service. I would think that would be a very good idea, especially on your Friday, Saturday and Sunday, on the weekends, especially Friday night and Saturday night there would be more people up to board a bus that try to get behind the wheel of their car. Or they don't want to wait for a taxi so they think, oh well, no I'm going to drive my car, I just want to get home. The thing of it is, most of the nightclubs let out at 2:30 and by then transit is all nicely tucked away in bed asleep. That's the thing.

The greatest thing that we have had in transit are buses that are mobility accessible. The old jimmies we had, it was difficult for women carrying strollers on. Women had to collapse the strollers, so your baby in one arm, the stroller in the other, perhaps a bottle bag in another. That's too much to ask. Now parents can bring the stroller right on the bus. There's no having to fold it flat and hold the baby on your lap. In fact, what the transit would like people to do is leave your child in the stroller. The stroller is secured, lock the wheels, and the child is secure in the stroller. Another thing is we can now pick up wheelchair patrons, even on motorized scooters. The low floor buses are excellent for that. People who have trouble climbing stairs can now, there's this one minor step up. The bus also kneels so that it's practically in line with the curb. That, to me, is the greatest thing that transit ever did. It has allowed people that would normally have to wait for our DATS service, which is quite busy as it is, the ease to just go out and go shopping. Whereas with DATS they would have to make an appointment to be picked up, here they can go to the bus stop. Even the bus stop shelters are wheelchair and stroller accessible so if it's pouring out you can wheel your stroller in the shelter or put your wheelchair in there so that you're not sitting out in the rain. When I've gone to other cities that don't have that, I really notice. I say, how do people get around who are on crutches or who have to use canes or things like that? I think that's the greatest thing transit has ever done, is made their buses mobility accessible.

Q: How is the LRT being accepted?

LS: The LRT for the longest time was a short train service that just went from pretty much downtown up to Clareview. It has really come along. I was just recently out at Southgate Transit Center and noticed how quickly they are building the line out to Southgate. I've been to the transit line out to the south campus; very nice. I would like to see the transit system go all over the city, even a transit system that goes out to St. Albert, Stony Plain, Leduc. I think that would be the greatest thing that transit could do. The more accessible a transit system is, I know it sounds so pat, but the more accessible, the more people are going to take it. I know for a fact if they can get more service into the outlying areas, more frequent service, people would take transit more. But we have to

educate people that you don't always need a vehicle, you can get by with transit, especially if you work downtown. Why would you want to take your vehicle? The charge just to park your vehicle for a day is astronomical. Take the bus, you don't have to worry about the traffic, let the bus driver worry about that.

Q: What are some events you remember from your union's history?

LS: When I first became a shop steward and started attending the meetings they were at the old City Hall in the lunchroom there. I was very much a newbie there. I had no idea what they were talking about even though I had read over the collective agreement. So this was all a new experience to me. I noticed that there were a lot of people there in the meeting who had been in the union for a long time as shop stewards. I do remember Zonia being there. I never got a chance to really get to know Zonia as well as I do now until I became the chair of the history committee and she joined us as the treasurer. One of the things I love is talking to her about the union because she's like a walking encyclopedia of the union and she seems to have a memory of so many things that have happened in the union.

I do remember Shirley Wood being elected. She was our first female president. I thought that was quite a forward, it was very progressive, to for the first time have a woman president. I think Shirley served for one term and then shortly thereafter they had an election when her term was up, and Marion Leskiw came in. I remember Marion always attending the union meetings when we were at Villa Vesuvius, which is no longer in existence. I do remember a lot of people being very passionate at the general meetings. I was quite amazed that people were so passionate about what was being discussed in the general meetings. There were people who would get up and challenge the current president. I thought, wow, this is so good that no one has to feel afraid of voicing their opinion. They did ask to be respectful when you are approaching the president, which is only natural. When you have something to say it should be done in a respectful tone.

But what I really liked is people would get up and challenge an idea that was being brought forward, like a motion. I found that extremely, it made me feel good about the union, that people could feel free to do that. I noticed in our union that there are so many people who stay in as shop stewards year after year, and they really have a vested interest in the well being of the union. I think if people weren't so passionate about the union you wouldn't have people standing up and saying, no this isn't how our union should be run or we should be running it this way. People want to be involved in the union. I think that's the best thing. I know some people may think, oh my god, here's this person getting up again and talking. But that's what the whole democratic situation is about. You're a union member, you should be able to stand up and say, okay, if they have a concern say it or if they're representing their members who have a concern.

I understand the union did go on strike many years ago. I had not been an employee of the city of Edmonton at the time. Whenever I hear a union having to go on strike it really disheartens me. I think, oh my god, are things so bad that they have to go on strike? This is so sad. So many people lose a lot when they do go on strike. It becomes a financial

sacrifice for them. But I admire those people so much to take a stand like that, go on strike, even though they know they're going to lose money that way and they don't know how long the strike is going to be. Thankfully, my understanding is there was no violence during the strike. I know many unions in the past have had violent acts against them when they have been on strike, and that actually terrifies me in a democratic country that that can be allowed.

But for the union, I know just recently we were very close to having a strike vote. This was... This recent one we were happy with our 4.5 and 4.5. But the previous collective agreement, we almost had a strike vote there. The city decided to, geez I'm losing my ability to speak. The city and the bargaining unit, no the city and the negotiating committee were able to come to an agreement and that strike vote never came to be. That was very good, because I'd rather see the city and the negotiating committee sit down at the table rather than have people have to go on strike. It would've made it very difficult where I worked, for the Amalgamated Transit Union operators to cross the picket line. You have to get transit service out there. If the union 52 workers are on strike it would place them in a very difficult position.

Q: What kind of union is it?

LS: I would say our union is, well we're almost like a pink collar and a white collar union. We predominantly do look after the clerical staff, accountants, we actually have surveyors under us as well. What I like is lots of times because there's mainly women who work in these positions, that they get left under the radar. I firmly believe if it were not for Civic Service Union 52 we would not have the good pay scale that we have for our positions. Unfortunately, clerical work is always considered not that important, if you want to use that way of thinking. But it is very important. We know this whenever we're all off sick and the supervisors have to run the show and they will come back to us and say, oh my god, I didn't realize you did all of this. We deserve to be paid. When we walk into the job we have to already know how to run an office, we have to know how to operate a computer and be knowledgeable of a number of computer programs. We are not usually trained on the job. That's what I like about our union, is we represent the other people who work in the organization. Where I am in Edmonton Transit we have a union that looks after our operators and dispatchers and anything to do with their work. The responsibilities of a bus operator and the responsibilities of most of our union 52 people are vastly different. We have different concerns than what the bus operators have. So I like being under a union that is predominantly geared toward looking after people who work in offices, or they could work out in the field in EPCOR. We have people who work out in the field, but they need representation. I think our union is a union that represents everybody who doesn't fall under one particular union. We have a whole group of people in our union, different positions.

Q: Could you go deeper into the kind of union it is?

LS: What's the union that now looks after the Shaw Conference Center?

Q: United Food and Commercial Workers.

LS: Union 52 is one of the unions in the coalition of unions. Union 52 was involved in the United Food and Commercial Workers, working with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union when the Shaw Conference center food handlers were walking off the job. The United Food and Commercial Workers Union was the ones who wanted to represent them, and union 52 backed them. This is where you have to check the facts, but there was support on the picket line from union 52. Marion Leskiw, our president, had brought it up at several general meetings what was happening with the Shaw Conference Center workers. It's important, even though we are a local union and independent, it is important that we get involved in situations where we can help out an international union. It's all about the workers. It shouldn't be, well we don't really look after food handlers, we're not going to get involved in that. No, it should always be, you're a union, United Food and Commercial Workers, you want to look after members, we want to look after members as well, we're going to help you with your fight. That's what it's all about is unions supporting other unions. It is true, solidarity is what it's all about. When one union is trying to bargain in good faith for their rights, for a decent wage, when they see another union coming on board who's totally unrelated to the positions that their members would be filling on the job, it sheds light on the subject that, hey, these unions aren't just stand alone, they are part of one big family. That's what it's all been about. If you look at the history of the unions it's always been unions helping other unions. You never know when your own union is going to be put in a position where you're going to need help from another strong union that's international.

Q: Have members questioned a union when it's done something like that or when it got involved in civic elections?

LS: Yes, there have been some people. I think it was just a matter of misunderstanding or not being educated as to why we are involved. I think a lot of people think, this is a local union and an independent union; we look after these type of members and that's the way it should be. But you have to get involved when there's a civic election going on because that's going to impact on us. I know when city 97 came along it really impacted a lot of people. Even to this day we're still feeling the impact. Every time there is a civic election it impacts on Civic Service Union 52. We are working in City Hall, we're everywhere. It does impact on whether there's going to be job losses, whether there's going to be some jobs that are made redundant, and layoffs, all sorts of things like that impact us whenever there's a civic election.

Q: Do you remember any people you'd like to mention?

LS: I remember when I came on with the union, Lloyd Egan was the president. Lloyd Egan I found to be very fair. He was a very calm person, not easily ruffled, but still very passionate about issues that were brought up at general meetings. He was a very professional man, always came in wearing a suit, but that was the era as well in the '80s. I always found him, oh who's this man? This is Lloyd Egan. Very down to earth person but very passionate about the union, very professional.

Q: Why do you suppose he got beaten then?

LS: I'm not sure. I came in in 1983. When did he...?

Q: He got beaten by Frank Sopawa; were you there at that time?

LS: Yes, I was. I think the difference between Lloyd and Frank is Frank was a very, when he was running for president, he was a very gregarious, outspoken, very animated person when he spoke. I think a lot of people maybe thought that Lloyd was too laid back. But that's not what it was at all. He just had a different approach to things, more methodical and analytical. Frank was more outspoken and more of aggressive, assertive personality. I think a lot of people thought, oh well we need someone like that in our union who's very outspoken, who's take the bull by the horns kind of person. Well you can still get a lot of work done even if you are the more analytical type of person. I think people were just very, maybe they thought this was the kind of president they needed.

Q: What kind of person was Shirley Wood?

LS: Shirley Wood, I think what happened with Shirley is she kind of had to come in and take over and try to smooth the waters. She was given a situation where anybody would've struggled with it just to try to get everything back in the center again. I think she was a bit overwhelmed by that, understandably. I think what happened is maybe people started to lose a bit of confidence. But sometimes it takes two terms to get the boat back in the water and on calm seas again. In her situation it was almost like she was brought in to get everything back in the center, but then maybe they thought she couldn't do it quickly enough. I'm not sure. But I think she was just so overwhelmed with what was going on.

Q: What kind of person is Marion Leskiw?

LS: Marion is a lot like Lloyd in the fact that he is analytical and methodical. He's not confrontational. I've not seen him speak to people when there's a civic election going on. I haven't seen him in action at a meeting of the councilors. But my understanding is people do have respect for him. Likely what happens is he doesn't go in there like gangbusters. He goes in there and says, okay, this is where our position is. I think with Marion, because he is more of an analytical person, he goes in there ... he's done his homework before he goes into any meetings. He says the odd time he's been blindsided even though he has done his homework, but this was out of his control when he has become blindsided. It's like maybe a decision was made 10 minutes before he walked into the meeting and he had no way of knowing what was going on. I do think that he really cares about the union. He's always run for president and he does care.

Q: Why did you choose to become chair of the history committee?

LS: It's very funny. Amanda Hall is a very outspoken shop steward. I like her because she's very charismatic and she's very forthright. We were at the general meeting and she said, we need a history committee, our history 100 year centennial is coming up. She said, we should strike a history committee. Everyone agreed to that, and then she nominated me. I had never had any dealings with her or anything. This totally came out of nowhere. What had happened is we originally started out with another chair, and he had to step down due to work and person reasons. At the time I was the co-chair, so the rest of the membership elected me as the chair. I've always liked history, I've always liked to know why things are the way they are, why they started out this way. I really enjoy that. I always want to know why things are the way they are. So I came upon this and I was the chair and then when we had elections again I asked to be nominated again as the chair and was elected as the chair again. I really like it. We have an excellent team. We've had a few people who have come on and had to step down for various reasons, always regrettably. The people that we do have are very passionate about it. I think a lot of it is people don't really know how much work is involved in this. It may seem a bit overwhelming to some people and yes, it is overwhelming. We're dealing with 100 years here. But it's so interesting.

Q: Why is important that history be a part of your 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration?

LS: What I think is unfortunately when everything is going well, people become apathetic. They have to be reminded that this isn't always the way it is. You always didn't have three hours to attend a medical appointment, you lost pay for that. We didn't have a sick plan, a long term disability plan. All of these things that we now take for granted, our union had to fight for. Things like maternity leave. We start to forget what our unions had to fight for that we now take for granted as our right. Well it's my right to have sick pay. If I'm sick why do I have to lose out on money? Having some friends in private industry where they are not paid when they're sick makes me realize that, oh my god, we are so lucky to have a union who looks out for us, looks after us. You cannot be fired without a cause. You can't just have the boss walk in one day and say, oh you're fired, I don't like what you're wearing today. And violations of collective agreements. A lot of supervisors realize that actually having a union makes supervisors a lot more compassionate and open minded. They realize that they have to treat their employees with respect because there is a union there to protect us against wrongful dismissal, conduct violations on the job, things like that. Things like just having a code of conduct, for instance, where the supervisor can't stand there and scream at you while you're at your desk. Simple things like that. I really feel that people always have to be reminded of where we came from and what we had to fight for.

[ END ]