

## From the Big Chair

Recently my staff honoured me in branch and on social media by acknowledging my years of service to the co-operative and credit union system. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members and community members for the kind words and congratulations on this milestone. I really liked the comments about how young I am supposed to be and how I still have a long career ahead of me!

In talking with staff about my time in "the system", they suggested I comment on changes I have seen during my career. I am not sure the changes are as drastic as what my grandfather saw in his lifetime. He walked for many miles to claim his homestead only to watch a man walk on the moon years later. He went from farming with horses to farming with machinery.

Here is my trip down memory lane.

When I started in the Co-op Store:

- We did not have product scanners. We had to ring in every item purchased.
- Prices were not programmed into tills. We hung the sales flyer by the till, but memorized sale items and prices to not delay the buying process by having to look up each item on the flyer.

During my time with the Credit Union:

- When I started, we had one computer for the whole organization. All transactions were posted by one person. All those transactions required a paper copy to be given to the computer operator.
- All member information was printed out on large, lined sheets on what was known as a tractor printer. You referred to paper reports stored in massive binders for everything.
- We used typewriters to complete documents like mortgages. We stapled the papers to the document if the land description was too long for the allotted space on the document. I was not a good typist. Thank goodness for erase ribbons.
- We used cheque sorters to help us sort cheques to make filing them easier. At that time, we personally reviewed every cheque for signing authorities, signatures and body and figure correctness.
- To open an account required a member signature on one document that was as large as a recipe card. It was pretty simple and basic.
- Day end, month end and year end were a process. Depending on when you started the process

and which process it was, it meant going into the office more than once, sometimes in the middle of the night (or later if you forgot) to change paper and to continue to initiate each stage of the process. Year end took a lot of time and effort to complete.

- Members used to come into the branch regularly to do business as their only other option was to phone in.
- When I worked in Meadow Lake, we used what were called dummy terminals to do account inquiries and post transactions. If I remember correctly, they only displayed three to five lines of information at a time.
- While I was there, we advanced to getting computers for each employee. We didn't really use them to full capacity at first, but our use evolved as time went on.
- Fax machines and what they were capable of doing was almost unfathomable. You could send documents anywhere using a phone line. Crazy! In the beginning, fax machines used a roll of paper, so your fax often was placed on your desk in a roll.
- I was working in Debden when we got dial up connection to the internet on one computer only.
- While in Debden we opened a branch in Big River and were the first to use new technology to run the banking system. This was known as a RAT, which stood for Random Access Terminal.
- We thought faxes were something, but then we got email. In the beginning getting an email was pretty special. Ask us now how we love email!
- During my time, the credit union system in Saskatchewan has gone from over 200 autonomous credit unions to 33 currently.
- We used to have meeting seasons in the spring and fall. We drove to Saskatoon or Regina regularly and often for training or system meetings. The system meetings used to use the biggest conference rooms in the hotel. Now we rarely meet and when we do we use a standard meeting room. We sometimes used several rooms to allow different sized credit unions the opportunity to talk amongst themselves.
- The system "bought" some BMO branches predominantly in rural Saskatchewan in what became known as the Kanata project.
- Technology and the use of

technology has blossomed. I have gone from one computer in the credit union to a laptop for every employee, to smart phones and apps, to Enterprise Content Management Programs to electronically store documents, to DocuSign for electronic signatures, to the use of Artificial Intelligence, to bots, to talk of Open Banking. What a lot of flexibility and adaptability required.

- Teams and Zoom meetings took some getting used to, but COVID forced us to master the technology. They are commonplace now.

Through all this change, the thing that has remained constant is helping members and being committed to community. Members may use our services differently, but we still have a desire to help them through whatever life offers them. As an employee and as the credit union, we have had all kinds of opportunities to get involved in community events and functions and have participated in many different ways. All those memories are pretty awesome as was this trip down memory lane.

Thank you for allowing me to enjoy a long career and for continuing to utilize and support Unity Credit Union Limited. It is my honour to continue to serve you.

Gerald Hauta  
Chief Executive Officer



Unity Credit Union  
120 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East  
P.O. Box 370  
Unity, SK S0K 4L0

Phone: 306-228-2688  
Fax: 306-228-2185

Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

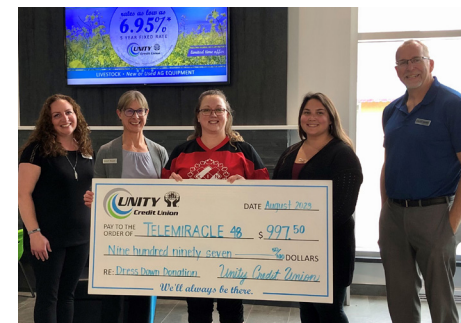
www.unitycu.ca  
Email: info@unitycu.ca



## UNITY CREDIT UNION NEWSLETTER

### CU in the Community

#### Donation to Telemiracle



Pictured is Nora Aldred representing The Kin Club on behalf of Telemiracle 48, with Michelle Aldred, Shauna Hammer, Courtney Roberts, and Gerald Hauta representing Unity Credit Union.

Unity Credit Union staff have donated \$997.50 to Telemiracle! This represented staff donations to be able to "dress down" on Fridays from January - June 2023.

#### Swimming Pool BBQ



Pictured is Shannon DeRoo, Manager of Digital Experience, and Nicole Headrick, Lending Account Manager.

Unity Credit Union Aquatic Centre held their annual Drowning Prevention Week BBQ in July. Some of our staff pitched in to cook burgers. It was a great turnout!

#### UCU Scholarships



Pictured is Scott Smith, Certified Financial Planner, presenting the scholarships to Dailyn Wagner and Kaybree Spendelow. Congratulations to our Unity Credit Union scholarship recipients from Unity Composite High School - Dailyn Wagner and Kaybree Spendelow! They each received \$2,000 to be put toward their post-secondary education.

#### Orange Shirt Day



Unity Credit Union acknowledges that our office is on Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional homeland of the Metis. In the spirit of reconciliation, we recognize, value, and respect the diverse cultures and heritages of Indigenous peoples of Canada. Our staff wore orange shirts on September 29 to acknowledge this day.

#### Farewell Ashlyn



Pictured is our Board of Directors President, Colette Lewin, presenting a scholarship to Ashlyn Greenwald. A big thank you to Ashlyn Greenwald for being part of our Junior Board Member program for the past two years! Our Junior Board Member Program allows high school students to be a part of our Board of Directors. They are remunerated for each meeting they attend in the form of a scholarship towards their post-secondary education.

### Employee Feature



My name is **Deanna Botrokoff**. I joined Unity Credit Union in March, 2023, as a Member Experience

Representative. I am looking forward to meeting all our members in the community and doing my best to serve them. When I'm away from work I enjoy taking care of the things I am blessed to have - my husband, children, property, and pets!



## Spot the Warning Signs of Fraud Before it's Too Late

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a time to remind ourselves that online fraud happens every day to thousands of people around the world, regardless of education or background. There are a few steps we suggest taking when an offer or opportunity comes along that might sound enticing, or even too good to be true.

**1. Slow down:** A common theme in many fraud attempts is a sense of artificial urgency. Fraudsters create this to prevent you from thinking things through. When presented with an enticing offer, stop and think about it. If the fraudster says it's only available now, chances are it's not a real offer.

**2. Apply the 'too good to be true'**

**test:** Listen to your gut. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Looking back to our previous tip, if the offer is limited or only available 'now', then chances are it is not a real offer.

**3. Question everything:** Who is the person who contacted you? Do you know them? Is their request unsolicited? Why did they approach you? What are the risks? More importantly, would you trust them to watch your wallet, purse or phone?

**4. Get a second opinion:** If you are being asked to do something (ex. wiring someone money or sending bitcoin) and you feel uneasy about it, bounce the idea off someone else. Contact a trusted friend, a colleague or someone at your credit union and

run the proposal past them. Do they think it's a good idea too?

**5. There is no such thing as a free lunch:** Many scams play on the appeal of quick, easy money. Don't let that distract you from making a reasonable, informed, cautious decision.

**6. You are not a cashier:** If someone sends you money and says you need to send some of it back to them, for any reason, it's a scam. These are often seen during private online purchases where parties are paying each other via e-Transfer or Paypal. The money they send is often fake, or perhaps a real transfer that'll eventually bounce, but the money you would have sent back to them was real.

## International Credit Union Day

International Credit Union Day has been celebrated on the third Thursday of October since 1948. It is designed to create awareness and celebrate how credit unions improve the lives of their members around the world. Credit unions truly have the perfect business model to make a commitment to members and communities across the world. The global credit union movement is now more than 393 million members strong, and they are served by more than 87,000 credit unions in 118 countries.

What sets credit unions in Canada apart from other financial institutions?

- As financial co-operatives, credit unions are guided by the seven co-operative principles.
- A credit union is a secure and well-regulated financial institution.
- Credit unions are for-profit,

member-owned financial institutions that offer financial services to individuals and businesses.

- Credit unions are local, community-based, full-service co-operatives that put their members' needs first.
- Credit unions give back to their member base and communities through profit-sharing and investing in local organizations and initiatives.
- Members have a say in how their credit union is run. All credit unions operate under the 'one member, one vote' model. No matter how much money is deposited, each credit union member has a say in how their credit union is run by democratically voting for its board of directors. The directors are selected from the membership base of the credit union.
- Credit unions' localized expertise

can allow them to offer their members greater flexibility and more personalized banking services than other financial institutions.

### Seven Co-operative Principles:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, and Information
6. Co-operation among Co-operatives
7. Concern for Community



## Pay off Debt or Start Saving? What Should You do First?



What's more important? Paying off debt or saving money? Debt repayment is incredibly important, but if you're living without any savings, and your current debt payments are manageable, it might be time to think about building a rainy-day fund.

It might sound odd, but saving money for yourself is one of the most important parts of being able to pay off debt. Sound odd? Consider that one of the biggest roadblocks people face in paying off debt is the inability to cover an unexpected expense. If living pay cheque to pay cheque, unexpected bills can put immense pressure on a person's finances, making it harder to cover other expenses, and in some cases, creating new debt.

Having access to a rainy-day fund grants a person the freedom to

make bigger debt payments down the road without fearing disruption by any unexpected expenses. How big should a rainy-day fund be? At minimum it should cover a couple of months of expenses, but ideally, it would cover three to six.

If you're dealing with debt repayment difficulties, Unity Credit Union might have a solution for you. Give us a call at 306.228.2688 to discuss your options and how you can move ahead with less financial stress, and to make a plan for your future!

## Worried About Inflation and How This Will Affect Your Financial Plan?



Rising inflation has been making headlines and creating challenges for many this year.

In this environment, many are looking at their financial picture to determine how to save, spend, or invest in the way that best aligns with long-term goals.

Through an updated financial plan, renewed budget, or smart investment

vehicles, you can minimize some of the impacts of inflation.

Unity Credit Union can help you stay on track and reach your goals. Are you worried about inflation and how it will affect your financial plan? Our Certified Financial Planner, Scott Smith, can help. Give Scott a call at 306.228.2688.