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CCFA Executive

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[Nicholas Read](#), Treasurer
[Debbie Gascoyne](#), Chair, CMC
[Judith Hunt](#), Chair, CNC
[Jacquie Conway](#) Chair., PDC

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[Pasquale Fiore](#)

CCFA Office:

[Erin Waugh](#), Admin Assistant
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CCFA Office Hours

Septmber 18	8:30 - 4:30
September 19:	8:30 - 2:30
September 20:	8:30 - 1:30
September 23 - 27	8:30 - 4:30

From the Executive

Kelly Pitman, CCFA President

Hello friends.

I hope those of you on the semester system have had a smooth start-up and that those of you on the quarter system will have a good beginning as well. I haven't much to report as the first official executive meeting of the year is September 19.

The Executive has appointed Nicholas Read as CCFA treasurer, subject to ratification at the GM on October 2, 2013. Nicholas works in the Applied Business Technology department in the School of Business, and we're pleased that he is willing to fill this late vacancy on the executive.

We are also pleased to have appointed the following volunteers to FPSE standing committees:

Mice Albano	Disability Management and Rehabilitation Committee
Candace Fertile	Status of Women Committee and Pension Advisory Committee
Blair Fisher	Education Policy Committee
Larry Hannant	Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee
Tanya Kirkland	Non-Regular Faculty Committee
Tom Rippon	Workplace Health, Safety and Environment Committee

In addition, some members of the executive serve on FPSE committees by virtue of their roles on the executive:

Jacquie Conway	Professional and Scholarly Development Committee
Debbie Gascoyne	Contract Administration Review Committee
Judith Hunt	Bargaining Coordination Committee
Kelly Pitman (me!)	Presidents' Council

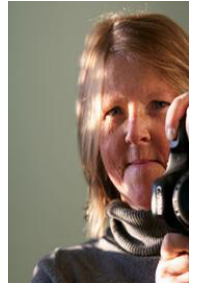
Finally, thanks to those who signed up for the CCFA Budget Committee (really, I think we need a cooler name). This committee will be taking a close look at the college budget to help the executive prepare to provide meaningful input at budget time and informed response when budget decisions are made. The members of that committee are as follows:

Craig Derksen
 Judith Hunt
 Mark Kunen
 Valerie Montague
 Kelly Pitman
 Janice Simcoe
 Ying Sun

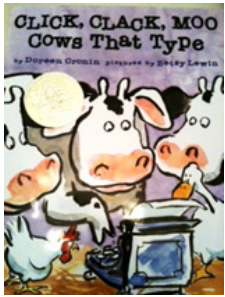
I've had only one volunteer from the general membership for a CCFA Social Committee. If anyone else is interested in helping to plan CCFA events, please let me know.

If Cows Had Collective Bargaining

Debbie Gascoyne, Chair Contract Management Committee



Click, Clack, Moo. Cows That Type
Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin
New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000



Here is a thoroughly delightful picture book for those with small children. It would be great to read out loud, or as a first reader.

Farmer Brown's cows like to type. He thinks his only problem is the sound of "Click, clack, Moo" all day long. Then they write him a note telling him their barn isn't warm enough, and they want electric blankets...

Then, the hens get in on the act.

Follow along and see how the power of strike action gets the farm animals what they want. The illustrations are humorous and expressive, perfectly capturing the spirit of the story.

It's never too soon to introduce your children to the power of collective bargaining! But seriously, this is a children's classic for a reason. Get it for your budding union member, or for yourself if you need a smile one day.



Adventures in SD

Power to the People: A Costa Rican Odyssey.

Ian Browning, Electronics and Computer Engineering

This March, generously assisted by PD funding, I was very fortunate to be involved with a diverse group of intrepid volunteers on a mission to bring power to the rural people of Costa Rica. Our group, eighteen in all, had come together to learn about solar energy systems in the developing world and to get our hands dirty installing some systems where the utility companies dare not venture.

Costa Rica is not the poorest of countries but in remote areas many people still live without electricity. The aim of our project was to install small-scale (30-Watt) photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on three separate households giving several hours of light each day from 3 or 4 LED light bulbs. Despite the lack of grid-electricity many rural Costa-Ricans own cell phones, a classic example of 'leapfrog' technology. However, they may have to walk several kilometers in order to charge them. Our PV-system recipients were understandably very excited to learn that they would be able to charge their phones using the adapted car-chargers in their new equipment.

After a couple days at our base, an environmental education centre near the small village of Mastatal, we ventured out to the first project site. We had been warned that getting to the site would be 'strenuous' and indeed our group leader did not lie. Our journey began at 6.00am with a 40 minute trip in the back of a cattle truck winding through the mountainous terrain on dusty tracks. If there were an export market for pot-holes Costa Rica would be a very wealthy nation. After loading some of the heavier supplies onto horses we began the long hike down the valley along a steep track.

Our first stop was Domingo's house. Domingo already had solar powered lights from a previous trip but we were adding the all-important cell-charger to his system. Through our translator Domingo explained a little about his life as a small-scale farmer and banana grower. By Canadian standards 'Shack' would be a better description of the house although the surrounding mountains and forest seemed idyllic to a nature lover. Domingo had few visible possessions but one wall of the house was adorned with some posters, one of the Virgin Mary and one with the word 'Abogado' (Spanish for Lawyer) at the top. Despite the best efforts of our translator, why the two female 'lawyers' were wearing Bikinis is still a mystery. We demonstrated the new charger to Domingo, who seemed to be visibly moved by the whole experience, then proceeded, fresh-water and bananas in hand to our next destination.

The trek down the steep slope in the heat and humidity was challenging enough but after crossing the river at the valley bottom we were faced with an even steeper climb up the other side, apparently the idea of switch-backs has not reached this far south. The large sun-bleached pile of bones on the track were a little disconcerting but reminded me to keep chugging-down the water.

By around mid-day we arrived at our project site, two families living in houses a short distance apart. After some introductions and refreshments we got down to the task in hand. I pondered how strange it must seem to these people to have 18 enthusiastic strangers suddenly show up and start frantically drilling holes, pulling wires and bolting strange objects to their house, but they seemed to take it in stride. I was on 'roof duty' for this job fixing the small solar panel to the rusty corrugated roof and making sure it pointed in the right direction. I don't know exactly how hot it was up there but I have a new found empathy with fried eggs.

Within a few hours our job was done and we assembled as a group for the 'big-switch-on'. It's a sobering reminder of how much we take energy and technology for granted to see the excitement a flipping light switch can cause!

We said our goodbyes in clumsy Spanish, shook hands and started the return journey back to base feeling good about a job well done; almost instant gratification. The return trip was even more challenging as we had to get back to the top of the other side of the valley before dark. I started the uphill section chatting to Bob, a 68 year-old physician from Washington, D.C. I couldn't help but admire his determination, pushing his physical limits as we ascended the steep trail in the late afternoon heat, pausing frequently for breath and to admire the stunning scenery around us. As we reached the top together the sky was turning deep red, and we were concerned that we were still heading in the right direction. We asked a local (more clumsy Spanish) passing by on horseback if he'd seen a group of white folk in a cattle truck (couldn't

find that one in the phrase book). After a brief exchange he pulled out a cell-phone and made a call. Perhaps we'd inadvertently asked him to order us a Pizza? Fortunately, we spotted our group further down the road waiting for the truck.

By the end of the trip we had formed a tight-knit group (I know this from the amount of sharing about bodily functions or rather disfunctions that was occurring).

We will return to our 'normal lives' perhaps a little wiser, a little more open, and certainly a little more sun-tanned.



Reflecting on the trip raises many questions for me about our relationship to technology and to nature. Clearly, technology can and should be used to improve the lives of the poor and 'Leapfrog' technologies such as clean energy systems can help developing countries avoid some of the mistakes

of industrialization. From the comfort of Canadian suburbia it is easy to romanticise a simple life in idyllic surroundings away from the pressures of modern society (I often do) while, conversely, much of the developing world understandably aspires to the trappings of western affluence. How do we reconcile these opposing views, and, if there is a choice at all, who gets to decide? Development is a complex issue with no simple answers. How, for example, will introduced technologies affect health, culture, environment and local economics? Is it ethical to 'impose' certain technologies on different cultures and, importantly, what can we learn from the societies we are trying to help?

My trip did not provide any simple answers to these questions but left me with a renewed sense of the importance of critical thinking, openness to new ideas and intellectual humility. How (I wonder) can these mental-skills be cultivated on a day-to-day basis within the framework of our educational system or, should we re-envision the framework altogether? Philosophical musings aside though, the priceless look on the faces of Domingo and the families we helped to have a 'light bulb' moment will stay with me a long time.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS :

We want you to contribute to the Confluence: tell us about your groovy SD project, or the creative work you are doing with your students, or what you did on your summer holidays! The deadline is ongoing, so no pressure...

Thanks.

The Union Reel

Kelly Pitman

9 to 5

1980

Dir. Colin Higgins

I thought I had already seen 9 to 5, but when I sat down to watch it last weekend, I found I was mistaken. I think maybe I had just heard the song, far too many times, when it was shiny and new. It's the kind of hit song that infects public space. The kind of song you're forced to endure when you're on hold, as if being on hold wasn't bad enough.



The film is better than its theme song. In fact, it's not bad. I don't know why I expected it to be mediocre. Maybe it's the post-traumatic stress of all those hours on hold and stuck with the top forty. Maybe it was the presence of Dolly Parton, whom I confess I have always thought of as a kind of cartoon character. I was wrong. It's actually funny, well-paced, and blessed with an excellent cast.

The premise is simple. Three women work in an office: the earnest newbie going through a divorce (Jane Fonda), the bubbly secretary the boss chases around the desk (Dolly Parton), and the wise long-timer who not only gets passed by for promotion but has to stand by while the boss presents her ideas as his own (Lily Tomlin).

The film is a little dated. They still use the word secretary, for instance. They have typewriters. Their phones are attached to the wall. The three leads sport eighties hair and shoulder pads. Overt sexism, of a kind you wouldn't dare project in most workplaces today (at least in this part of the world), is standard operating procedure. The basic plot of 9 to 5, however, is perennial: the boss is stupid and mean, the workers are unappreciated and abused, revenge is imagined and eventually enacted, it all gets wildly out of control, but somehow it works out in the end. This is the film, I think, that set the standard for the many weak copies that have followed it.

Why does it work?

For one thing, the story is enlivened by some great dialogue and some deft treatments of what could have been clichéd moments. Take the obligatory bonding scene, where our feisty heroines connect over a joint and which spins into a fantasy sequence bordering on the surreal. There's also a hilarious chase scene with a body in a trunk. And above all, there's the inexplicable chemistry between the three leads. Why inexplicable? Well, really, who would have foreseen Fonda, Tomlin, and Parton being in the same movie? But somehow, it's a golden combination. It's impossible not to root for them.

Also, the film still feels like a cogent and often edgy look at the politics of power in the corporate world. The company—we don't know what product the company makes, it could be anything—is vigilant about anything that smacks of unionization. These employees are not in a position to negotiate anything, and management doesn't intend that to change. In one scene, a secretary is overheard speculating about salaries in the company washroom (where the boss's spy hides in a stall to eavesdrop) and is summarily fired. Employees keep their heads down and their protests muffled, hoping that if they play nice, they'll be one of the chosen ones. It's an effective strategy for keeping people focused on pleasing the boss by any means necessary. It's the opposite of an engaged workplace. But when the boss temporarily disappears for reasons I won't reveal, the women make a few changes. Company daycare, job-sharing, less surveillance and more incentive. A collective restructuring with the interests of the workers in mind resulting in greater productivity—what a great idea.

I learned a couple of things from 9 to 5. The first is that I am lucky. Because people who came before me negotiated the terms of my employment. Because I've got rights as well as responsibilities. Because my work is interesting and relatively independent. Because the structure of my workplace is such that management and workers meet respectfully on neutral ground to agree upon rules of engagement. Because I am free to speak up when I think something's wrong.

The second thing I learned is that you can get into some pretty complicated shenanigans and still look great. A girl doesn't have to sacrifice heels and coordinated skirt suits just to kick some ass. It's all about balance, really.