

## Christmas Word Search

U Z F H R U D O L P H P U H U  
 N U V A Y E L L E B A R W N T  
 L O S I G T I L S C U P I D E  
 T E R A X L S N A M W O N S M  
 S S P T N E J O D B R H R E O  
 T T R S H T N I R E H S A D C  
 N O E L U P A A K F E K T Y H  
 Y C S E W G O C C Z X R S E T  
 B K E D R R A L L Y Y O T N A  
 G I N G E R B R E A D W I N E  
 S N T N C W M G P E U N B I R  
 M G N T N E Z T I L B S A H W  
 K O U D A N C E R F U S A C K  
 D N P R R C H R I S T M A S A  
 L A A G P E A C E A Z V S V K

BALL	FROSTY	SANTA CLAUS
BELL	GIFT	SLED
BLITZEN	GINGERBREAD	SNOWMAN
CANDYCANE	NOEL	STAR
CHIMNEY	NORTHPOLE	STOCKING
CHRISTMAS	NUTCRACKER	SUGARPLUMS
COMET	PEACE	TOY
CUPID	PRANCER	TREE
DANCER	PRESENT	VIXEN
DASHER	REINDEER	WORKSHOP
DONNER	RUDOLPH	WREATH
ELF	SACK	



Join UNISON Today

Contact:  
01224 620624

For an application form

UNISON Moray Matters  
is a regular publication by the branch.

We would welcome comments / letters /  
ideas for competitions, etc.

Any contribution from members  
would be appreciated.

Contact Linda Magill,  
Communications Officer,  
through the branch office if you can help.

MORAY BRANCH OFFICE

Council Offices  
12/14 Greyfriars St.  
ELGIN IV30 1LF



## DECEMBER 2003 NEWSLETTER



### A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY (14/11/03)

UNISON is a union that speaks up for public service workers. We are a union that has a vision of a more just and inclusive society. And we are the most influential union in the UK. But we're not always good at celebrating our own successes.

So let's not forget that our website takes three million hits a month – people are interested in what we have to say. UNISON Direct takes a quarter of a million calls per year. We were the first trade union to use radio and TV advertising. We'll train 10,000 members this year, and 30,000 over the next three years, with 400 employer partnerships. UNISON Welfare helps 1,200 members every year, and has set up a new debt counselling service.  
*Extract taken from UNISON Website*

### SINGLE STATUS/JOB EVALUATION

Moray UNISON has been active during 2003 in keeping members informed on the progress of Single Status. Information has been passed on in a series of bulletins, and members have had the opportunity to air their concerns at Roadshows held throughout Moray. For many people, this has been their only source of information.

The Trade Unions in Moray, who were the original partners in the Single Status exercise, currently take the view that it is preferable to delay implementation from the proposed date of April 2004, in order that the final package for staff is beneficial to as many members as possible. Discussion on a new grading structure has just begun, and further discussions on issues such as the length of the working week and removal/change to allowances have yet to begin. Although the Council is attempting to minimise the number of employees who will suffer as a result of Single Status, there is

no doubt that some members will suffer a reduction in their earnings over a period of time, and potentially even a substantial reduction.

This is the most important issue facing the Branch in the year ahead, and we will endeavour to keep members informed and to look after your interests to the best of our ability.

Please contact us if you have any questions on this or any other issue.

### RETIRED MEMBERS

There is life after work. Indeed, for most of us retirement seems to leave little time for putting the feet up and relaxing – despite the promises we made ourselves when in work. Suddenly, on retirement, we find we have something we never had before – time! But there never seems to be enough of it as new interests and new opportunities place as many demands upon us as working ever did. The difference, of course, is that this time belongs to US!

And there is UNISON too after work. Members are entitled to life membership of UNISON upon retirement. A form is sent out to the member's home as soon as the branch is notified of his/her retirement. This form refers to a payment (presently a one-off subscription of £15 but in Moray that is paid by the branch as a thank-you for the member's participation in the life of the branch when in work).

Retired members are entitled to take advantage of membership benefits including the free wills service, discounts on insurance and holiday/travel offers.

Retired members also have a voice in branch affairs. They are entitled to attend Branch meetings and to make their views known to the Branch Executive Committee through a Retired Members' Officer (in the current year, Mr John Barrett) elected by retired members attending the AGM.

The retired members' group acts as a point of contact – for keeping in touch with colleagues and with the Branch. If members wish to organise group activities – sporting events, outings, theatre trips, social events, and so forth – then the Retired Members' Officer will provide help with the organisation. How many activities take place is up to the members. If it is possible it will be done! Members have only to ask, help with the admin, and turn up on the day.

The Retired Members' Officer can be contacted through the Branch Office. However, he is not waiting on the end of the phone – "I'm far too busy enjoying retirement for that!" But there is an answering machine and all messages and correspondence will be forwarded.

John Barrett  
Retired Members Officer

### STEWARDS & CONTACTS



We are looking to fill vacancies locally within the Moray branch  
Are you :

- ☺ a good listener?
- ☺ Active?
- ☺ Forward thinking?
- ☺ A good team worker?

Do you :

- ☺ Have a sense of humour?
- ☺ Have loads of enthusiasm?

Then Join Us Now

## Enter our UNISON Christmas Draw – it's FREE to every member 2 Nights for 2 People at the....

Draw will take  
place on  
5 January  
2004

Prize to be  
taken in  
Jan or Feb  
2004



Fill out the entry slip  
& return to the  
following address  
by  
19 DECEMBER 2003

CHRISTMAS DRAW  
Moray UNISON  
Branch Office  
12/14 Greyfriars St,  
ELGIN, IV30 1LF

### UNISON CHRISTMAS DRAW

2 NIGHTS FOR 2 PEOPLE AT GOLF VIEW LEISURE & COUNTRY HOTEL, NAIRN

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

MEMBERSHIP NO: ..... PHONE NO: .....

## BEING ACTIVE IN UNISON - YOUR BRANCH OFFICER PROFILES

Many workers wonder why some of their colleagues are active in UNISON. They ask why these people take time away from their workplaces, not only in the working week but also in the evenings and weekends, to give of their time to UNISON.

We thought we would ask some of our Branch Officers to tell us why.

We start this month with Dougie McPhee, Moray Branch Education Officer.

Where is it you work and what is your job title?

"Oh start with a hard question! I work in the Keith Housing Office as a housing officer in the Community Services Department."

How long have you worked for the Moray Council?

"Mmm I think I am now into my 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> year as an employee with the Council."

How long have you been in a Trade Union?

"Certainly I have been in a trade union all my working days, firstly in UCATT when I was on the tools, to NALGO which ten years ago merged to become UNISON – so always!"

Why in a few words do you believe in Trade Unions?

"I think today many people out with a trade union remember some of the bad points of trade unionism, especially going back to the miners strikes, etc. but that isn't the case. If it was not for trade unions, we in this country would have no Health Service, holiday pay, increases in equality, educational training, etc. So there are hundreds of reasons why I believe in trade unions."

Are there negative points in being in a Union?

"I don't think so. Like many others I am in it for the protection it offers me in my employment and also the information I can get from my fellow stewards that helps me in my workplace."

Many fellow workers think you're daft doing what you do?

"I suppose I think that some fellow workers are daft going to the gym, going cycling, canoeing, whatever. I do my job as a Steward for myself and my colleagues. I enjoy the teamwork and take pride with fellow branch colleagues when we share our many successes. We don't go out and shout from the rooftops, but as a branch we are one of the top three most active branches in Scotland."

I know that fellow workers get scared and worry about facing management, but it's my choice. If I didn't do what I do who would? Union stewardship is not about confrontation, it's about gathering and sharing information to colleagues which is clear, factual, and relevant to their place of work. I can't see why that's strange, it's our right as workers within the Moray Council to know what's going on."

Why did you get involved in the Education role?

"I am very conscious that some members leave school as early as they can and some have very few qualifications simply because they hated school. When you get older you want to better yourself, you want to learn more, you want to improve things for your family, etc. Education is the crux of this – it is a focal point in today's society that all employers want to see a well educated and efficient work force."

I believe that whatever your age you have the right to education and this is a fundamental part of the UNISON agenda. UNISON as a trade union can assist workers with the many courses run through the Return to Learn scheme. I also assist my fellow stewards in running courses within the branch that are of benefit to all members of the branch."

What is your greatest achievement so far?

"I am not sure, probably the Lifelong Learning Policy that we've achieved this year, but I would say anything that I do that benefits a member in any way through information, support, representation, etc. is a great achievement."

What are your fears for the future?

"I do not fear for UNISON, but I do fear that with the Single Status/Job Evaluation, and also the Joint Futures, the government push is a simple cost-saving exercise. Government and management play with people's lives like a game of cards – lowest hand loses!"

How would you best describe your Branch?

"Apart from them all being crazy! No, honest I would say – honest folk trying to help other workers to get the best out of their working lives."

Thank you, Dougie



## MEMBERS QUESTION PAGE

Q. How does UNISON help if a member gets hurt whilst at work?

A. Every year, UNISON helps thousands of members and their families secure compensation if they have been injured in accidents. Last year we won more than £33 million in compensation for injured members. UNISON's legal assistance scheme is one of the most used services provided by the union.

The last thing you need if you have been injured is to have to worry about how you recover lost wages while you were signed off sick. You also need to know experts are handling your case.

To receive legal help you must have been a member of UNISON for at least 13 weeks prior to needing assistance and must continue to pay your subscriptions for the duration of the case.

Moray UNISON put forward a claim to National level on behalf of a member who was injured at work. As a result a claim for compensation was taken up via Thomsons (Solicitors) who successfully negotiated a settlement on behalf of our member.

Q. I phoned the Council Personnel Department about the article on rights for temporary workers featured in the August Moray Matters and was told the information was incorrect. What does Moray UNISON have to say with regard to this?

A. Yes, the Council Personnel Department did contact us in connection to that article and have asked for the following to be included in this newsletter:

As an employee on a fixed term contract, you will not be treated any less favourably than a comparable permanent employee, as outlined in the Fixed-term Employees' Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment Regulations 2002. The equal treatment requirement applies to all fixed-term employees covered by the regulations, including those whose contracts were agreed before 1 October 2002.

Any employee who has been continuously employed on successive fixed-term contracts for four years or more (the clock starts ticking for continuous service on 10 July 2002) will become permanent on 10 July 2006, unless the use of a fixed-term contract is justified. Service prior to 10 July 2002 will not count for the purpose of accumulating service towards the four year limit on the use of successive contracts.

The Branch is anxious to get members' views on any aspect of UNISON whether it is related to the Branch itself or to do with national issues.

Please contact Linda Magill, Communications Officer, by post at UNISON Moray Branch Office, Council Offices, 12/14 Greyfriars Street Elgin IV30 1LF or e-mail

[linda.magill@moray.gov.uk](mailto:linda.magill@moray.gov.uk)

OR

[unison@moray.gov.uk](mailto:unison@moray.gov.uk)

Whilst all members views may not be published, the Branch undertakes to respond to them all.



## EQUALITIES AND SELF ORGANISATION

To make sure all our members have a voice, UNISON members have set up self-organised groups to provide a voice for people who are traditionally under-represented. These are groups at national, regional and local level for women, lesbians and gay men, black members, and disabled members. These groups are designed to be self organising but also integral to UNISON structures.

If you require any information on self-organised groups – contact MOIRA BANGURA, Equalities Officer on 01542 882461

