Grievances and Arbitrations – Julie Jobin

I attend the weeklong Grievances and Arbitrations workshop offered by the CLC July 5-10, 2015 in Port Elgin, Ontario.

In this workshop we learned the steps to take in preparing for a grievance, how to present an effective labour arbitration case, strategies to prepare witnesses and conduct an examination-in-chief, how to conduct a cross-examination, and proper objections during examinations and cross-examinations.

We also learned about the various resources available to search for and obtain case law, how to formulate strong arguments, and ways to speed up the arbitration process for our members.

Throughout this course we did several mock arbitrations where we had to research, present and defend cases. The highlight of this course was defending a case in front of a real arbitrator, Elaine Newman. This experience was invaluable. Throughout the exercise, she gave us pointers about things that arbitrators look for during grievances. She also gave us feedback to aid in refining our questioning skills and most importantly showed us how to “tell a story” during our questioning to ensure that the arbitrator understands the union’s position.

In addition to what we learned in the classroom, this was a great opportunity to connect with other cope members, as well as other unionised members from across the province. The activities organized by the CLC allowed us to foster and grow our union pride and solidarity. I left this weeklong school re-energized and motivated to make positive changes for our local.