

SAFAGRAM

President's Message



By Doug Spurgeon

Once again there are several events being prepared for in the SAFA office.

1. SIR II season is upon us once more. At this time of year the SAFA office is dealing with issues as faculty start receiving their SIR results. The help of faculty is requested on our endeavour to track numbers for the Fall 2011 semester. For any faculty who have received a score lower than 3.8 on Question 40 while also receiving higher scores in the areas that are most in your control, please notify the SAFA office. We would like to obtain a copy of the results. Your identifying areas can be blanked out. The purpose of this request is to provide evidence to upper management that a reliance on Question 40 is not the proper judge of a faculty member's abilities. As stated in documentation from ETS (Educational Testing Services)—the creator of the survey, Question 40 may be an indicator but a more thorough examination of the survey should be done. I have been repeatedly told that a higher value of Question 40 will result in higher values in other areas while a lower value would have the same effect toward the lower end of the scale. If the student survey is going to be used for monitoring an instructor's performance, then a look at all areas under control of faculty should be done regardless of the value of Question 40. If any faculty would like to contribute to the sample of lower 40, please contact me or drop by the SAFA office.

Over the past few weeks, I have been able to make improvements in the documentation relating to how SIR II surveys are to be conducted. I have received confirmation from the AVP Academic that he has taken the concerns I raised in our meeting to the individuals who create SAIT's survey documentation and FAQs and some rewriting has begun. It has also been passed on to management that if student comments are used in any fashion toward discipline of a faculty member, the anonymity of the individual is forfeited. SAFA will, in the event of such a use of student comments, require the release of the names of individual(s) making the comments at any arbitration hearing so that a proper cross examination may be done.

2. Interest Arbitration of the Collective Agreement. As you know, we are in year five of a three-year agreement. The arbitration dates are set for March 15 and 16, 2012. The team has worked hard in preparing—many thanks for their

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Editorial Board

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SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) five times a year usually closer to the end of the months of October, December, February, April, and June. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month preceding publication. Send submissions to SAFAGRAM, care of the SAFA office, N201 or e-mail submissions to kathie.dann@sait.ca. Please keep submissions under 300 words, double-spaced. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length, or content.

SAFAGRAM editorial policy, as approved by the SAFA Executive on June 14, 1995, is as follows:

1. The Editorial Board has the final say as to what is included or deleted from the newsletter.
2. Editorial Board decisions about newsletter material must be agreed to by consensus.
3. The newsletter will include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in its content do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.
4. All material included in the newsletter must
 - be signed by the author when submitted to the editors, but anonymity may be requested and granted for printing.
 - be based on "reasoned argument" if personal criticism is used.
 - not involve name-calling.
 - not include sexist, racist, or homophobic comments.
 - be related to SAIT, although this will be interpreted broadly.

The views expressed in SAFAGRAM do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.

efforts. More work is to be done as the arbitration dates get closer. We are tied to our comparables within the province, the closest one being NAIT.

3. Grievances. I'm sure everyone will agree with me when I say that I am pleased to report that the grievance total has dropped significantly. Currently, besides the interest arbitration for which we are awaiting the results, there is a Level II hearing on termination and one arbitration on the books for a termination. The reduction in the number of grievances can be attributed to several different factors:

- a) an increased knowledge of the Collective Agreement by both members of faculty and management,
- b) an improvement in the informal discussion phase, and
- c) the knowledge that SAFA can and will defend its members.

To this end, I would like to thank our LRO Al Brown and the advisors in HR for being able to establish an effective working relationship that has enabled disputes to be handled efficiently. The relationship between SAIT senior executive and SAFA has also greatly improved over the past couple of years and has enabled open, honest discussions on areas of mutual concern. The student survey is one of those issues with agreements between both parties enabling enhancements and faculty concerns to be heard, addressed, and acted on.

4. Parkade (Parking Garage). The past cold snap which saw an increase in parkade usage also now has an explanation. At a recent joint executive meeting, the VP Finance indicated that the parkade is in fact oversold. This only becomes a problem when the cold snaps come and more people drive. If the parkade is full when you are about to enter, press the help button and you will be directed to another lot to park. Also, if you see an empty stall, you can inform the attendant when they answer and they will let you in. In all cases, you should not back down the road as that will create a safety hazard. Press help and ask for the gate to be raised so you can turn around safely.

5. SAFA Rent. SAFA will no longer be paying "rent." In talks with the VP Finance, a proposal of changing the "rent" paid to SAIT would be to convert this budgeted amount to a scholarship. This was put to a vote at Faculty Council with the majority voting to accept this. Talks will be start-

ing soon to arrange the scholarship. While it is still technically "rent," the destination of the money now resides in the scholarship realm rather than general revenue coffers.

6. Two Other Pressing Issues for the Association:

- a) **Court Date.** We are waiting for a court date to hear SAIT's appeal of the judicial review in regard to abolishment payout. This is the result of an abolishment in which the amounts for the educational allowance was not paid. The story so far, binding arbitration SAFA 1 SAIT 0; judicial review of arbitration award SAFA 1 SAIT 0. The paperwork for the appeal has been filed and now we wait for either a dismissal of the case or a date to present in front of a judge.
- b) **The Charter Challenge.** A year ago a proposed "off-road" was provide the designation criteria and a valid appeal process, and we can discuss a resolution. A year ago there was no reply, but this year a request for a proposal was asked for which SAIT would run through legal. Currently, we are working on this proposal to see if we have an off-road.

7. ACIFA Conference. The Conference will take place at the beginning of June. Once again, SAFA will provide partial funding for the first 30 individuals with approval for the time to attend the conference. The conference has been a good place to learn what other institutes are doing and to reconnect with friends from other institutes. This year Red Deer College will be rejoining ACIFA. The conference will be hosted by Grande Prairie Regional College Academic Staff Association in the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.

8. SAFA Elections. Finally, a reminder this is an election year for SAFA. All executive positions will be up for election. If anyone wants more information about any SAFA positions, please visit the SAFA office. The election will be timed to allow any newly-elected members sufficient time to meet with the current executive so a transition of items and issues can be made smoothly. Also, stay tuned for news about the AGM meeting to be held later this academic year. More details will come.

As always, if you have any concerns, questions, or comments you would like to pass to the SAFA office, please call, e-mail, or drop by for a coffee and chocolate. ☘

The Devil's Advocate

By Eugene Blanchard

During the early 1990s, I was the Technical Manager for a small electronic research and design firm. We were consultants who designed and manufactured specialized electronic equipment for companies in the oil and gas industry. Part of my duties were to liaise with new customers to determine the scope of the project and the specifications that were to be met.

One meeting with a new client named Keith sticks out vividly in my mind. I had several previous meetings and telephone conversations with Keith and everything was going absolutely smoothly. We had excellent rapport and were just ready to wrap up the final specifications.

During this particular meeting, Keith brought in an associate

named Dan. While we were discussing the specifications, Dan would interject and question every step and process. He was incredibly disagreeable and was literally taxing my patience. Keith, on the other hand, was the exact opposite and was ready to push ahead with the project.

After the meeting, I had a chance to speak with Keith privately; I asked him point blank "Why did you bring Dan to the meeting?" Keith basically explained that his nature was to jump into projects and only see the good side. Dan was brought in specifically to act as the devil's advocate and to take an argumentative position. Keith said that rather than

TRAIN LIKE A TROJAN

Did you know?

Week-long Summer Sport Camps are offered for youth in basketball, hockey, and volleyball during the month of August. Participants will improve their skills from high level coaches through team play, training, and conditioning, as well as having a lot of fun at our first-class facilities at SAIT. Plus it's a great value! Registration information at www.sait.ca/trojans



Desire 2 Learn – It's a Good Thing!

By Eugene Blanchard

I was one of the early adapters of Desire 2 Learn (D2L) and participated in the pilot when it was first introduced at SAIT. After using it for four semesters, I have to say that it is a great improvement over WebCT. I had used WebCT for about five years, and I felt that I was pretty proficient with it. Last semester, I went to retrieve some data from WebCT and was shocked to realize that I couldn't remember how to navigate the menu structure! It really made me realize how intuitive D2L is.

D2L provides the standard tools that we expect from a computer-managed learning (CML) system with online assessments and grading, but there's the optional tools and course flexibility that really excites me. The basic structure of D2L has a Master D2L shell for each course. At the beginning of a semester, the Master is copied to the individual course shells such as CMPN-311A. Instructors have complete control of the D2L shell for their courses.

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The Devil's Advocate
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jump head first into a project blind, Dan brings to light other issues that Keith may overlook or not realize even existed. Dan performs the check and balance that any sustainable project needs.

From Wikipedia, the definition of a Devil's Advocate is as follows:

"In common parlance, a devil's advocate is someone who, given a certain argument, takes a position he or she does not necessarily agree with, just for the sake of argument."

Since the meeting, I gained a new respect for Dan and his role. Being the devil's advocate is a vital role that any project or institution should always embrace. I know that it is easy to be blinded by your own brilliance as you come up with the latest greatest idea. Having someone to pull you back down to earth is an important step in planning. The devil's advocate provides the safety net that forces you to look at things from all points: the good, the bad, and the ugly. He usually asks the questions that nobody wants to hear. These are the difficult embarrassing parts that you haven't thought out thoroughly. Believe it or not, that is a good thing to know!

Surrounding yourself by "yes men" is the surest way to embrace failure. It is still your decision that will be made, but if you listen to the experience and views of others who take on the role of the devil's advocate, you can make knowledgeable decisions knowing that all viewpoints have been addressed and met. What is especially important is to welcome the input of the devil's advocate and realize that it is not a clash of personalities as much as a sharing of different views. All sides and viewpoints need to be heard and considered. ♦

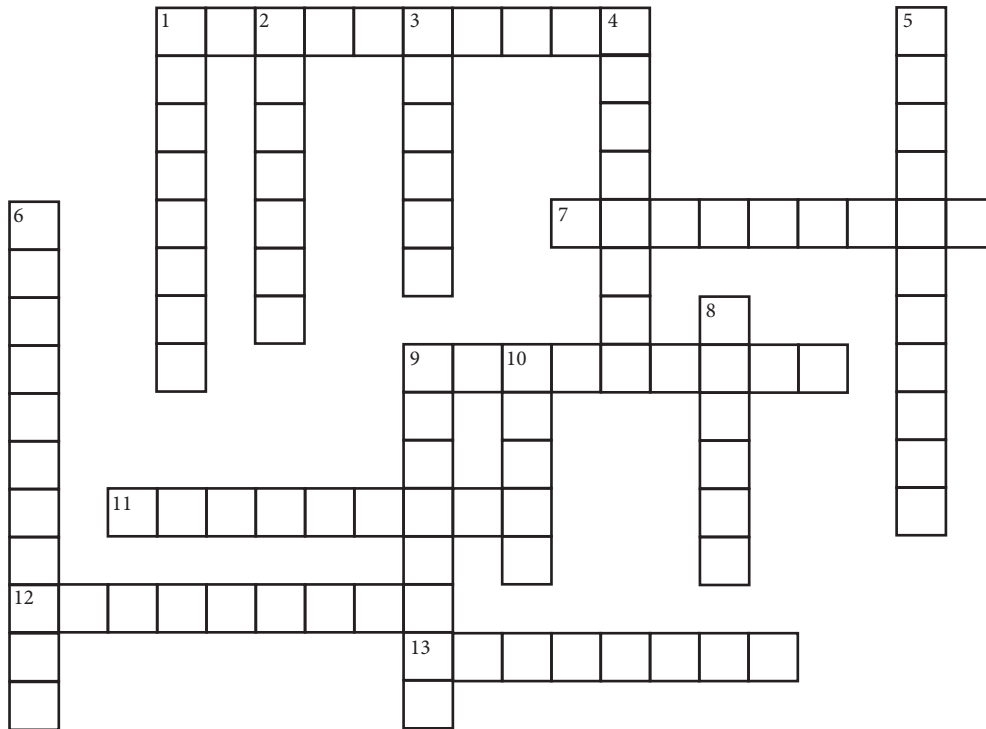
Follow Faculty Development Services on Twitter!

Keep in touch with news and events of interest to SAIT faculty by following FDS on Twitter. You will find us @SAITFDS on Twitter, and through viewing the CTD homepage, citd2.sait.ca

Crossword Puzzle

SAFAGRAM two

Instructions: Complete the crossword puzzle. Use the clues to help identify the words.



Across

1. This includes written reprimands, suspensions, and dismissal.
7. This type of training course can be used to bring the academic staff member up to their class contact hours.
9. This type of leave consists of a health-related component and a non health-related component.
11. The Association holds this type of bargaining agent for all academic staff members covered by the Collective Agreement.
12. The difference between one period and the next period within a grade.
13. This is pay for excess contact hours and is paid at the conclusion of the academic year.

Down

1. A transfer to a position with a lower maximum salary.
2. This type of leave is limited to ten working days within a calendar year.
3. A single salary rate within the grade.
4. The Board of Governors established to operate and control SAIT as described by the Post-Secondary Learning Act.
5. No one can be appointed to this board who hasn't resided in Alberta for one year immediately preceding the date of the appointment.
6. No change to the class contact hours of an instructor will be made in this fashion.
8. The maximum number of continuous days absent recognized as general illness.
9. No person who is directly affected by the dispute or has been involved in an attempt to negotiate or settle the dispute can be appointed to this position.
10. Casual illness is this many days or less.



Health and Wellness Optimization Lunch & Learn

What Are You Waiting For?

by Life Coach Laurel Vespi
from Edmonton

Why do we procrastinate about The Big Things, The Important Things, and The Priorities, while taking care of the Small Stuff with efficiency, confidence, and focus?

The things you can do to make yourself happy are simple . . .
and you can do it!

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Noon

Senator Burns Penthouse NN 1201

Please register
(SAITNOW/Me and My Career/Lunch & Learn)

Desire 2 Learn – It's a Good Thing!
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Just for clarification, updating the Master does not automatically update the instructor's course shell. If the Master is changed, the changes do not automatically propagate to the instructor's shell. You have to manually upload the changes from the Master to your course shell. Once the course is started, you shouldn't really change the Master, its job is over. Think of the Master as the starting point; any changes once the course has started should be done on the course shell. At the end of the semester, update the Master from the course shell. Also, note that manually uploading changes from the Master to your shell while the course has already started is fraught with perils—I don't recommend it as grades can be affected, duplicate content may appear, and more...

If you run multiple cohorts or have multiple instructors teaching the same course, then there is a way to cross-list the courses. This must be done before the semester starts. A cross-listed course shell will have the letters "XL" in its name. The Master is copied to it and now all cohorts are identified by "section." This allows you to sort and view by "users" (everyone) or by "section" (cohorts). Sections are identified by CMPN-313A, CMPN-313B, etc. Any

change to the cross-listed (XL) shell is immediately shared with all cohorts. I strongly suggest that when cross-listing courses one instructor be made responsible for updates and the others "report" to him. It will make it easier to manage.

While we are discussing sorting, a neat tool is the group tool. It allows you to group users into groups that you can use as a sorting option. I group my users into their lab cohorts. This makes it easier to sort for grading and for attendance.

There is an attendance tool that allows you to track attendance through D2L. Under the attendance tool, you create an attendance register - I called mine Weekly Attendance and made it a Weekly Scheme. Then you create sessions that correspond to your classes during the week. I created three sessions per week (14 weeks): Th1, Lab1 and Lab2, and a special session for the Final Exam. Once that's done, a "spreadsheet" is created that you can select which week and class to take attendance. You can then sort by user, group, or section.

One of my favorite tools is the News tool. This is a way for an instructor to display current information about the course and schedule when and how long it is available for viewing. I use it to put up information on quizzes and assignments, tips and corrections on labs,

etc. I can schedule the news note to be removed after a week or stay displayed until the end of the semester. You can restrict who can view the News by users, groups, or sections by setting up Constraints—only those members belonging to Section CMPN-313A can view this. It allows instructors to send news notes to specific users, groups, or sections.

Another favorite tool is the Schedule. Quizzes and assignments can be scheduled and notices displayed on the main page. The notices indicate when an assessment is available and when it is closing. Another tool worth mentioning is the Additional Condition Release tool. You can make releases of a quiz dependent on whether they received a pass on another assessment. In my case, the students have a pass/fail on performing the lab. They pass when the lab is performed correctly. When I enter a pass in D2L for the lab, it triggers releasing the lab quiz. They can't do the lab quiz until the lab is passed. The best part is that it is on an individual student basis.

There are many other tools that D2L provides that make your life as an instructor easier. The more I use D2L, the more that I like it and the less marking and work I take home. Learning D2L has greatly improved the quality of my life. ♦♦

LRO Report

By Al Brown



The “Know your Collective Agreement” contest continues to gain popularity! As you know, some time ago, SAFA initiated a contest with the goal of educating our membership about our Collective Agreement. This SAFA initiative was well received by faculty, and the feedback indicated that it helped in the understanding of the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement. I thought it would be helpful—and fun—to run this contest again! My

intention is to do this contest via e-mail every two weeks or so. The winner will be notified via e-mail, and faculty will receive a follow-up e-mail with the winner’s name and time that I received the correct answer. The correct answer to the contest question will also be revealed.

To clarify the best answer—I need the correct answer(s) and where to find them in the Collective Agreement. A simple cut and paste of the appropriate section of the Collective Agreement alone won’t suffice. While the answer is correctly contained within the quoted section of the Collective Agreement, it may require an interpretation which can lead to confusion and, hence, the need for the contest!

So, I’m looking for a specific answer to the question AND the supporting section of the Collective Agreement.

The prize winner will pick up his/her prize from the SAFA Office (N201). The prize will generally be a gift card, so keep an eye on your inbox!

I’ve included a crossword puzzle in this edition of the SAFAGRAM. All the answers can be found in the SAFA Collective Agreement. The first SAFA member who e-mails me the correct solution will receive a prize. I made it a little tougher this time, but all the answers are still in the Collective Agreement! The answers to the crossword puzzle in the last SAFAGRAM are in this issue—and the answers to the current crossword puzzle will be in the next issue.

In case you do not have a Collective Agreement handy and you would like to answer the question, here’s the link to our website where you will find an electronic copy. <http://www.safacalgary.com/collective%20agreement%202007%20-%202010.pdf>

As you can see from the President’s message in this issue, we’ve been busy in the SAFA office on several fronts—not the least of which is the upcoming interest arbitration for our Collective Agreement. While I’m not going into details here, please contact me if you have any questions regarding the negotiations, etc.

I thought I would include some information on “The Duty of Fair Representation.” Although we are not covered by the *Alberta Labour Relations Code*—we operate under separate legislation called the *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)* which specifically exempts us from the *Labour Relations Code*—the concepts of fair representation applies to grievances and the way SAFA governs itself when handling them.

The *Labour Relations Code* requires unions to fairly represent all employees in a bargaining unit. This is called the duty of fair representation. The Supreme Court of Canada has set the principal features of the duty in five points:

- The exclusive power conferred on a union to act as spokes-

person for the employees in a bargaining unit entails a corresponding obligation on the union to fairly represent employees comprised in the unit.

- When . . . the right to take a grievance to arbitration is reserved to the union, the employee does not have an absolute right to arbitration and the union enjoys considerable discretion.
- This discretion must be exercised in good faith, objectively and honestly, after a thorough study of the grievance and the case, taking into account the significance of the grievance and of its consequences for the employee on the one hand and of the union on the other.
- The union’s decision must not be arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, or wrongful.
- The representation of the union must be fair, genuine, and not merely apparent, undertaken with integrity and competence, without serious or major negligence, and without hostility towards the employee.

In essence, this means unions have a large amount of discretion when they deal with grievances. **For example, unions may settle or drop grievances even if the affected employee disagrees.** To counterbalance this power, unions have to fairly treat all members of a bargaining unit. This duty of fair representation requires unions to exercise this power in good faith. This usually means unions must carefully examine grievances. The union must also consider the significance of the case and its consequences for the union and the employee. The representation by the union must be fair, genuine, and not merely apparent. The union must act with integrity and competence as well as without serious or major negligence. The union must act without hostility towards the employee. This means the union’s decision must not be arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, or wrongful.

If you have questions about this or any other labour relations topic, please contact me at 403.210.4067, e-mail at al.brown@sait.ca, or stop by the SAFA office for a coffee and a chat. ☛

STUDENT WHO OBTAINED 0% ON AN EXAM

- Q1. In which battle did Napoleon die?
 - his last battle
- Q2. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?
 - at the bottom of the page
- Q3. River Ravi flows in which state?
 - liquid
- Q4. What is the main reason for divorce?
 - marriage
- Q5. What is the main reason for failure?
 - exams
- Q6. What can you never eat for breakfast?
 - Lunch & dinner
- Q7. What looks like half an apple?
 - The other half

Library Report

By Jason Kuffler

When I first started at SAIT in December of 2010 as the Coordinator of Library Instruction, my goal was to increase the number of students who we were reaching through Library tours and Library instruction sessions.

The pursuit of increases in tour and Library instruction bookings began that December with numerous e-mails, networking, and various initiatives by the Instruction and Communication team.

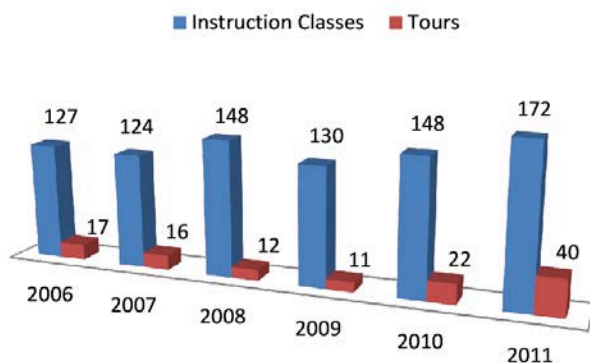
In the last year, the number of tours and classes, as well as the number of students reached, has gone up. In 2011, we had 172 classes and 40 tours with a total of 4131 students attending. However, we still have work to do particularly in the trades area. There seems to be an increase in the number of trades students who make inquiries at our information desk, and it would seem that they are in need of a basic introductory session to the Library.

We hope to reach these trades students by

- Promotion,
- Contacting instructors about the Library's instruction classes and their benefits, and
- Networking with instructors and academic chairs.

We hope to see increases over the next year in tours and instructional sessions and pride ourselves on working with SAIT instructors to make these experiences as relevant as possible for their students. If anyone would like more information about the tours and classes offered at the Library, please contact me. ➡

5Y + CY Instruction Classes and Tours



PARAPROSDOKIANS

Definition: "Figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected; frequently used in a humorous situation."

"Where there's a will, I want to be in it," is a type of paraprosdokian.

Enjoy a few PARAPROSDOKIANS!

1. Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on my list.
3. Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right —only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. Evening news is where they begin with 'Good Evening,' and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.
9. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
10. A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.
11. I thought I wanted a career. Turns out I just wanted paychecks.
12. Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says, 'In case of emergency, notify:' I put 'DOCTOR.'
13. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
14. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
15. Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.
16. A clear conscience is the sign of a fuzzy memory.
17. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice. ➡

Answers to the SAFAGRAM One Crossword (December 2011 issue)

Across:

2. Casual
4. Arbitration
7. President
9. Grievance
13. Performance
15. Grade

Down:

1. Forty
3. Assignable
5. Representative
6. Float
8. Six
10. Informal
11. Conclusion
12. Probation
14. Fifty



Honestly, having gone without a contract for over 18 months, I could just about ...

Scream? Yeah, I could tell.