

WALK AN AISLE IN MY SHOES...

...is a new book by Dave Rackham. Dave worked in the retail food industry for years, first as a part time clerk, then in a variety of managerial positions, ultimately acting as a labour advisor for Canada Safeway.

The book is a series of anecdotes recalling Dave's experiences, mainly at the "shop floor" level. Amusing and warm, overall it is a good read, especially for those who have had a retail career. Certainly anyone who has worked at Safeway and remembers the "old days" will identify with many of its nuances.

Unfortunately, the book, at times, reinforces negative union stereotypes, and simply put, trivializes the watershed Safeway strike of 1997. There, thousands of employees courageously stood up to an unprecedented level of corporate greed, ignored or arguably reduced to the point of near insult in the book. On this basis, any union endorsement of Mr. Rackham's writings is certainly qualified. What is left out of the book is as important as what is put in.

Dave's stories, while offering a basic respect for retail work, do not offer a vision of how Safeway as a corporation can again foster a more meaningful career for its employees. As Safeway union members now head into collective bargaining, that goal needs to be front and centre.

Memories of Safeway should be memories of fair remuneration and reasonable workloads, or they will not be fond memories. It is hard to have thoughts of the fun and the challenges of retail work when it is overwhelming. All retail employees know this.

Notwithstanding its limitations, Walk an Aisle in My Shoes is worth a look. Find out more, and see info on how to get the book at www.walkanaisleinmyshoes.com. The book is \$14.99 and Mr. Rackham will forward \$5.00 from each sale to leukemia research, a major recipient of UFCW's charitable campaigns and efforts. (Thank you Dave!)