

# THE UNION STAND

A PUBLICATION OF THE N.S. GOVERNMENT & GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION

PRE-CONVENTION 2016





President Joan Jessome has her photo taken for the Local Xpress, a website run by striking Chronicle Herald workers who have been locked out of their workplace since January.

Dear members,

Wow, it is hard to believe 17 years have passed and this will be the last time I address you as your President in the NSGEU newsletter. I have made the decision not to re-offer at the 2016 Convention. They say that a good leader knows when it is time to leave, and that it's better to leave when they want you to stay than to overstay your welcome. I am confident that the time is right, and that I am leaving you all in the very capable hands of our staff and union leaders.

Recently, I've found myself reflecting back on the many challenges and triumphs we have faced together over the years, and thinking about the thousands of you that I've had the honour of working on behalf of, and getting to know. What stands out to me most is the dedication and commitment you have to the public you serve. Despite what the media might say, or what some members of the public might believe, NSGEU members that I know are not focused on simply making more money: you are proud of the work you do, care deeply about the services you provide, and have a genuine passion for public service and your communities.

I first got involved with the NSGEU as a secretary working for Public Health. I was a single mother of three beautiful girls, and I wanted to be able to give them a good life. But the government of the day – the Savage government – was making that goal very difficult, attacking public sector workers with wage freezes and rollbacks. I decided it was time to get involved, so I attended my first union meeting, where I quickly discovered that the union could offer me opportunities to learn and grow within the organization and my workplace. I never looked back.

Of course, today we are facing a similarly hostile government. But it's been my experience that in these moments of crisis, there is great opportunity for growth: this is when activists and leaders emerge.

The theme of our 2016 Convention is a very simple reminder of this: "You are the union." And yes, I mean you!

Those who know me are probably well aware that my favourite saying is: "The world is run by those who show up." Well, I really believe this. In fact, it is a principle that has guided my own life. If I didn't show up at that first union meeting over 25 years ago, who knows where I would be today?

So, my parting message to you is very simple: now is the time to get involved. And there are so many ways to get involved: it can be something as minor as "liking" NSGEU's Facebook page, or following us on Twitter, or just making sure you read emails from the union. Or, it could mean showing up at a local meeting or rally, or participating in a telephone town hall meeting. Who knows: those small steps could lead you to run for President some day!

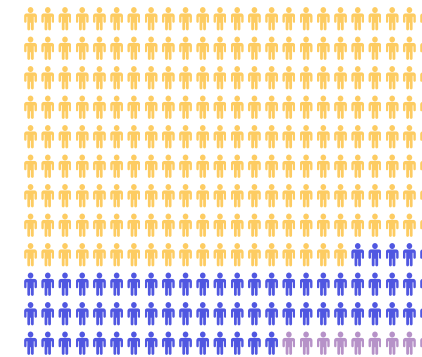
It truly has been an honour to serve as President of the NSGEU: I could never give back to the union what it has given to me, and am forever grateful to you the members and the NSGEU staff.

Yours in solidarity,

President, NSGEU

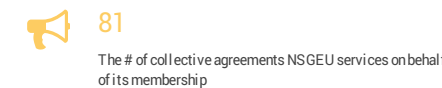
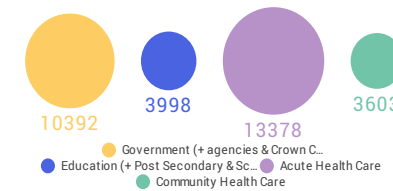
# NSGEU

The largest public sector union in Nova Scotia, we represent 31,379 working women and men:

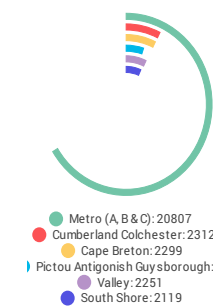


● Women ● Men ● Prefer not to disclose

They work in four main sectors: Government, Education, Acute Health Care & Community Health Care



Our members live & work in communities throughout the province: Metro, Cumberland, Cape Breton, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, the Valley and South Shore:



\*Information is current as of December 8, 2015.

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## CONNECT WITH US!

We want to hear from our members. If you have thoughts on this issue of The Stand, or ongoing union issues, send us your feedback! You can email us at [inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca) or connect with us:

- [facebook.com/NSGEU](https://facebook.com/NSGEU)
- @NSGEU @PrezJoan

## NSGEU TWEETS

**Brynn Langille (@BrynnELangille)**  
 .@NSGEU calling on @nsgov to bring in security at Comhla Cruinn Youth Centre in #Sydney immediately, calls environment dangerous. @NEWS957

**Chris Soucie Madill (@christinesoucie)**  
 NSGEU nurses join striking journalists on the line. @NSGEU@HTU\_official #CHstrike

**Donna MacGregor (@macgregordm)**  
 Yay! Old School copies of 'The Stand' for the Local 71C meeting Tuesday night. Stoked @NSGEU

**Joe Ward (@joewardpr)**  
 .@NSGEU @prezjoan 100 healthcare jobs cut... while \$800k sits in a box at the #capebreton regional? bit.ly/1OP8l8k How much waste?

**Alison MacDonald (@blimeycat)**  
 I unfollowed @chronicleherald during the strike and you should, too. @HTU\_official @NSTeachersUnion @NSGEU #papercutshurt

## THE STAND

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The NSGEU is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the National Union of Public and General Employees.  
[www.alltogethernow.nupge.ca](http://www.alltogethernow.nupge.ca)



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# What delegates can expect at NSGEU's 2016 Triennial Convention

**T**riennial Convention is undoubtedly the most significant – and exciting – event the NSGEU organizes and hosts.

Every three years, people from a cross-section of our membership are elected to represent their local, and they gather for a four-day conference held in downtown Halifax. There, the future of your Union is shaped through a series of resolutions that are introduced and debated, and the election of new leadership.

Since the NSGEU's founding Convention was held in 1958, this event has established the direction and core principles of this union, which proudly represents more than 30,000 women and men delivering valuable public services throughout Nova Scotia.

This year's Convention, which will be held from May 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> at the Westin Hotel, promises to be the largest we've held to-date, including up to 340 voting delegates! The theme of the 2016 Convention is: "You Are The Union!" and our tagline is a tribute to our outgoing President's favourite saying: "The world is run by those who show up."



Members listen to speakers at the 2014 Special Convention.



Labour lawyer Ray Larkin speaks during the 2014 Special Convention.

Over the course of the four days of Convention, elected delegates will have the rare opportunity to step outside of the workplace and their daily lives to discover the true spirit of solidarity. They will have input into a range of causes that are at the heart of NSGEU's commitment to the community, as well as a range of key initiatives and issues that matter to all of us.

Convention can, of course, seem a bit overwhelming at first, especially to new attendees. Rest assured, however, there are "rules of order" that govern when people can speak and what they can speak about. These rules are in place to ensure fair, safe and open debate. To help first-time delegates get familiar with these rules, the NSGEU hosts a New Delegate Seminar on the first day of Convention (Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> from 3 to 5 p.m.). It is highly recommended that new delegates attend this seminar.

We are confident that anyone who attends 2016 Convention will find it to be an empowering experience: one where new friendships are forged, connections are made, and our members are able to make a meaningful contribution to the future of the NSGEU.

We look forward to seeing you at Convention! ■



President Jessome addresses the delegates at the 2014 Special Convention.



NSGEU members take to the podium during Special Convention.

## Schedule of events:

**Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> – Constitutional Amendments begin on Wednesday night and may continue Thursday morning, if necessary; hospitality night.**

**Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> – President's Report, Executive Director's Report and Financial Report are presented; General Resolutions begin.**

**Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup> – General Resolutions continue; reports from the Provincial standing committees are presented; Banquet held in the evening.**

**Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> – Continuation of General Resolutions and Committee reports are presented; election of NSGEU Executive Committee is held.**

*You* are the union!  
 "The world is run by those who show up"

# Executive Committee Elections

The 300-plus delegates who attend this year's Triennial Convention will help to determine the NSGEU's priorities and direction for the next three-year term. But it's up to the NSGEU's five-person Executive Committee to ensure those priorities and directions are followed. The Executive Committee is elected by Convention delegates on the final day of Convention (May 14<sup>th</sup>). Any Convention delegate can run for a position, and has until May 13<sup>th</sup> to seek nomination. So far, 12 people have announced they are seeking election for the Executive Committee. On the following pages, they introduce themselves to you.

## Presidential Candidate: *Jason MacLean*



Sisters and Brothers,

Every great organization has in its existence; pivotal times, moments, votes, and conventions that have changed or altered the course of history for that organization. This convention is one of those times. We have for the last 17 years, been under the guidance and leadership of our great Sister Joan Jessome, whose vision and determination have brought us from a medium size public service union to the most powerful and most respected in the province.

Filling Joan's void will be no small task. This position brings a responsibility that lies on one's shoulders when the whole body of a great union relies on the soundness of your judgment, and the correctness of your direction. There is no question that you learn the job as you do the job; but there are tools, assets, educational opportunities that one can attain and achieve that would make "doing the job" less daunting. I am confident that I have what is needed to be your President. I hope I have already demonstrated this to you, but if not, then the convention should give me the opportunity.

For those who don't know me, I'm a Local 480C member, a Correctional Officer at the Cape Breton Correctional Facility. I have come through the ranks of our Union as a Steward, JOHSC member, Local VP, Facilitator, Picket Captain, Regional Councilor,

Bargaining Representative, Board Member, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP, and 1<sup>st</sup> VP. If elected as your President; I will continue to represent every member, by bringing the practical experience, the passion, and the motivation I believe is needed to lead us into the future.

I represent our Union proudly within the Nova Scotia Labour movement, as Vice President Representative of Workers of Colour and Aboriginal Peoples with the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour where I have been Chair of the NSFL Anti Racism/Human Rights Committee. I also remain an active member of the Cape Breton District Labour Council. Nationally, I serve as a Vice-President of the National Executive Board of NUPGE since 2009, I am currently a NUPGE/NSGEU Representative on the Canadian Labour Congress' (CLC) Human Rights Committee and the CLC Workers of Colour Working Group.

Over the past 11 years I've witnessed positive change for workers in all communities across Nova Scotia. If elected, I will give 100% my time and apply my knowledge and experience for the next term as your President. There are key points within my activism that empowered me to believe I can lead. Some are: Acting President during Bill 148, participating in the 2015 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference, graduating from the 2012 Labour College of Canada, and all the pickets and rallies I've been privileged to be a part of.

These are trying times for unions, especially our union. This province is now led by a bully who seems to get a particular delight in exercising his newly found power by thrashing the hard fought for rights of our members. Defeating this attack and protecting our rights means motivating every member and continuing to forge ahead with strong Union pride.

I thank all members, including the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee and the Provincial Committees who have worked with and supported me this past term. I also would like to show my appreciation to NSGEU staff whose loyalty and work ethic make all our roles a much easier endeavor. As a proud NSGEU member, I am very excited to represent you and I plan to be the hard working President you deserve!

Vote Jason MacLean for NSGEU President.

In Solidarity,

*Jason MacLean*

## 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Sandra Mullen*



Sisters and Brothers

I would like to announce my intention to re-offer for the executive committee for the upcoming term in the role of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. I was humbled to serve in the roles of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President during the past year, Board member for the past 5 years, representing the PR members of Civil Service and board alternate for the two previous terms.

It has been an extremely busy and exciting time to serve you since our last Convention. As a Member of the Board and the Executive, I have worked hard on behalf of the 30,000 members. Every decision at the board table impacts the membership and I take that responsibility seriously. I have participated in all the rallies and protests with Bill 1, 30, 37, 99 and 148. We have been in some of this Union's biggest fights in decades and through the hard work of the leadership of our members, we continue to stand strong.

I work as a licensing officer with the Department of Community Services. As part of local 16, I have served both as President for numerous terms and then as Vice President to allow opportunity for others. I served on Occupational and Bargaining Council as well as Provincial Committee, where I served two terms on Women's Issues Committee. I have completed many educational training programs at NSGEU including our Weeklong school, Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, NUPGE and Canadian Labour

Congress conventions. I served on the NUPGE Resolutions Committee and the NUPGE Leadership training program this past summer in Ontario. It was both rewarding and eye opening to see a national and global perspective. It is important to know all that we offer to ensure the best use of our resources as we go forward. I will put that knowledge to use as we prepare for the biggest change this Union has seen in years. I believe I have proven myself in my roles and I know that we must provide opportunity to our members to support our ongoing mobilization efforts.

The decisions made at the executive table affect all members and are often made quickly; this requires strong leadership skills with good insight and the ability to multi task. Through all of my work and volunteering, I have proven that I have those skills. Like many of you, I have a busy life. I live in small town NS. I work and have a family with all the joys and stresses it brings.

I have served on many organizations and Boards from Kiwanis, Lions, Clare Minor Hockey and Girl Guides. Married, with our two adult children and aging parents and like many of you, we all depend on our services to ensure the well being of our families and communities.

Whether it's respite to seniors, healthcare, or processing a drivers license, the 2500 different jobs of our 30,000 members matter. As tax payers, we all have a vested interest in services we provide and work hard at making this the best province to raise our families. We must protect our public services, as they are without question, under attack.

I would like to thank the Executive, Board of Directors, Occupational Council and my local for their support during this past term and for allowing me such rewarding opportunities. You have invested in me and I know I have much more to offer.

As we prepare for Convention 2016, I look forward to speaking with you to hear your concerns and to share my ideas.

In Solidarity

*Sandra Mullen*

## 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Peter Perry*



Hello Brothers and Sisters:

Our public sector has been under attack since 2000. It is time to take a more direct and active approach with government. Austerity measures such as layoffs and privatization must be stopped. Privatization looks attractive to government because of short-term injections of revenue. Proven fact is private for profit organizations are less efficient and result in reduced services. In the long term, privatization leads to higher operating costs, increased user fees and taxes. It also means lower wages and reduced benefits for workers. Cuts to the public sector result in less efficient services for Nova Scotians. It takes good paying jobs out of the economy, resulting in higher unemployment, lower consumer spending and a shrinking economy.

My call to activism was influenced by a few key events. In 2001, nurses and healthcare workers stood side by side to fight Bill 68. The bill attempted to criminalize strikes and give government the right to impose a contract without negotiations or arbitration. I stood with my wife as she was one of thousands who signed her intent to resign after 20 years of service. Together we attended rallies and protested at the Legislature. Workers stood strong against the Hamm government and legislation that would have imposed large fines on unions and individuals for exercising their democratic right to strike. Workers' rights are human rights and we must defend them.

In 2007, healthcare workers went on strike at the IWK Health Centre. Once again government threatened workers with legislation. After an emotional one-day strike, members voted 90% in favor of binding mediation to prevent government-threatened legislation that would take away our right to strike. I stood loud and proud with my coworkers. Soon after the strike I was elected vice-president of my local.

Since then I have worked with the Right-to-Strike Campaign and, most recently, the Mobilization Committee for Bill 1. I have demonstrated at the offices of the Minister of Health, the Premier and several MLA offices. I have spoken at Law Amendments. I have lobbied MP's on Parliament Hill for a national pharmacare program, long-term patient care strategy, and a national health accord. I will be in Ottawa this April to lobby Liberal MP's to reinstate a National Health Accord and protect and strengthen the Canada Health Act.

I have served on a number of boards over the years, including, most recently, as Inaugural President of Halifax Minor Baseball where I oversaw the merger of four associations into one. I have served on several committees and councils within NSGEU. I am currently on the Healthcare Bargaining Committee. I represent NSGEU on the Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat. Created by NUGE, it brings together unions representing healthcare professionals across the country to take collective action and to speak with one common voice to issues affecting patient care and worker rights.

With change comes a new beginning. I have the experience, leadership, instincts and work ethic to represent and protect our members' work rights and human rights. I humbly ask for your support as I run for First VP. In return, I pledge 110% of my effort to fight for social justice and the dignity and rights of all public sector members. It is time to stand up and act, not react. We need to engage and mobilize our members like never before. We need to educate the public on the valuable services we provide. An attack on any group of public sector workers in this Province is an attack on the entire public sector.

In Solidarity

*Peter F. Perry*

President Local 122

Board Member for Trade Union - Institutions

## 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Shauna Boudreau*



Hello brothers and sisters,

I am excited to announce my intention of running for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of NSGEU. With my commitment and passion I am confident I will represent all members of the NSGEU with the upmost integrity.

In 1997 I became a member of NSGEU. This occurred via a run off vote when the Halifax Infirmary and the Victoria General amalgamated. This gave me the opportunity to choose NSGEU as my union. I still remember marking the X beside NSGEU on my yellow ballot.

My Activism began in 2000 during the events of Bill 68. We marched together at Province House, went out on an illegal strike, and I signed my resignation letter as did many other healthcare workers. This is how passionate I am about the rights we carry as a union. Because of our determination, hard work, and solidarity we defeated Bill 68.

The past few years have been challenging times for our union, I have attended numerous rallies supporting NSGEU members. The McNeil government continues to attack public sector workers with Bill's 30, 37, 1, 69, 100 and Bill 148. When nurses participated in the illegal strike in early April of 2014, I was there. We marched around the legislature all day in the freezing rain and snow. I then sat at Law of Amendments until early into the

morning for my turn to speak on Bill 37. In fact I spoke at Law of Amendments 3 more times in regards to Bill's 1, 69 and 148.

Though these few years have been difficult, what is important is that we have stuck together and stayed strong. Today we are facing Bill 148 that dictates the terms of our contracts, also the threat of privatization, job security issues, and more. We need strong leadership within our union to rise up and lead us through the fight. I believe I have the ability to be that leader.

I am honored to say I am currently a leader within the NSGEU serving in various positions. I am Chair of the Nursing Occupational Council, Chair of the Nursing Bargaining Committee, and a member of the Board of Directors. Last fall I served on the planning committee for the Leadership Symposium where I also facilitated a session. I continue to actively share NSGEU's message on social media through Facebook and Twitter. Simply, I believe that you should not complain about a problem unless you are prepared to be part of the solution. I commit to be part of the solution.

On a personal note I have been married for the past 26 and have two grown children. Family and friends are very important to me. I have worked as a registered nurse for the past 26 years and I love my job. It is great to have a job where every day I get to help people and feel like I make a difference in their lives. I also enjoy having the opportunity to mentor nurses, helping to enhance their practice. At heart, I pride myself as being someone who can bring people together and motivate them to move forward in a positive direction.

When you elect me as your 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President I commit to:

- Always acting on behalf of the best interests of all members with integrity.
- Continuing to be a champion for public services and build on our successes.
- Take a leadership role in protecting and enhancing human rights and labour rights.
- Serve with energy, honesty, passion and commitment.

I look forward to speaking to you at convention.

In Solidarity,

*Shauna Boudreau*

## 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Raymond Theriault*



Hello Brothers and Sisters,

This convention will be an exciting one. Not only do we have an opportunity to make changes to our constitution and bylaws, by voting on resolutions, we will also be electing a new NSGEU executive that will be leading us through the next term. We need the right leadership in place to represent our 30,000+ members, to bring our members closer together and stronger than ever before. Presiding as local President of 119 (Previous local 19), Support Services for the last 3 consecutive terms we have faced many challenges. These include: attempted contracting out, merged services, technological change, staff restructuring, budget cuts and we have fought hard to save 100s of jobs with campaigns such as the healthy foods initiative, We Can Do It Better campaign, and fighting against privatization for all our members. We have made great strides.

This term also brings on a new set of challenges, essential services legislations, bills 30, 37 and 1, further privatization concerns to hospital services, the NSLC, Land Registries and Joint Stocks and many more. Not to mention bill 148 effecting 75,000 workers in this round of negotiation.

As a Dedicated union activist of more than 26 years I am proud to offer myself as your next NSGEU 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and take on the challenges that we face ahead. My Passion,

Commitment, Leadership and strong belief in the Labour movement ensure my devotion of time, commitment, knowledge, education and experience to the best of my ability. My experiences as local 119 President representing 1900 members has shown me the importance of the work we do, and how to mobilize members to achieve some of the largest turnouts at local meetings. Working together we can make certain that we keep NSGEU leading in changes that benefit our members and to ensure job security for all. Our greatest Strength is solidarity. We are family, let's build it stronger, together and stop changes that negatively impact us. If elected as your 1<sup>st</sup> VP I will do what is needed to ensure that we fight every battle to its fullest, to work with the incoming executive committee to develop strategies to defeat austerity and changes brought forth by the liberal government that negatively impact us. To help to develop new action plans to bring members together in solidarity and to provide better education methods to the uneducated on unionism and create a stronger membership. The strength of our union is dependent on the involvement of our members and we need to work together to strengthen participation. Over the years I have always been there for support members, now it's time to support all the membership. When there are issues I will be there for you, working with you, doing whatever it takes. Together, we can move mountains.

In solidarity,

*Raymond Theriault*

Union activity and Experience

- Current President local 119 – 3 terms • Chair of negotiating committee -3 terms
- Metro A regional councilor – 5 terms • Board alternate – 3 terms
- Local VP – 2 terms • Chief steward - 2 terms
- Steward - 26 years • NSGEU workshops and Training including all week long school courses
- Steward levels 1, 2, and 3, • Mobilization committees
- Healthcare ADHOC committee
- Development of the Steward grievance investigation Booklet
- Serviced Grievances from beginning to end
- Labour management meetings
- Organizing and mobilizing at the local level
- Facilitator, NSGEU educational courses - new activist, steward 1, steward 2.
- VP at large Nova scotia Federation of Labour (2013 - 2016)
- Much more

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Bill Zebedee*



My friends, it is an honour to offer my name as the next 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President for NSGEU.

Though it has been said a lot recently, I believe it bears repeating; we are at a historic crossroads. A crossroads not only for the NSGEU, but for organized labour in Nova Scotia. This government has forced us as unionists, as community activists, and as Nova Scotians to step up and fight for our rights.

Although I have taken part in numerous rallies, demonstrations and protests over the last 30 years, I never thought I would be faced with the decision to go back to work - or risk discipline by remaining with my union sisters and brothers (from NSGEU, CUPE, NSNU, Unifor to name a few) at the steps of Province House, protesting yet another draconian piece of legislation.

However, I did just that during the Bill 1 protests. I stood there—shouting myself hoarse (not yet having figured out how to scream from my diaphragm)—well past my lunch break, because I knew, in my heart, it was the right thing to do. I will always be willing to take a stand to defend the rights of union members in Nova Scotia, regardless of threats of reprisal from management.

In recent years I have run for Halifax City Council, as well as for the Nova Scotia NDP's nomination held prior to the 2015 by-election in Dartmouth South (necessitated by the tragic and untimely death of our previous MLA, Allan Rowe).

So, why am I now running to become your 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President?

I have the experience of sitting on over 20 Executives across Canada. I have been a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Member-at-large of political, union and community organizations since 1986. It is this experience that I want to bring to our union and to our Executive, so that we can achieve what needs to be done to build and strengthen our membership as we fight this government that has targeted us so relentlessly these past three years.

As your 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, I intend to make the following my immediate priorities:

- Put forth motions that will see the Board of Directors implement more efficient, timely, and respectful communication with our Locals;
- Implement ways to Rebuild and Motivate our members;
- Introduce workshops (separate from the Education Program) to help facilitate more diversity of candidates in elections;
- Find more inclusive ways to be accountable to our disabled members (of which I am one), and ensure that they be heard and respected;
- See that we begin the journey to put a one-member-one-vote system in place, so that ALL of our members can vote for our Executive.

You can find out more about my platform at my website:

<http://zebedee.ca/nsgeu/index.html>

From walking a picket line in 1986 in Alberta—during the most violent strike in this country in recent memory—to joining 250,000 protesters on the steps of Queen's Park in Ontario protesting the Mike Harris Government austerity budgets (sound familiar?), to walking with our sisters from the Elizabeth Fry Society in 2012, I have been there working alongside all of us who call organized labour our home.

Brothers and sisters, should you choose me as your 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, I will not disappoint you - or my Labour Relations Professor who called me a "radical" (he also called me an ass, but we won't go there). I will be a strong voice for our best interests at the Executive Table.

Together we can move this union forward!

In Solidarity,

*Bill Zebedee*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Tammy Gillis*



Hello to all my NSGEU sisters, brothers and others.

I am excited to tell you I am running for the position of NSGEU 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President at our upcoming convention!

I have been a proud member of NSGEU since 2008 when casuals across a number of departments were converted to permanent status. At that time, I was working as a tourism supervisor at the Visitor Information Centre in Pictou. After my location was closed in February 2015, I began working as a Justice Officer in the Pictou Justice Centre. Because of the job protection language that I have in my contract, I and most of my former colleagues were transitioned into positions in other government departments. For that, I owe great thanks to members before me who worked hard to negotiate strong contracts. I am proof of what a strong union can do for its members, but I also know that a strong union cannot rest on the successes of the past and needs to continue to work and fight hard to ensure our members' rights are protected and our working conditions improved. My involvement since becoming a member shows that I am willing and able to do that work.

In my local, Local 2, I have served as vice president and am currently the local president and have been a steward for the past three years. I have represented my local as an occupational councillor for the last two terms, and am currently vice chair of our negotiating

committee. I am also a regional councillor, representing my local for the second consecutive term.

Provincially, I served two terms on the Social Recreation Committee, and one term on the Ad Hoc Healthcare Committee. Since September of 2013, I have had the great pleasure to work with some amazing members from across the province as chair of the NSGEU Human Rights Committee. I currently sit on NSGEU's Board of Directors, representing the Civil Service Clerical bargaining unit. And in early March of this year, was honoured to be elected by the Board to be your 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President.

I have also extended my involvement in the broader labour movement in the last few years. In 2013 I worked on NUPGE's Fairness Campaign, travelling on the Fairness Express to communities across the province to speak to Nova Scotians about a host of issues, including the importance of unions in Nova Scotia. In 2014, I attended the Canadian Labour Congress Convention as a voting delegate to elect a new national leadership, and that same year joined with my Human Rights Committee in attending the World Pride Human Rights Conference, a first-time ever event in North America. I have attended the last two Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) Conventions, and at the most recent convention, in October 2015, I was elected VP representing the women of NSGEU, and was honoured to represent NSGEU at the 1st annual NSFL International Women's Day Breakfast on March 8th.

My involvement has exposed me to many great experiences, from marching at the legislature in opposition to legislative attacks on workers in the forms of Bills 30, 37 and 1; to helping organize social events in the local for our members and their families; to coordinating donations to members with gravely ill family members and helping them access financial assistance from our NSGEU Cancer Fund. These experiences gave me the opportunity to help our members, and that is work that I want to continue to do. With your support, I will be able to do that on a larger scale as your 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Candidate:

*Tracey Fisk*

Dear Sisters and Brothers

It is with great excitement that I let you know I have put my name forward to be your new 2<sup>nd</sup> VP.

I have been active in the union for many years and have proudly served the members in any way possible.

- Presently president of Local 101 • BOD for 1 year
- Former president Local 42 • Formerly chair of ADHOC Healthcare committee • Current chair of Provincial nurses council

When the government attempted to move me from NSGEU to another union it really brought home to me how much NSGEU and the people of NSGEU truly mean to me. Over



the years I have meet some of the most amazing people. Many of whom to this day I can call friend. To me being a member isn't just paying dues and watching from the sidelines.

NSGEU has become part of the fabric of whom I am as a person as an activist and as a women. I believe every member no matter who they are or what they do is extremely important.

I want to be a part of this new chapter in the NSGEU. I know there will be fights to be waged against the government as always and against employers. But I also truly believe we also need to make sure every one of our 30000 members know about their union, their contracts and what they need to do to have the voice they deserve. It doesn't matter if it's a local of 3000 or a local of 4. We are all sister and brothers across this province. We are ALL NSGEU.

I know that if chosen as your 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president there will be exciting work ahead and challenges to be overcome. I truly believe this is what I was meant to do. I am up to the challenge and promise to do you proud.

In Solidarity

*Tracey Fisk*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Erica Sisco-Dube*

Sisters and Brothers, I would like to introduce myself, my name is Erica Sisco-Dube.

I am running for the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President for the NSGEU.

I am married and have three children. I work in the Group Home sector as a full time employee, Local 59A. I have been with my organization for almost 20 years. I live and work in Yarmouth N.S.

I was an instrumental part of our local becoming unionized a few years ago. I saw the need for our staff to be treated fair and equal, and to be able to have support behind us that management would have to answer to.

It was a difficult process for us to become unionized as we not only had to get our Yarmouth employees on board, but our employees in Halifax as well. When these people were presented with appropriate and accurate information to make an informed decision, we then had the numbers to back us up.

Since becoming unionized, NSGEU has provided me with many different learning opportunities to better myself. I have taken New Activist, Steward 1&2, Advanced Steward, Communication and Leadership. I have been Chief Steward of my local since we became unionized in 2010. I sit on the South Shore Regional Council as secretary and alternate to the board.

I feel that I owe service back to the union in a larger capacity for all that it has done for me in regards to education and support, therefore I would be honored to hold the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President for the upcoming term.

We are in a time of crisis with the McNeil government trying to shut us down with various pieces of legislation that they have passed since being in power. We need people who have the heart, desire and determination to keep up with this fight. I feel that I possess all of these qualities. Please consider me for the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President of NSGEU.

Yours in Solidarity Erica Sisco-Dube

"A river doesn't cut through rock because of its strength, it's because of its persistence." unknown

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Kim Jenkins*

Hey Everyone

My name is Kim Jenkins and I would like to take this opportunity to announce my intention of running as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President of NSGEU. Currently I work a permanent 1.4 within the Healthcare Sector. I work full-time as an Administrative Assistant at the IWK Health Centre and a .4 as a Utility Worker in the Food & Nutrition Department at the Veterans Memorial Building, Nova Scotia Health Authority. I have been employed at the IWK Health Centre for the past 19 years, part-time at the Nova Scotia Health Authority for 5 years and have seen many changes over this period of time and know too well the importance of having our Union in the workplace. Not once, but twice, my job was made redundant – luckily for me I held a unionized position.





Being a young single mother - job security was one of the things I needed, along with all the other benefits we have fought for.

I have been an active member within the NSGEU membership for the last 10 years and have had the pleasure and privilege to represent our members in the following opportunities:

- A Board of Directors Member for 4 terms representing Trade Union Occupational Council Administrative Professionals
- Bill 1 - Team Lead for the Mobilization Team for Local 423 (IWK Health Centre)
- Held various roles for Local 423 – President (1 term), Bargaining Team (2), Secretary (3 terms), Clerical Labour Management Team, Occupational Council Rep. (since 2009), Regional Council Rep. (1 term) and recently becoming a Steward. Held role in Local 119 (Secretary – 1 term)
- NSGEU Chair: Education Committee (formerly), and the Social Recreation Committee (currently)
- NSGEU Weeklong School – Communications, Leadership and Mobilizing the Members
- Attended the CLC Convention
- Attended the NUPGE Convention • Attended the NSFL Convention • Attended various rallies & pickets

Our members have undertaken numerous challenges/fights with the Government over the years. Some battles we have lost and some we have won, but each was a great opportunity to learn the important role that unions play in our lives. We all need to contribute in making our Union solid. Anything we can give makes a difference. All of our members have been under attack – and we need to fight back in any way, shape or form we can.

Every year, I like to put my hand in the pot a little bit deeper. It's like digging for gold. I know I can mobilize and encourage other members to become involved and try to make our union stronger. I believe everyone can make a difference, if given the chance and opportunity. I am committed, dedicated and have exceptional communication skills.

I would like to thank you all so much for taking a moment to consider me as a representative for all of our sisters and brothers. If elected as your 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President, I promise to you that I will listen, communicate and represent everyone's concerns and make our Union stronger. I will use what knowledge I have to engage more members, and to represent and promote solidarity within the membership. I look forward to seeing you all at Convention!

In solidarity,

Kim Jenkins

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Candidate: *Elaine Webb*



I am so happy to have this opportunity to introduce myself to all my sister's and brother's outside of local 7.

I have been blessed to have been married to the love of my life for the last 37 years. My husband is fully supportive of my passion to defend and protect the rights of worker. My husband is retired from the Canadian Armed Forces after serving 25 years. During those years my husband was away on peace keeping deployments i.e. Persian Gulf War, Dubai, and Haiti, and the Arctic Circle.

When my husband was away on military operations, I found strength that I didn't know I possessed. My husband and I have two daughters and like a single parent I had to compensate for the roll of a single parent. Many of Military children were missing a Mother of father because of deployments. There were no support groups for families on the Military Bases and true to form I decided this was not fair or acceptable, we deserve better. This situation led me to organize and implement a very successful support group, to address our concern, fears, for our love ones away and for us at home.

Prior to my services to the Government of Nova Scotia I worked in the private sector, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC). CIBC was and still a privatized work place.

I lead a campaign to try and bring a union into the work place. Many of the employees working there were either fired or quit because of the unfair working condition. When management and administration discovered our joint efforts to bring a union into the work place they retaliated against five people who they deemed to be the instigators, subsequently the employer took immediate action and fired four people.

Some of you may already know me but for those of you that do not I work at Services Nova Scotia for Registry of Motor Vehicles. I became a union activist in record time shortly after I was hired, after seeing firsthand how we were being mistreated in the workplace.

The employer was violating the collective agreement and abrogating our basic rights. I learned very quickly that our employer was the biggest bully in our work place, not our Brothers and Sisters, and as a result I started to fight back.

For the past four years I have been a shop steward, Chief Shop Steward, Member of Metro C, Human Rights Committee, BUNC, and I am currently on the board of directors as the Metro C representative.

Most of my adult life I have stood for the fair and equability treatment of people in my personally and work life. By electing me for the third Vice President. I promise to work tirelessly to insure that this continues in our union and to stop the systematic abuse of the government to take away our rights through legislation that have been fought and won over the last fifty years. We have to protect what we have for our sons and daughters. As Joan always said "The world is run by the ones that show up" I will show up. So I am looking for your support for the 3<sup>rd</sup> VP.

### Secretary Treasurer Candidate: *Darren McPhee*



NSGEU Members,

It has been a privilege to represent you as NSGEU Secretary Treasurer for my 6th consecutive term. I wish to convey my intention to re-offer for the position of your Secretary/Treasurer for the coming term. I welcome the opportunity in representing you again with all the pride I felt being elected at my first local meeting 20 years ago.

NSGEU has just come through one of the most challenging terms conquering the threats, hardships, and a number of bills forced upon us by the government. By your side and by the sides of your elected Brothers and Sisters, I felt confident NSGEU could finance all necessary campaigns, job actions and court challenges to protect the interests of our members. As a union, we lead the battles and stood firm until we successfully maintained the rights of all individual members to remain within our Union. We forge ahead into a new term with a continued strong and healthy financial position. This will allow NSGEU the means to fight all legislation that threatens to erode our members ability to achieve fair and just contracts in this round of bargaining!

I am fair, honest and approachable and believe all financial matters are sensitive and important issues. I have used these beliefs over the past 13 years as your Secretary Treasurer to help guide recommendations that strengthen our Union. I have consistently demonstrated my abilities as both a leader and team member within the NSGEU Executive, Board of Directors

and Provincial Committees. Of the many leadership roles I have held as your Secretary Treasurer, I am most proud of leading these initiatives on your behalf;

- Chairing the 2008 NSGEU 50th Anniversary Committee to create and host a celebration of the contributions NSGEU achieved to make it to "50 Years of Golden Solidarity" as a Union
- Leading NSGEU's Strategic Planning with the Board of Directors through 2009-2012
- Project Managing the NSGEU Building construction from its inception Sept 2011, through its completion and move into our new building in Aug 2013.

I would like to acknowledge my family – Allana, Lachlan and Kieran and thank them for their continued support which allowed me to fulfill my obligations to you with confidence. I would like to thank the NSGEU membership, Executive, Board of Directors, and the staff for their support and guidance. This term we were pushed to our trade union limits on many fronts, but it is with pride and satisfaction I say:

Continue on page 16



Continued from page 15

We continue to stand Together, Unbroken and in Solidarity as NSGEU Brothers and Sisters!!!

It has been a pleasure working together with you to successfully complete another term. Our combined work in the coming term will ensure NSGEU's continued progress and position representing the membership as the Strongest Union voice in Atlantic Canada. I am proud to be a member of NSGEU and even prouder to have been serving with you this term while many monumental successes were achieved.

It is on this foundation and with the same passion and pride I have always held representing you in all my roles, I continue this commitment to you and ask for your support for the position of NSGEU Secretary Treasurer.

Thank You,

In Solidarity,

Darren McPhee

# NSGEU TURNS 58!

We would like to see your photos from your NSGEU Day event! Please send them to [inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca)



**H**elp us celebrate another year at the NSGEU as we turn 58 on April 19<sup>th</sup>! NSGEU's Social Recreation Committee provides funding to each region so you can hold your own celebration. Each region has access of up to \$100.00 every year to celebrate NSGEU Day. Each Regional Council must complete the proper application form and have it signed by your Regional Chairperson and Treasurer. ■

For more information visit [nsgeu.ca](http://nsgeu.ca) or call 902-424-4063

# MEET TUAPOC:

The Trade Union Administrative Professional Occupational Council



**T**he Trade Union Administrative Professional Occupational Council, which includes several members from the current Administrative Professional Bargaining Committee, would like to take this opportunity to highlight the vast number of job roles and classifications within this grouping. We are the staff members within NSGEU that provide more of the non-clinical service needs and support to clients/patients on a daily basis. We are also a group that works with leadership and other senior staff to handle client requests for information and higher level reports and delivery processes.

Since the Dorsey decision, this group has expanded its' membership, and now includes such classifications as Prevention and Community Education Officers, Research and Statistical Officers, and Quality Management Coordinators among others. Some of the more traditional classifications of this group include Booking and Registration Clerks, Medical Transcriptionists, and Secretaries, who work with the staff who directly serve patients/clients, while

others typically work in more of a supportive role that helps to create the foundation of the services that Healthcare delivers each and every day.

The Trade Union Administrative Professional Occupational Council would like to take the time, through the next several issues of The Stand, to outline and highlight some of the classifications and we being with this issue to outline the titles of the many classifications to see if you might be a member belonging to this grouping.

Please take the time to review the word cloud above which outlines the classifications within this grouping and stay tuned for future articles designed to help promote our Bargaining Committee and Occupational Council; you never know who might be in your group across the province. ■



Last spring, the Liberal government suddenly closed our provincially run Visitor Information Centres (VICs) in Pictou and Digby, leaving seasonal workers without jobs. Small local tourism operators and municipal politicians were furious that they had lost such a valuable resource, and without any consultation.

So heading into the 2016 tourism season, it was easy to understand why the workers at Nova Scotia's six remaining VICs – located at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport, on the Halifax waterfront, and in Amherst, Peggys Cove, Yarmouth and Port Hastings – were concerned about their jobs and the future of tourism in their communities. They hadn't received the customary recall notice, and there were all sorts of signs that government wasn't planning to reopen the centres this year.

Members of NSGEU Local 98, the newly established Tourism Nova Scotia Corporation, first approached the NSGEU with their concerns in the Fall of 2015. Then at a local meeting in January, Local 98 President, Rosie Weiman, along with local executive members, decided to get out in their communities and speak with the tourism partners they've worked with over the years to talk about the value of the VICs and the work our members do.

They set up a public Facebook page, "Faces of Nova Scotia Tourism," to promote the issue, and began to collect feedback from tourism operators and community members. Within days the page had hundreds of "likes," and no shortage of positive feedback.

A few weeks later, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) issued a public statement, highlighting their concerns with the potential closure of the provincial VICs:

*Last year, Tourism Nova Scotia announced the closure of the Digby and Pictou Provincial Centres. We were advised this was because both had municipal centres next door; that there would be a strategic review of visitor servicing in totality and investment in best-in-class locations. This thoughtful review has not happened and here we are, a year later, with the possibility of losing some of the most strategic locations and opportunities for sales.*

# VICTORY!

## How active members and their grassroots efforts helped save our Visitor Information Centres

*While we recognise the model for visitor services is changing, we do not have information that suggests elimination of face-to-face services is the best way forward for Nova Scotia. Technology is changing the way people travel and we agree the role of visitor centres needs to evolve, with a focus on increasing economic activity. There are examples all over the world of how destinations are adapting to better meet the needs of the global customer. How will we define our visitor services to best capture the essence of Nova Scotia and position ourselves for incremental economic growth.*

*Currently the Provincial Centres are relied on heavily by operators to book business, especially at strategic locations. TIANS is very concerned that there has been no research done to determine the economic impact on tourism businesses, as a result of the closures. One operator has reported business referrals from provincial centres were in excess of \$30,000.00 in 2015.*

(To view their full statement, visit <http://bit.ly/1Tote2o>)

Less than two weeks later after TIANS issued this statement, Business Minister Mark Furey confirmed that the six VICs would remain open and continue to be operated and administered by the province.

"I am very pleased with this outcome. Over the last year, our members who work in these Visitor Information Centres have been very concerned about the future of tourism, and the role these centres play within the industry," NSGEU President Joan Jessome said in a media release on the day of the announcement.

"These workers have dedicated a lot of time and effort into reaching out to tourism operators to advocate for the centres to remain open, and in the end it looks like that hard work has paid off."

"I am relieved the government has decided to not turn its back on this \$2 billion industry and that they are not throwing away the many of years of tourism experience, passion and dedication our members use to promote Nova Scotia to visitors," President Jessome added. ■



## Women of NSGEU doing great things in their communities

Honouring Bernice Doucet (1956-2016)



NSGEU sister Bernice Doucet.

stop from morning to night and always arranged to have her other "love", husband Hector, come up for the banquet and dance - and dance she did!

A proud mother and grandmother, she beamed when she shared news about her family. She was thrilled to have her daughter Janelle become a member Local 195, along with son-in-law Harold of Local 16. They certainly were a union family.

Bernice was more than the union - she was a member of so many community organizations, both locally and provincially. She served as President of the Nova Scotia Dental Hygienist Association; she was active in her church, l'Eglise Saint Marie; in the Cancer Society; Heart and Stroke Foundation; Yarmouth Hospital Hullabaloo; Clare Christmas Daddies; Chef de Mission -Jeux de l'Acadie; Clare Feral Friends; and many other organizations. She was awarded the Queens Jubilee Medal as recognition of her selfless giving to her community.

She enjoyed her annual trek to the sunny south with family and friends where she befriended the locals with her lovely personality. She also became fluent in Spanish so she could speak to the locals in their native language. She took her work seriously, but enjoyed a laugh along the way. She was known to dress up in green suffering from what she termed "Frogitis" every Halloween. The local children came to know her as the "lady that gave the Toothbrush with the Candy".

Even as she began her journey through treatment, she lived everyday as much as she could. She took the time to call her union friends and family and made her way to our local Labor Day celebrations in Yarmouth. She will be greatly missed by all that had the pleasure of knowing and working with her. May her legacy continue to inspire those she were fortunate to know her.

Bernice Doucet of Local 195 left us far too soon. ■

Rest in peace, Sister Bernice.

May 28, 1956-January 8, 2016

# Welcome to the NSGEU!

Between the protests and battles with government, the NSGEU has continued to quietly organize groups of new workers who work in a variety of sectors and regions of the province. Since last Convention in May 2013, we have added a total of 323 new members, organized into nine new Locals.

They are:

- **Local 87** – Parkland at the Lakes. We now represent 84 members who work as Cooks, Wait Staff, Food Services Attendants, Client Services Assistants, Activity Coordinators, Activity Leaders, Van Drivers, Housekeepers, Maintenance Workers, and Client Service Coordinators (LPNs) at this Dartmouth long-term care facility.



Local 87- Parkland at the Lakes, ratification vote.

- **Local 56** – Shannex Incorporated, Blomidon Court. There are 48 staff working as Personal Care Workers, Continuing Care Assistants, Recreation Assistants, Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy Assistants, and Support Services Attendants at this nursing home, which is located in Greenwich, Nova Scotia.

- **Local 21** – McKesson Canada Corporation, Telehealth Associates. If you've ever called 811 looking for health information or advice, chances are that you've spoken with one of the 16 new NSGEU members who work as Telehealth Associates for our provincially-funded telecare service.

- **Local 75** – Stock Transportation, CSAP Drivers. There are 55 Bus Drivers/Utility Drivers who joined the NSGEU in 2015. These members drive buses for the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) throughout the province.

- **Local 49** – Canadian Mental Health Association, Kings County Branch. The NSGEU now represents 13 members who work for this community-based mental health association's branch in King's County. These members administer a variety of programs and special projects, with a focus on finding educational and employment opportunities for their clients.

- **Local 54** – Celtic Community Homes. There are 20 members

working at two small option homes and eight supervised apartments in the Antigonish area. These facilities are part of the larger network of the Nova Scotia Residential Agencies Association, which is a coalition of non-profit residential agencies serving persons with disabilities.

- **Local 58** – Gateway Homes Inc. We now represent 42 staff helping to provide a range of community supports to a group of people with mental handicaps who lived for many years either in institutions or in their own family homes. The people supported by Gateway now live in groups of two or three in homes in the Metro area.

- **Local 51** – Community Inclusion Society. There are seven staff working for this non-profit, charitable organization based out of Kentville. They are Career Practitioners, Case Managers, Employment Maintenance Workers, Job Developers and Program & Business Assistants who help persons with disabilities find employment.

- **Local 102** – North End Community Health Centre. We very recently added the 38 staff of the North End Community Health Centre to our union membership. These members include Social Workers, Community Nutritionists, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Clinical Aids, Cleaners, Patient Resources, Billings Clerks, Medical Receptionists, Medical Secretaries, Front Desk Reception/Resource Support, and IT Technicians. The mission of the centre is to support North End Halifax to be a healthy community by offering leadership in primary health care through health services, education, community development, outreach and advocacy.

- **Local 52** – King's Meadow Residence Society. The 12 employees of King's Meadow Residence Society voted overwhelmingly to join NSGEU in February. Opening in 1969, King's Meadow was the first community based group home in Nova Scotia. The focus is on the teaching of skills necessary for daily living with programs addressing such skills as fiscal responsibility, household maintenance, independent travel, safety, social connections, self-care and self-esteem,

recreation, citizenship, and healthy living.

Additionally, we have been successful in amending two existing Locals to include additional classifications and members:

- **Local 71** – Chignecto Central Regional School Board. This Local now includes Community Outreach Workers with the school board.

- **Local 122** – IWK Health Centre, Health Care Central Zone. This Local has been expanded to include Pharmacists, Psychologists and Registered Dietitians.

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of these new members! ■



Local 52- King's Meadow Residence Society.



Local 58- Gateway Homes Inc.

# BILL 148

## The following is the letter a member submitted to the Law Amendments Committee on Bill 148:

It is sad and ironic that on a day this Committee sits before passing Bill 148: The Public Service Sustainability Act, Vladimir Putin signs a law allowing Russia to ignore international human rights rulings. Undoubtedly, Russia will be condemned for passing this law, perhaps by some sitting on this committee. As you read and listen to people speak about Bill 148, I hope that you will think about what is happening in Russia, and how Bill 148 sets the province down the same path.

Collective bargaining is defined as “a method of jointly determining working conditions between one or more employers on one side and organized employees on the other. The normal outcome is a collective agreement outlining terms and conditions of employment as well as issues such as union recognition, grievance procedure and special committees”. Previously, all provincial governments and the federal government agreed that it is in the public interest to permit and encourage collective bargaining. It is common practice that in situations where a group such as the public service does not have the right to strike, binding arbitration by a tribunal settles disputes when a mutual agreement cannot be reached. These fundamental principles of collective bargaining are imperiled by Bill 148.

Anyone who votes in favour of Bill 148 will not only be encouraging the breaking of collective bargaining rights, but will also be on the wrong side of history. I ask each committee member to reflect how you will be viewed by leaders and citizens in Nova Scotia as well as other provinces



NSGEU members take part in a Bill 148 protest at Province House in December, 2015.

and international communities. What message is being sent if Nova Scotia does not uphold rights, does not bargain in good faith, and does not uphold agreed upon and signed collective agreements?

As a public servant, I am concerned about the future of the public service in Nova Scotia. On one hand, we are told we are valued for the work we do. On the other hand, the rhetoric is that we are overpaid, redundant, and that the government can no longer afford benefit packages such as the Long Service Award. There is a need to make cuts to the public service and services need to be privatized to manage the deficit.

The Honourable Stephen McNeil has recently been quoted as saying the province cannot afford to leave wage and benefit decisions to a third party arbitrator. May I remind you that your MLA wages and benefits were reviewed and set by a third party committee which compared your wages and benefits to elected officials in other provinces. If this process was fair for you, why is legislation needed to place limits on arbitrators in determining wages and benefits for public servants? It seems rather hypocritical.

James Sawler, an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at Mount Saint Vincent University, wrote an opinion piece in The Chronicle Herald, which was published on March 20, 2015. In that opinion, Dr. Sawler argued that austerity has not worked elsewhere and that a vibrant public service is needed in Nova Scotia. From my experiences and

as someone who has specialized in community economic development and rural sociology, I concur.

There is no doubt that Nova Scotia has challenges going forward. The recent budget update clearly indicates that problems reside on the revenue side and not on the spending side. Nova Scotia's GDP to debt ratio has been falling in recent years, and our ratio is comparable to the national average and much lower than that of Ontario and Quebec. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the Nova Scotia economy will grow by 2.3% in 2016. Looking at the numbers objectively, the present and future do not look as bleak as the budget suggests.

I have been fortunate to work with intelligent, knowledgeable, and dedicated colleagues who believe in the Public Service Values. My fear is that actions such as contracting out services, reducing benefits, and wage restraints will result in the public service losing highly skilled, experienced workers. The reality is that there may not be an incentive to stay in the province as the economic disincentives will outweigh the perceived quality of life benefits. Losing these public servants is especially troubling considering that innovation is paramount in moving the province forward. The public service needs people with experience and diversified skill-sets, especially considering the public service will experience staff turnover from a wave of retirements, only made worse if this Bill becomes law. Downsizing the public service will have an effect on supporting the pensions promised to retirees and affect the services the public expects and receives. What this Bill does not consider is that many public servants have options. I chose to make Halifax and Nova Scotia my home, and I am writing this letter because I, like many of my colleagues, want to live here and play a

role in helping Nova Scotia reach its potential.

Eliminating benefits such as the Long Service Award will have a disastrous impact on the morale. The Long Service Award is the only retention mechanism in place for unionized public servants. A decision to eliminate the Award will impact new and recent hires disproportionately. Recent and new hires will have the most to lose, while public servants near retirement will be relatively unaffected.

Without an opportunity to earn bonuses or increase income aside from increases that are collectively bargained, there is no longer an economic incentive to work for the public service with the exception of receiving a pension upon retirement. Considering that most other provinces have lower taxes, higher salaries, and a lower cost of living aside from housing, there really is not much of an economic incentive to remain in Nova Scotia. Many younger and middle-aged Nova Scotians have already figured this out and moved to other provinces.

I urge you to contemplate the latent effects of Bill 148 as the province

currently has difficulty attracting and retaining young and middle-aged workers with skill-sets that will be needed to deal with the challenges facing the province. Public servants want to be actively engaged. My hope is that you will allow us to be partners on the journey to making our province a better place to work and live. ■

Sincerely,  
Dr. Andrew Knight

*Dr. Knight is a Civil Service member of Local 8 and a Regional Councilor for Metro B.*



NSGEU members rally at a Bill 148 protest.

# AROUND THE UNION IN PHOTOS



Christine Saulnier of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives speaks during an International Women's Day breakfast at NSGEU.



NSGEU members rally to support striking members of the Halifax Typographical Union.



Participants from the International Women's Day breakfast at NSGEU.



Halifax Typographical Union President Pam Sword spoke to members during International Women's Day.



President Joan Jessome and NSGEU Board Members visited the picket line in a show of support to the Halifax Typographical Union.

# EDUCATION

## NSGEU EDUCATION COURSES 2016

### New Activist

April 5&6  
Old Orchard Inn,  
Wolfville  
South Shore & Valley

April 18&19  
NSGEU Offices, Truro  
Cumberland/Colchester  
Pictou/Antigonish/  
Guysborough

April 25 & 26  
NSGEU Office, Sydney  
Cape Breton &  
Pictou/Antigonish/  
Guysborough

### Steward I

May 26&27  
NSGEU Office, Yarmouth  
South Shore & Valley

June 3&4  
NSGEU Office  
Dartmouth  
Metro A, B, & C and  
Cumberland/Colchester

Eligibility: Members  
with no prior training.  
Recommended for  
New Stewards prior to  
Steward 1.

### Steward II

March 31& April 1  
NSGEU Office,  
Dartmouth  
Metro A, B, & C and  
Cumberland/Colchester

April 7&8  
Old Orchard Inn,  
Wolfville  
South Shore & Valley

June 8&9  
NSGEU Office, Sydney  
Cape Breton &  
Pictou/Antigonish/  
Guysborough

Eligibility: Stewards with  
no prior training.

May 30&31  
NSGEU Office,  
Dartmouth  
All Regions

Eligibility: Stewards  
with six months  
experience at Level 1.  
Description: In-depth  
grievance investigation,  
tools for dealing  
with management.  
Expanded roles and  
responsibilities of the  
Steward.

If you're interested in participating in any of the courses or workshops listed here, the NSGEU can help make it happen! We cover your transportation and child/eldercare costs (as defined by the NSGEU Board policies) and will also help arrange for your time off work. For more information contact us by calling 902-424-4063 (toll-free 1-877-556-7438) or emailing: [inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca).

The Social Recreation Committee would like to advise that they are now accepting applications for the NSGEU Amateur Sports and Fine Arts Awards. Each year, the NSGEU Social/Recreation Committee may issue up to 15 Amateur Sports Awards (of which up to three may be Fine Arts Awards) of \$300 each to members, or children of members, who are amateur athletes or artists. These awards help defray the costs of participation in or training for sports or art. The deadline is March 31 of each year. Please visit the NSGEU Website for details <http://bit.ly/25jNY6j>

## Unions make a difference in our lives.

Unions fought for many of the benefits workers enjoy today: Sick leave, maternity & paternity leave, vacation, minimum wage, paid breaks, overtime, workplace safety standards and regulations, collective bargaining rights, and much, much more.

Do you know of a group of non-unionized workers who might be interested in joining the NSGEU? Please contact:

**Lori Smith, Organizing Officer** 902-456-6531 or 1-877-556-7438 or [lsmith@nsgeu.ca](mailto:lsmith@nsgeu.ca)



## NSGEU Standing Committees

The NSGEU has Standing Committees of the Board that include representatives from the eight regions, a Board of Directors' member, and a Provincial Executive Committee liaison. These committees all fall under the direction and mandate of the Board of Directors and follow approved terms of reference.

These committees are:

- Constitution & By-Laws Committee
- Resolutions Committee
- Finance Committee
- Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Committee
- Human Rights Committee
- Political Action Committee
- Education Committee
- Women's Issues Committee
- Social/Recreation Committee
- Ad Hoc Committees of the Board

If you are interested in joining one of these committees, you must first be elected by your local to the NSGEU Committee Pool. These elections are held at the end of the month following the NSGEU Triennial Convention. To be elected, you must be a member in good standing and have attended at least 40 per cent of your local meetings in the 12 months preceding the election.

After the locals have elected members to the Committee Pool, the NSGEU Provincial Executive Committee assigns Committee Pool members to the various committees. The Board of Directors must then ratify the assignments.

We are featuring these committees in The Union Stand to help raise awareness of the work they do and the larger role they play within your union.

### CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS COMMITTEE:

This committee considers all proposed amendments to the NSGEU Constitution & By-Laws that have been submitted by the locals and the Board for debate and decision at the Triennial Convention. The Committee then presents these amendments to delegates during Convention, along with its recommendation on whether each should be accepted or rejected.

The Chair of this committee is Colin Sutton and the Executive Committee Liaison is NSGEU President Joan Jessome.

### RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

This committee considers all of the resolutions submitted by the locals, Board of Directors, and committees to the Triennial Convention. The committee then presents these resolutions to delegates at convention, along with its recommendation on whether each should be accepted or rejected.

The Chair of this committee is Peter Perry, and the Executive Committee Liaison is Sandra Mullen. ■

## UNION THREADS

There's a whole range of colourful NSGEU clothing available at the union office at 255 John Savage Avenue. For more info, call Jackie Creemer at 424-4063 (toll free at 1-877-556-7438) or email [jcreemer@nsgeu.ca](mailto:jcreemer@nsgeu.ca)



\$15.00- Jacket micro fleece



\$20.00- Sweatshirt



\$60.00- Jacket with hood



\$25.00- Umbrella



\$3.00- Water bottle

Our NSGEU sweaters & jackets would make a great addition to your sprint wardrobe!

# NSGEU

## Gives Back!

Between 2010 & 2015 the NSGEU has given back to the community in excess of **\$388,000** in the form of donations to Nova Scotia charities and disaster relief efforts, approved by your Board of Directors.

**FEED NS: \$96,000 | CHRISTMAS DADDIES: \$46,000 |**

**AIDS COALITION OF NS: \$32,000 |**

**MENTAL HEALTH COALITION OF NS: \$42,500 |**

**BEACON SOCIAL JUSTICE LITERACY AWARD: \$2,800 |**

**HAITI/OXFAM DISASTER RELIEF: \$10,000 |**

**NSGEU CANCER SUPPORT FUND (FUND T826) \$25,000 |**

**NUPGE'S SOCIAL JUSTICE SOLIDARITY FUND \$16,100 |**

**NUPGE'S INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE SOLIDARITY FUND \$10,900 |**

**TRANSITION HOUSES ASSOCIATION OF NS \$60,000 |**

**MAYWORKS \$5,000 | KIDS HELP PHONE \$39,000 |**





**April 27, 2016 is:**

# **Administrative Professionals Day**

**Please check [nsgeu.ca](http://nsgeu.ca) for more info!**

# **NSGEU**

**Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union  
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