

NSGEU

THE 20-20 STAND

Summer 2014



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

Special Convention 2014 Unanimous support for action! (Pg. 4 & 5)

In Your Words Delegates speak out on workers' rights (Pg. 6)

Selling Alcohol Responsibly Why agency stores are bad for all of us (Pg. 14 & 15)

CONVENTION RALLIES MEMBERS



NSGEU President Joan Jessome speaks at the NSGEU Special Convention in June.

Special Convention 2014 made it clear - the entire membership stands behind our health care members who were legislated back to work with essential service legislation in the spring. Delegates from regions across the province and diverse occupations spoke to the crucial role the right to strike and labour rights play in our ability to have a voice in labour relations. Essential Service Legislation weakens our rights and we will continue our challenge of this legislation in the courts.

As we head into late summer, school board budgets for the next year have been decided. We have spoken out against cuts to library hours and positions at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board and cuts to administrative professionals in the South Shore Regional School Board. Health and safety continues to be a priority item for our correctional officer members working at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Burnside in particular, and we are working at addressing concerns with the employer.

The Liberal government will be bringing in legislation in the fall that will set the stage for the restructuring of the District Health Authorities. We have been through this process before. We have represented health care workers as Nova Scotia hospitals were restructured into regional and then District Health Boards in the 1990s and as the Capital District Health Authority was created in the early 2000s. We know the chaos that can be part of this kind of initiative: our experience serves us well,

and we are working hard to find an acceptable solution that will work best for our members.

The government has told us they would like the unions to work together on a proposal for labour representation for the one DHA and they want fewer bargaining tables. Together, working through the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, all the health care unions (NSGEU, CUPE, NSNU, and UNIFOR) are trying to find a proposal acceptable to all parties, which we will present to the government.

Through our first ever Special Convention and our Leadership Symposium held in June, our leaders, delegates, and members have taken stock of the many challenges ahead. It is clear that we stand together and will need all members to continue to support each other and show up when called on. With our strength and our diversity, we are a powerful democratic voice for public sector workers and will continue to be into the future.

In solidarity,

Joan Jessome

Joan Jessome
President, NSGEU

THE STAND

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Members take part in the NSGEU Leadership Symposium in June.

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FAMILY FUN DAY CORN MAZE: YOU'RE INVITED!

WHAT: Cumberland Colchester annual Family Fun Day! All members are invited. Event features a 12-acre corn maze, cow train rides, laser tag, petting zoo, wagon rides, pumpkin u-pick & tire jump, as well as a free BBQ (hamburgers, hotdogs & veggie burgers).

WHEN: Sunday, September 14, noon to 4 p.m. (Rain date is Sunday, September 21)
WHERE: Riverbreeze Farm & Corn Maze, 660 Onslow Rd. Truro, N.S.
COST: \$5 per person (includes lunch), kids under 4 are free!

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 or connect with us:



MEMBER TWEETS

- Lyne Brun (@LyneBrun)**
Had a great time presenting today on mental health at the @NSGEU Bullyfree Workplaces conference. Excellent group! #thanks
- Unifor (@UniforTheUnion)**
Flags of many colours assemble to support Cascade workers on strike. @cfsns @NSGEU @HalifaxLabour ow.ly/i/5540v#bcpoli #nspoli
- Rick Wiseman (@rickw10)**
Nova Scotia government is opening 7 new agency liquor stores. Cool story, I won't be in any of them. @NSGEU
- Halifax Media Co-Operative (@HfxMediaCoop)**
Talking strategy: #NSGEU special convention addresses attacks on workers bit.ly/1kGpKlk#canlab #nspoli #nsgeu14 @Tony_Tracy@NSGEU
- Anna Tea (@HOLA HFX)**
Great 2 focus on the transformative power of our collective voice & the @NSLiberal attempt 2 silence it with #bill37 @NSGEU #nsgeu14#nspoli



Special Convention called to address DHA restructuring

By Deedee Slye

Don Gosse was just one of many members who voiced concerns at Special Convention in June.

On June 2, the NSGEU held an historic special convention called by President Joan Jessome, in accordance with Section 3.13 of the Constitution. The convention call came out of a need to meet with the entire membership to discuss pressing issues facing the union including next steps after the Liberal government introduced essential service legislation for our health and community care members and the restructuring of the District Health Authorities.

President Jessome told delegates about the support we have received from other provincial unions who are also members of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) and what we have learned from them about their experience with essential service legislation and negotiations. She outlined the bargaining landscape going forward, which includes the wage restraint promised by the Premier and the essential service terms of Bill 37. She asked that all locals ensure they have their Bargaining Committees in place as we will be holding bargaining strategy sessions for all sectors and stand-alone locals, to prepare for negotiations.

At one point during Convention, every delegate was standing as President Jessome illustrated how intertwined and interdependent we are to each other within the NSGEU. Everything we do has an impact on all of our members in different areas. Members stood up to speak out against the legislation. If they worked in health or community care, or if they received wage increases that followed the wage pattern set by those members who work in health care (the 7.5% wage pattern increase achieved and set by Local 42). They stood up if they had shift or weekend premiums or the right to strike (shift and weekend premiums were achieved because

we had the full right to strike). They stood up if they have a major pension issue at their bargaining table (pension issues have been advanced by our members who work in the university sector). The impassioned speeches they gave clearly illustrated how Bill 30 and 37 impact health and community care workers directly, but how indirectly, they also affect all members.

"This whole convention is about walking out of here shoulder to shoulder. The issues we face are bigger than any one occupation," said President Jessome.

Members voted unanimously to:

- Condemn and defend the imposition of unconstitutional legislation by the McNeil Liberal government by challenging Bill 30 and 37 in the courts;
- Condemn the McNeil Liberal government for unfair and inequitable treatment of NSGEU members covered in Bill 37 and to take all necessary measures to challenge this legislation and preserve the use of a strike threat in bargaining;
- To take all necessary measures to protect NSGEU members to ensure they remain members under the new employer and to protect employee rights from erosion as a result of the merger of District Health Authorities;
- To equalize as much as possible the strike-related income of all striking employees in a bargaining unit.

It was an emotional convention, with members speaking at the microphones in favour of the resolutions. They were passionate about the importance of the right to strike and how it gives workers a stronger voice in bargaining which we would not otherwise have.



President Jessome speaks to the delegates at Special Convention.

“Nurses are far too essential to have the right to strike but not so essential that they can’t be suspended for two days? In what universe does that make sense?”

– Larry Brown, NUPGE Secretary Treasurer

Larry Brown, Secretary-Treasurer at (NUPGE), explained to Convention delegates why income inequality continues to be the most pressing issue we face as a society. The notion we are in a period of austerity is factually incorrect. We are twice as prosperous now as we were 20 years ago. The top one or 0.1 per cent of the population have made out like bandits. There is more than enough money but it is not shared equally. If governments tell you they cannot afford public services, they are telling you they have made a choice not to put money there.

“This whole convention is about walking out of here shoulder to shoulder. It (the issues we face) is bigger than any one occupation.” – Joan Jessome, NSGEU President

“Nurses are far too essential to have the right to strike but not so essential that they can’t be suspended for two days? In what universe does that make sense?,” said Brown, NUPGE Secretary-Treasurer.

Brown shared words of solidarity with delegates and reminded us that we will continue to be a strong and diverse union long after the McNeil government is a memory in the history books.

As a result of a motion from a delegate from Local 1 in the Civil Service, Amy Graham, the Convention resolution regarding Bill 30 and 37 was amended to include:

“Should we be successful in determining that Bill 30 and 37 are unconstitutional we should apply this to all legislation

that takes away the right to strike.”

This amendment means that we will also be pursuing the right to strike for the Civil Service and police on constitutional grounds, if Bills 30 or 37 are found to be unconstitutional in court.

The day after Convention, Local Presidents came together at a Leadership Symposium to continue discussion and to develop actions out of the resolutions passed at

Convention. We heard that members would like NSGEU’s profile raised in their communities, through materials members could display at home, at work and in the community. Lawn signs, window clings, water bottles, and other items have been created and are in the process of being distributed at events this summer. Our leaders came with a strong idea of who NSGEU is: our strengths and our challenges. We will communicate the strengths of the NSGEU and promote the work we do together with materials like these.

Special Convention and the Leadership Symposium made for a great opportunity for the leaders and delegates of our union to get together, take stock, discuss, and plan a response to many of the challenges we are facing and will continue to face under this new Liberal government. ■

Quotes from the Special Convention



Members at Leadership Symposium in early June.

“ I was there at the legislature when (Bill 37) was passed. I truly believe that an injury to one is an injury to all and we need to stand up for these workers. They have stood up for us and we need to do anything we can to defend their right to strike. – **Carrie Campbell, Local 81, Mount St. Vincent University** ”

“ My mother became seriously ill not too long ago. At the time, I had to give up work and became her primary caregiver. She passed away in 2007. All of us are going to face the issue of aging parents. Although I couldn't be at the legislature, I'm so proud of everybody that was there and so supportive of this resolution and what is to come. I want to thank everyone in health care for what you do and your dedication at the hospitals and to the families. – **Gayle Gray, Local 6, Civil Service** ”

“ We are at war. If we don't stand up, we are going to be bowled over. We need to engage everyone and fight this at every level. – **Ken Wilkie, Local 480C, Corrections, Civil Service** ”

“ I represent about 3800 health care workers affected by these Bills. It was very disheartening when the legislation was passed. It actually made me nauseous. We need to stand up. – **Tracey Fisk, Local 42, Capital Health** ”

“ We had a great show of support for Local 34 with a support picket in the Truro area on that frigid day...I took this as a personal slap in the face, that for 50 cents an hour we are not equal. Two years ago we were considered glorified housekeepers, now we are an essential service. Which way do you want it? You can't have it both ways. – **Ruth MacDonald Local 35, VON Home support, Colchester County.** ”

“ I stand here in support of this resolution ... By passing this resolution, we will not only talk the talk, but will walk the walk. I would like to see a unanimous vote on this resolution. – **Lois MacDougall, Local 94, Public Health/Addiction Services/ Continuing Care, DHAs 7 & 8** ”

“ I listened in horror as the Premier told the home support workers that they need to accept the 2, 2.5 and 3 or it won't be there next time. People, we are under attack. If we allow this legislation to stand, who is to say that my school bus will not be declared essential? ... I don't want to see our rights taken away by someone who doesn't understand the meaning of the term essential service. – **Wayne Molene, Local 78B, Stock Transportation** ”

“ It is time for us to take a strong stand. I had to miss time at work so I could look after my mother. She lives in Nova Scotia but because there was no bed for her here - they had to send her to New Brunswick. It is time for this to stop. – **Rosemary Mills, Local 24, Crothall Laundry** ”

NSGEU family picnic



The NSGEU Annual Family Picnic was held at Oakfield Park on July 12, 2014. Proudly hosted by NSGEU Social Recreation Committee, the afternoon event captured a record number of attendants. Many hours of planning created fun and excitement for children and parents alike. Smiles, giggles and laughter along with sounds of clicking cameras captured special memories to last a lifetime. It was a very special day for NSGEU members and their families!

Special thanks to our many volunteers who gave their time to ensure everything went smoothly. Many thanks!

Thank you to all who attended and made our picnic so successful.

Plans are in the making for next year's date: July 11, 2015. We'll see you then!

In solidarity,

Edie Fraser, Chair, NSGEU Social Recreation Committee



BULLY-FREE CONFERENCE REPORT

By Susan Caldwell

Shifting Workplace Culture, Prevention, Promotion and Protection was the theme of the Working Toward Bully-Free Workplaces International Conference held at the NSGEU Conference Centre. The conference was attended by business, labour and community groups wanting to understand more about the new National Standard for Canada on Psychological Workplace Health and Safety.

This theme was addressed by Mary Ann Baynton, MSW, RSW, co-chair of the Technical Committee on the National Standard of Canada on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. Mary Ann is an independent consultant who also serves as the Program Director for the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, is a member of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Expert Panel, and was recently appointed to the ISO project committee on occupational health and safety management systems.

Mary Ann addressed the idea that if the standard is voluntary and free, what is the motivation to implement?

Subsequent presenters also looked at the relationship between bullying and a psychologically safe workplace with an interest in promoting the development of a strategy based on the Standard

A second theme centered on program delivery & evaluation, with Valerie Cade offering the keynote. Valerie Cade is an educator and internationally recognized, award winning presenter considered one of North America's top experts in the field of stopping workplace bullying. A professional speaker and business consultant to health care organizations, government, the corporate sector and not-for-profit setting, Valerie is author of the bestselling book "Bully Free at Work: What You Can Do To Stop Workplace Bullying Now."

We wanted presenters to look at research for evidence and best practices; as well as models for sustainable change and evaluation methodology, both quantitative and

qualitative. Facilitator competencies for program delivery received attention, given that we feel the success of the NSGEU Working Toward Bully-Free Workplaces program relies on the capacity of the facilitators.

NSGEU President, Joan Jessome provided the keynote on the union role and to showcase the NSGEU program. It was Joan's vision to offer a program to the NSGEU's 30,000 members to educate and remedy workplace bullying. Beginning with research, development, field testing and evaluation the program was launched in 2010. Several major projects have come out of this program, which now has approximately 40 facilitators delivering this model in three provinces and consulting in many other organizations.

The final keynote was provided by Helge Hoel, professor in Organizational Behaviour and a recognized international expert on bullying, harassment and violence in the workplace. He has written and contributed to a number of books, articles and reports in the area of bullying, violence and harassment, including commissioned works for the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Professor Hoel is the Director of the University of Manchester Fairness at Work Research Centre (FairWRC). Speaking on

restorative practices and Fairness at Work, he presented research to understand people who bully and those affected: the targets and bystanders. Understanding the restorative process, that it is participatory - democratic, fair, deliberative and reflective; as well as examining critical factors in building capacity and changing culture.

Presenters and participants had favourable comments on the conference content and process. Participants were highly complimentary of the building and conference venue, which allowed for the use of the Conference Centre. There seemed to be consensus that the NSGEU should host a conference like this again. ■

– Susan Caldwell is NSGEU's Bully-Free Workplace Coordinator.



Guests at the first Working Toward Bully-Free Workplaces Conference listen during presentations.

Conference Feedback

"It was so nice meeting you all. The conference was one of the best I have ever attended thanks to the commitment and dedication that is so easy to see that you all have for this topic..."

– Starlene MacDonald, Ontario Shores

"Thanks so much for inviting me to the conference last week. I had a great time. The folks that attended my session were very engaged and asked some great questions. Congrats on your conference, I heard good things."

– Lyne Brun, Emera

"You are doing such important work! I am sending this email because I feel so grateful for your efforts."

– Michelle Thomason, Dept. Labour and Advanced Education

"I know at this point you are 'knee deep' in preparation for the upcoming conference. Since I know the conference is going to be an overwhelming success I am writing to inquire about serving as a Media Partner for next years' event. I publish The Workplace Violence Prevention eReport and know we can contribute significantly to publicizing the event."

– Barry Nixon, Founder, National Institute for the Prevention of Workplace Violence, Inc



Guest speaker Professor Helge Hoel.



Guests of Bully-Free Convention listen to Professor Hoel.



Bully-Free facilitators.

LOCAL 97 UPDATE: ESSENTIAL SERVICE NEGOTIATIONS

By Shawn Fuller

When the provincial government passed essential services legislation this spring, it had an immediate impact on bargaining for NSGEU Local 97 members.

The Local 97 Bargaining Committee was in the midst of mediation when the law was introduced and managed to get out on strike for one day before the legislation was passed by the Liberal government.

That legislation, known as Bill 37, saw many historic presentations by CDHA nurses made before the province's Law Amendments Committee. The nurses said the legislation was a direct attack on their ability to negotiate fair collective agreements and to advocate for their staff and patients. Their presentations followed in the wake of similarly impressive presentations by NSGEU home support workers who faced similar legislation just a few short weeks before.

Bill 37 legislated an end to the strike by Local 97 and required NSGEU and Capital Health to negotiate an Essential Services Agreement before any strike could resume.

NSGEU formed an Essential Services Committee to undertake these negotiations.

The Committee is made up of NSGEU staff, five Local 97 nurses and NSGEU's legal counsel.

The committee has held about 10 meetings with Capital Health including several meetings with Capital Health managers and directors from almost every work area.

As a result of these discussions, the parties have reached agreement on staffing levels for a significant number of work

areas. In addition, the Committee is negotiating the terms of an agreement with Capital Health that would accompany any future strike. This agreement will cover matters like: payment of benefits during a strike; how to resolve any staffing disputes that might arise; and how to determine the skill mix required among those who will be required to provide essential services.

Despite the complex issues confronting the Committee, negotiations are proceeding at a reasonably quick pace. If negotiations stall, either party may refer outstanding issues to the Labour Board for final resolution. We expect negotiations to continue until the end of July or early August in an attempt to resolve the final Essential Services Agreement. ■

– Shawn Fuller is NSGEU's Director of Servicing & Negotiations, Health Care. He also sits on the Essential Service Committee for Local 97.



Members picket during the Local 97 strike in April.



HEALTH CARE WORKERS, HAVE YOUR SAY: SURVEY

The government announced in early July 2014 that they were seeking additional input on the DHA restructuring process from Nova Scotians through an online survey. We encourage all members to take a few moments to fill out the survey, which consists of just three questions:

1. In your view, what's the best way to ensure local voices are heard?
2. The health needs of every community differs. How can we best respond to changing health needs?
3. What's the single most important initiative needed to build a healthier community?

You can fill out the survey by visiting <http://bit.ly/1neePeJ>

Talking Retirement NSGEU's Pensions & Benefits Officer explains retirement eligibility

Do you know when you are eligible to retire?

Chances are if you've been in the workforce for 30 years, you've already taken a look at the details of your pension plan. But if you're just starting out in your career, you may not have considered retirement plans just yet.

NSGEU members belong to a variety of pension plans, depending on where they work. All pension plans outline when you are eligible to retire. They normally include an Early Retirement Date, a Normal Retirement Date and a Late Retirement Date. Certain pension plans allow you to retire when your age and years of plan membership/service equal a qualifying factor (i.e. 80 or 85). But since each pension plan has different rules, you will want to confirm the retirement eligibility rules for your specific plan by speaking with your plan administrator (it's best to call your Human Resources department, as they can put you in touch with the right person).



The following is an example of the Rule of 80:

Julie is 32 years old and currently has five years of service in her pension plan. She will continue to be employed on a full-time basis until her retirement. She wants to know: when can she retire?

Start by adding Julie's age (32) and years of service (5), which equals 37. Then, deduct this number from 80, and you get 43. We will then divide 43 by 2 (for each year Julie works into the future, she will also be one year older). This leaves us with 21.5 years. If we add the 21.5 years to Julie's current age of 32, we would see that she'll be eligible for an unreduced pension when she is 53.5 years old. She will have worked a total of 26.5 years with her employer.

$$80 - 32 - 5 = 43$$

$$43 \div 2 = 21.5$$

$$21.5 + 32 = 53.5$$

The annual statement that you receive from your pension plans includes information on when you can retire. If you have not received an annual statement from your pension plan, you will want to contact your Human Resources department. ■

• **Normal Retirement Date:** Most pension plans have a normal retirement of either age 60 or age 65.

• **Early Retirement:** You may be eligible to retire up to 10 years prior to your Normal Retirement Date. If you choose to retire prior to your Normal Retirement Age, you will receive a reduced pension. The amount of the reduction will depend on the formula in your pension plan and how many months your early retirement Date precedes your normal retirement Date.

• **Late Retirement:** You must retire at the end of the year in which you turn age 71. This is an Income Tax Rule.

• **Unreduced Retirement:** Pension Plans that offer members the option to retire early without a penalty usually have a "Rule of 80" or a "Rule of 85". This means that when your age (usually defined as at least 50) and your years of service equal 80 or 85, you would be able to retire without a penalty.



– Corinne Carey, the NSGEU's Pension & Benefits Officer, helps members navigate the world of pensions.

YOUNG WORKERS CONFERENCE

By Carrie Campbell

The Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee was created in 2009 to create awareness of the NSGEU, while encouraging young workers to become more involved within the labour movement. With the support of experienced activists, the committee engages workers between the ages of 18 and 35 to try and promote succession planning and bridge the generational gap between NSGEU and the workplace. In a survey of the membership, it was discovered that 67% of our members are eligible to retire within the next ten years. It is imperative that we engage young workers now, and encourage them to become active within their locals.

The idea of holding a conference for "under 35s" was a vision for the committee from the very beginning. The first two terms were used to promote and build the committee, and try and get out and be more visible - both within the community and NSGEU. Finally on May 30th and 31st, the first NSGEU Young Worker's Conference became a reality. We hosted 38 young workers from across the province, and from a vast range of sectors.

The conference was opened with a traditional Mi'kmaq smudging ceremony, performed by Brother Trevor Sanipass. For centuries, many cultures have used smudging as a way to create a cleansing smoke bath to remove negative energy from the body, aura, and space.

President Joan Jessome welcomed conference participants and spoke about issues workers are facing across the province, and ways they can get involved. Attendees were inspired by Joan's message: "The world is run by those who show up."

"Building a culture of solidarity means we have each other's backs," said Kyle Buott, President of the Halifax-Dartmouth & District Labour Council and Secretary-Treasurer of the Nova

Scotia Federation of Labour. Kyle is the youngest person to ever be elected to either of these positions. He spoke about the broader labour movement and how the NSGEU fits into it. The young workers in attendance were fired up after hearing Kyle's passionate speech.

Charlie Huntley, from Barrista's Rise Up movement opened day two of the conference and spoke about their experience trying to organize. Charlie was fired from Just Us Café on Spring Garden Road in 2013 for their participation in a union drive at their workplace. Charlie stressed the importance of protecting young workers who are often stuck in casual or part time positions, doing precarious work. Their story had a strong impact on the members in attendance, who realized that young workers are standing up for their rights, and are always fighting for better work conditions.

The Young Worker's Committee then hosted a World Café type of discussion, which was facilitated by NSGEU 2nd Vice President, Kelly Murphy. We discussed what kind of workplace, and what may be hindering their ability or desire to become involved.

The conference was wrapped up with a Bully-Free Workplaces workshop, facilitated by Rick Wiseman, who was on the Young Workers' committee for the past two terms, first as a committee member, then as Executive Liason.

Many of the young workers who attended the conference had never attended a local meeting, and didn't know how to get involved. It was very exciting to see them leaving on the second day with a little more knowledge, and a lot more enthusiasm. ■

– Carrie Campbell is Chair of the Young Workers Committee and President of Local 81, Mount Saint Vincent University.



Members of the Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee gather at NSGEU.

SUSAN STUTTARD

1946-2014

By Cynthia Tompkins

Susan Stuttard was an Audiologist with Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres from (1980-2003) and a founding member of NSGEU Local 20. She died on February 13, 2014, having retired from Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres in 2003 shortly after Local 20 members entered the NSHEPP pension plan.

Susan was a member of the bargaining committee that gave Local 20 members a pension plan superior to the defined contribution plan formerly provided by the Employer. She fought tirelessly to successfully convince Local 20 members that changing to a defined benefit plan was essential to members' financial security on retirement.

Local 20 Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres is a relatively young local which was certified in 1999 and achieved its first collective agreement in 2000. Without Susan's influence and dedication to organizing Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech employees, it is difficult to imagine how that certification would have been successful.

I had the privilege of organizing with Susan. I will never forget how tenacious and hard working she was in the months leading up to the certification vote as we contacted employees, held meetings, spent countless hours on the telephone convincing Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres employees to vote to join NSGEU.

After the successful vote, Susan was elected Local 20's first President and a member of the first Bargaining Committee, serving several terms in both offices. Since the first contract Local 20 has negotiated five more collective agreements. Local

20 members now enjoy most of the benefits that other NSGEU health care locals do, including but not limited to, pregnancy and adoption leave top up, wage increases consistent with healthcare, vacation and holiday entitlements, grievance procedures, retirement allowance, and retiree benefits.

Susan's dedication to the union movement embodied the values and commitment that are needed to organize, motivate and lead by example. She was also a wonderful Audiologist whose co-workers and patients held in high regard. Susan leaves behind her husband Colin Stuttard, her daughter Leila, son Gavin, five grandchildren, extended family in her native Ireland, as well as many former colleagues and friends who miss her unique spirit. She was truly the driving force

behind Local 20's inception and continued success. ■

– Cynthia Tompkins is an Audiologist at the Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centre and Chief Steward of Local 20.



Susan Stuttard casts her ballot for the first collective agreement of NSGEU Local 20 in September 1999.

NSGEU Speaks out on NSLC Issues

By Ian Johnson

When the Minister for the Liquor Control Act announced in early June that seven more Agency Stores would be allowed to open, NSGEU moved quickly to condemn the move. With the additional seven, the total number of Agency Stores will be 58.

As President Joan Jessome explained: "We think it is important to remember that when the Agency Store initiative started, Rodney MacDonald (then the Minister Responsible for the Liquor Control Act) committed the government in October 2000 to allowing only eight Agency Stores. We were willing to live with that limited number, but the government then decided later to break that commitment. It approved 15 more in 2005, 13 more in 2006, allowed for up to another 36 in December 2006, and approved up to another 15 more in 2007, before today's announcement."

She reminded everyone that it was almost exactly a year ago when then opposition leader Stephen McNeil promised there would be no further privatization of the NSLC. He said in an email to NSGEU dated June 7, 2013: "A Liberal government will not privatize or sell off the NSLC, nor will we change the manner in which alcohol is retailed/distributed in Nova Scotia." With this announcement, president Jessome notes that: "Adding seven new Agency Stores does change how alcohol is distributed in those communities and opens the door to still more privatization across the province."

She also questioned how opening new Agency Stores will "provide rural communities with additional economic activity and employment opportunities," as the Minister claimed. Instead, our members are telling us that the NSLC has already been cutting hours in rural areas, and currently reviewing a number of class one stores. "If the government was truly interested in creating good paying jobs, they should open up more NSLC stores," said Jessome.

On another NSLC issue, the union commented on June 18 about



NSLC Port of Wines employee Heather Jenkins checks a customer ID.

the draft regulations for U-Vent and U-Brew operations. This followed the passage of the enabling amendments to the Liquor Control Act found in Bill 52 during the Spring Sitting of the Legislature.

President Jessome wrote in January to express our concern about the potential impact of these businesses on the jobs and collective agreements of our members. The Minister replied on February 19 to indicate that she did not think these businesses would significantly affect NSLC sales and these legislative changes are being used to set standards for an already existing service in the province.

Members remain concerned about the legislative amendments to the Liquor Control Act regarding U-Vents and U-Brews on a number of different fronts, as they contain a number of significant gaps and shortcomings including:

- The Act has no requirement for a set of social responsibility programs or campaigns, such as requiring age identification for every transaction, as is done by NSLC on an ongoing basis;
- Health impacts of having easier, on-hand access should be fully assessed before finalizing the new system, especially for young people;
- People under the age of 19 years of age would be allowed to be employed in a FOP facility (this is not permitted in the PEI regulations on which these draft regulations were supposedly based);
- There are no limits on the hours of operation, as is the case in PEI regulations;
- There are no apparent controls on how much any one person can brew at a time, how much can be brewed in the facility as a whole, how much product can be stockpiled, or any limits on the alcoholic content of the finished product;

- There is no apparent limit on the number of licenses that can be issued or renewed; no provision for independent checks on quality control and there are no pricing requirements, especially as compared to NSLC products, which could adversely impact at least some NSLC sales;

- There is no enforcement section as found in the PEI Policy Manual;

- If there are proposed policies similar to those in PEI to complement the draft regulations, they should be clearly stated in a Policy Manual and subject to public input before they may come into effect.

When the broader picture is taken into account with the recent announcement of seven new Agency Stores, coupled with the reduction of hours in rural NSLC outlets and the review and possible reduction of a number of class one stores, we are very



apprehensive about these new developments. Every additional move towards a completely privatized system of alcoholic product production, distribution and sales moves us that much further away from a properly regulated, socially responsible, and fully accountable public body running this system. Our concerns have been forwarded to government.

It is important to acknowledge that the membership is not against new developments in the production, distribution, and sales of beverage alcohol, but we are committed to seeing new ideas within the public system and within the public regulatory framework in a way that keeps our communities safe and healthy without job losses. ■

Keeping unionized jobs in rural Nova Scotia

Please **do not** shop at NSLC agency stores

The NSGEU proudly represents over 1,000 staff who work for the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation (NSLC). Our members are managers and clerks in NSLC stores in communities across the province: they work in central office, and in the central NSLC distribution warehouse.

We are reaching out to union members to ask you to support your local NSLC employees, their families, and communities. Please **AVOID** using agency stores, which are cropping up in rural communities at an alarming pace. You can recognize these stores by their signs which read "Authorized Agent" under the NSLC logo (see image above.)

Agency stores draw sales away from the closest unionized NSLC store. If the sales drop below a certain point, the store may become a target for closure and good paying unionized jobs will be lost. Our

rural communities need these jobs; they are a very important part of keeping a healthy and safe local economy through responsible retailing practices.

NSLC
AUTHORIZED AGENT

Selling liquor privately has been shown to increase the number of alcohol related deaths. NSLC employees are trained in ID programs like "Check 30." They help to keep liquor out of the hands of minors and we count on them to keep our communities and our roads safe.

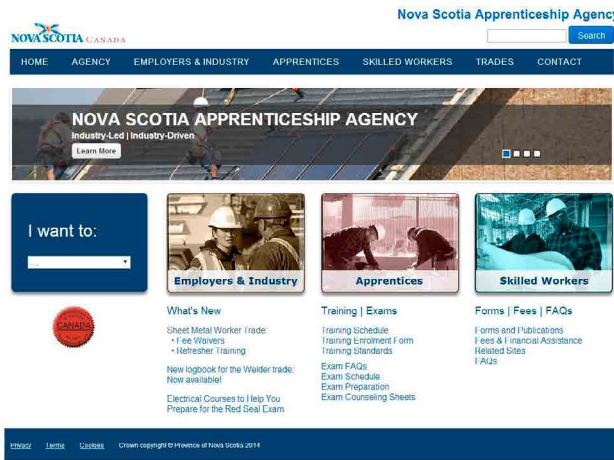
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has made it very clear they support the public regulation and distribution of alcohol for the safety of citizens. Read MADD's research and arguments for keeping liquor sales public: <http://bit.ly/1su5oLF>

Please support your local unionized NSLC store. Help keep good jobs in your communities, keep liquor sales public, and your roads safe. ■

NEW APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY BASED ON NSGEU MEMBERS

On July 1, a new Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency was established as a special operating agency with an industry-led board and an acting CEO. It is focused on improving Nova Scotia's apprenticeship system by getting more employers involved and helping more apprentices complete their training. NSGEU has supported this initiative, which was developed through a broad consultative process which began in 2011.

At the same time, it should be noted that the real foundation for this new Agency is the former apprenticeship training division of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and the NSGEU members who were part of that division.



On April 15, President Jessome wrote to Kelly Regan, who is the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, to clarify what would happen to the positions, rights and benefits of our members who were to be affected by this transfer. We wanted to make sure they would still be covered by the Civil Service Master Agreement, and that we remain as their bargaining agent.

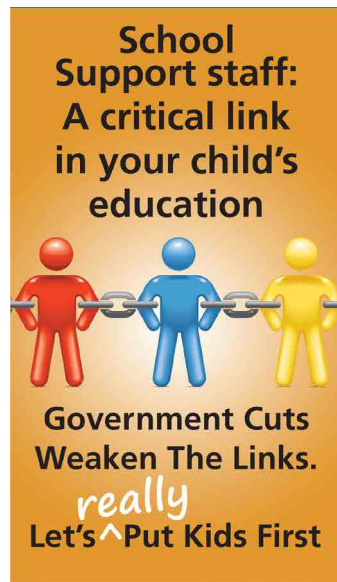
The Minister replied on May 28 to indicate that all staff members under the former division were expected to transfer to the new Agency as of July 1. She also indicated that all NSGEU members would remain as such, they would be covered under the Civil Service Master Agreement, and that NSGEU would remain as their bargaining agent. She thanked us for our support in setting up the new Agency. ■

SUPPORT STAFF: CRITICAL TO CHILDRENS' EDUCATION

During budget sessions in the South Shore and the Valley School Boards in June, decisions were made to continue to cut hours and/or positions for administrative assistants and library workers.

The Annapolis Valley Regional School Board (AVRSB) has reduced library hours by 4.5 hours a day across the region. This amounts to a reduction of approximately 855 hours per school year in library services for schools in the region. Some schools may lose their library services entirely as a result of the cuts.

Library technicians help instill the love of reading to students. Part of their mandate is to connect students with resources that support the student's personal interests, whether in books, or online. They support and encourage the student's personal literacy development outside of the classroom. They also organize events that get students excited about reading



for the fun of it. Losing library technicians and libraries in schools hurts the overall quality of education our children receive and our goal for a high literacy rate.

In the South Shore Regional School Board (SSRSB), they have reduced school support positions including two administrative assistant positions. These positions are in head office and will mean fewer staff will be responsible for more work.

Not only is the loss of these positions bad for the students and for the school system as a whole, but every position lost is a loss to the economy of the community. Losing good jobs, affects not only the staff member but their families and the communities in which they live including the stores they shop at.

We are currently lobbying the government to have support staff included in the Education Review process precisely because their work is critically important but goes largely unrecognized and unacknowledged. Currently, the province has not included support staff in the review process. We will continue to press this issue. ■

NSGEU RESPONDS TO EDUCATION REVIEW PANEL

By Ian Johnson

On February 19, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development announced the creation of an Education Review Panel which would review all aspects of public education and produce a final report by October of this year. They were asked to find out what Nova Scotians think is working and what needs to be improved in the education system. This panel is chaired by former Lieutenant Governor Myra Freeman and includes six other members. There was also to be a partners' advisory group representing a diverse group of organizations and educational partners such as teachers, universities, African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq, Acadians, youth and business.

On March 19, Ms. Freeman announced the panel would be launching an online survey, which started on April 24. She also invited written submissions by email or mail, responses by Twitter, and the use of a discussion guide. However, they did not hold formal public hearings. All input was to be received by June 13.

One issue that arose early in the process was the failure of the government to ensure support staff were recognized and represented in this process, especially on the partners' advisory group. President Jessome wrote on February 20 to make this request, which the Minister turned down on March 25. President Jessome then repeated our request in writing on April 14. She also wrote on May 23 to request a meeting with the review panel. Ms. Freeman replied on June 5 that the panel would determine after the submission deadline of June 13 with whom it will meet to help understand the issues raised during the consultation process.

The NSGEU School Board Occupational Council met on May 2 to discuss how to respond to this process, as was done with the Executives of our School Board Locals and Occupational Council during the School Closure Review Process. All members working for school boards were encouraged by President Jessome to participate in the online survey and all school board locals were invited to complete the online discussion guide.

Based on the discussion on May 2, the union sent a submission on June 12 to the panel which provided some detailed comments on five main topics of the discussion guide. This covered "supports for students," "equity and human rights," "school climate," "partnerships," and "organization of schools."

In general, we said that our members working with school boards do not think the public education system is meeting the needs of Nova Scotians and they see problems with the

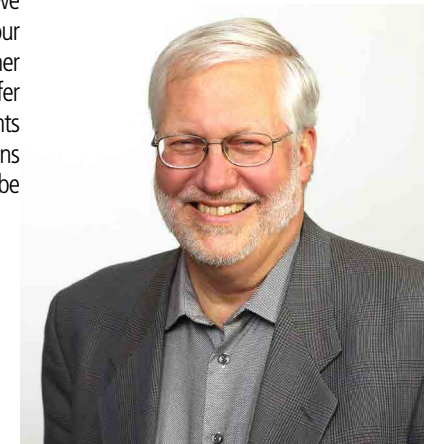
school system as it is now functioning:

- The public school system is not working properly, and it is actually failing almost everyone. Children are suffering and not getting the full experience. There is simply not enough support being provided;
- More emphasis is needed on educational/teaching assistants, IT, and library support, and less on consultants. These are critical links providing hands-on support to students;
- There is a hierarchy in public schools and disrespect from the top which has to be eliminated;
- Overall school communication is lacking. For example, they see that there is a lack of information to parents about the amount of support being provided for their children.
- Money in the school is not being spent on the right programs and supports. They see equipment being used ineffectively.
- There is no consistency from government to government in relation to the public school system.

It is important for support staff to be fully recognized and respected as a full partner and contributor to public education in this province. They should be adequately represented in every consultation process and decision-making body related to public schools such as School Options/Review Committees and School Advisory Councils.

On June 18, the Minister announced that more than 19,000 Nova Scotians had made submissions to the Panel. Of that total number, approximately 1,000 came from school and board administrators and staff.

If the panel truly wishes to offer a bold new direction to the government, we suggested that our members and other support staff offer important insights and directions that should not be ignored. ■



— Ian Johnson is NSGEU's Servicing Coordinator and Policy Analyst.

NSGEU EDUCATION COURSES

New Activist

September 15 & 16
NSGEU Office, Sydney
Cape Breton and
Pictou/Antigonish/
Guysborough Region

September 22 & 23
NSGEU Office,
Yarmouth
South Shore & Valley
Region

September 29 & 30
Best Western,
Bridgewater
South Shore Region

November 13 & 14
NSGEU Office, Truro
Cumberland/
Colchester and Pictou/
Antigonish Region

November 17 & 18
NSGEU Office,
Dartmouth
Metro A, B, & C
Region

Pre-Retirement

October 4
Acadia University,
Wolfville

November 15
NSGEU Office,
Dartmouth

Eligibility: Usually within one to two years of retirement.
Description: Overview of pension politics in Nova Scotia.
Presentation from CPP and your pension plan, i.e. NSAHO, PSSP, etc.
Retirement benefits. Benefit information varies according to location and Local members.

Steward I

September 17 & 18
NSGEU Office, Truro
Cumberland/
Colchester and Pictou/
Antigonish Region

October 6 & 7
Best Western,
Liverpool
South Shore & Valley
Region

October 29 & 30
NSGEU Office, Truro
Cumberland/
Colchester and Pictou/
Antigonish Region

November 19 & 20
NSGEU Office,
Dartmouth
Metro A, B, & C
Region

Eligibility: Stewards with no prior training.

Steward II

November 3 & 4
NSGEU Office,
Dartmouth
Metro A, B, & C;
Valley; Cumberland/
Colchester; & South
Shore

November 6 & 7
NSGEU Office, Sydney
Cape Breton and
Pictou/Antigonish/
Guysborough Region

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.

Bully-Free Program

October 9
NSGEU Office,
Dartmouth

Description: Six-hour interactive workshop that explores bullying issues in depth with small group activities; engages participants to help understand solutions to workplace bullying.

Week-Long School

October 19 to 24
NSGEU Office,
Dartmouth

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 424-4063 (toll-free 1-877-556-7438) or emailing inquiry@nsgeu.ca.

NEW UNION STAFF



Dawn Lohnes, Secretary (temporary)

Dawn is on a five-month contract with NSGEU providing secretarial support to our Education and Communication departments. She works full-time with the Department of Internal Services for the Provincial Government.

Steve Smith, Technical Systems & User Support Analyst

Steve joins the NSGEU after working for NS Business Inc. for the past 13 years. His main tasks include troubleshooting user issues, staff training and supporting our Systems Coordinator.



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



\$25.00



\$20.00



\$60.00



\$25.00



\$3.00



\$15.00

Our NSGEU tank tops and t-shirts would make a great addition to your summer wardrobe!

NSGEU DISCOUNT LIST

Present your NSGEU card to save money on a variety of items and services. Below you will find a selection of discounts available to you as an NSGEU member. For a complete list, visit to nsgeu.ca.

ACCOMMODATION

The Westin Nova Scotia

1118 Hollis St, Halifax NS.
1-877-993-7846
reservations@westin.ns.ca

\$129 + taxes, for a tradition room, either two double beds or one queen. This includes: parking, internet, newspaper, fitness centre, pool, coffee, tea, and shuttle service to business district.

CLOTHING

Mark's Work Wearhouse

10% discount on regular retail price on such items as: footwear, coveralls, overalls, industrial outerwear, rain wear, casual wear, health wear clothing, work accessories. You must have an NSGEU membership card and Mark's discount card.

FLORIST

Gerry's Nursery

Centerville, Kings County
902-678-1255
10% discount

Pretty Posies

8877 Commercial St., New Minas
902-681-1166
10% discount

FRAMING/PRINTING

Atlantic Photo Supply

5505 Spring Garden Rd., Halifax
902-423-6724
atlanticphotosupply.com
10% discount on photo supplies (not including cameras or other equipment).
25 free 4X6 photos when you sign up for online print service.

Frame Plus Art

6040 Almon St., Halifax
902-455-6792
frameplusart.ca
20% off framing and plaque mounting

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MacDonell Pharmacy Ltd

1024 Grenville St. St. Peter's,
Richmond County
902-535-3196
Additional supplementary coverage of up to \$4 per prescription. You must present your NSGEU card and if applicable your employer drug card. In addition, a 10% discount on certain non-sale items will be offered on front-store purchases.

HAPPY LABOUR DAY!

Monday, September 1st



**Celebrate the valuable work you do,
and the achievements of workers
around the world, with your
family and friends at one of five
great events being held in Halifax,
Kentville, Sydney, Port Hawkesbury
and Yarmouth!**

**Please check nsgeu.ca for more information
on the upcoming Labour Day festivities!**



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