

HELPING HANDS IN HAITI
A Local 42 physiotherapist lends her
labour where it's needed most. Page 9

NSGEU

JUSTICE FOR THE CURE
Two friends rally their co-workers
in the fight against cancer. Page 4

Pre-Convention 2011

THE UNION STAND



Marshalling Our Voices

**In Nova Scotia and around the world, labour is under attack.
From May 25 to 28, NSGEU activists will gather during
Biennial Convention to protect workers and their rights.**

PAGES 15-23: Executive Committee candidates | Advice for new delegates



Convention is a reminder that together, we are all leaders

I believe that for any worker, belonging to a union helps make their life better. Appropriate wages and safe working conditions are obvious examples of what unions can do for their members, but having been an active union member for over 20 years, I have come to believe that unions give something even more profound: self-respect and empowerment.

That's because at their core, unions are democracies. From setting bargaining priorities to deciding whether or not to go on strike, unions like the NSGEU are built on the idea that every member has an equal say in the direction and priorities of the group. In other words, we believe fundamentally that everybody has something valuable to contribute. Every member matters. We are all leaders.

Nowhere is this more proudly on display than during our union's Biennial Convention, which is now just weeks away.

Over the course of four days in late May, hundreds of members from all corners of the province and all walks of public service will crowd into the main hall of the Westin to set the coming agenda for this great Union.

Through open discussion and debate, we'll talk about the issues that are important to us and decide how the NSGEU will address them over the next two years.

For a taste of how empowering Convention can be, turn to Page 15 and see what some Convention veterans have to say about their experiences.

Much of the dialogue during Convention centres around our work and what the union can do to help us do it better. But our discussions during Convention are not limited to workplace issues. With almost 30,000



NSGEU President Joan Jessome

members and an overall annual budget of close to \$14 million, the NSGEU can bring considerable weight to bear on any issue about which its members are passionate.

During the last Convention, for example, delegates voted to donate a total of \$40,000 to such organizations as Feed Nova Scotia, Transition House Association of Nova Scotia and the Kids Help Line.

What initiatives will spring from Convention 2011? I may be the president of the union, but even I can't yet answer that question. We have a lot of work ahead of us over the next two years to protect your jobs and the important public services you provide. I believe one of the areas in which the union should assume an even more active role is in the push to properly address rampant mental illness in our workplaces. I can promise you that I will be speaking passionately on the subject.

But I will be but one voice among hundreds. When it comes time to decide, we will decide together.

In solidarity,

Joan Jessome

THE STAND

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The NSGEU is a member of the Canadian Labour Congress, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the National Union of Public and General Employees.



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On the cover

Scenes from Convention

2009. MAIN PICTURE: Delegates vote in favour of a motion.
TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: Local 22 delegate Elaine Hulan; Local 480 delegates Stephen Sweeney and James Herritt; NSGEU President Joan Jessome; Local 8 delegate Rocky Beals.



THE LIFEblood OF OUR BLOOD SYSTEM

Canadian Blood Services Lab Technologists Melissa Carrier (left) and Donna Young (both of Local 43) are among the dozens of NSGEU members who help ensure the fundamental safety of our health care system. **PAGE 10**



SOLIDARITY FOR DEMOCRACY

From Wisconsin to Nova Scotia, unions are under attack. Member Thane Paris says it's time for us to fight back. **PAGE 7**



Women Unite Against Poverty

NSGEU's Women's Issues Committee is pulling people together to help bring an end to a crushing problem. **PAGE 9**



Discount List

One of the benefits of belonging to the NSGEU is that you're eligible for discounts from dozens of businesses across Nova Scotia. **PAGE 14**



Bargaining

Local 42 gets a tentative agreement after a gruelling round of conciliation, while Locals 97 and 47 make ready for strikes. **PAGE 24**



Bargaining for Mental Health

Governments and health managers haven't been able to solve this growing problem. It's time for workers to force the issue. **PAGE 26**

MEET THE CANDIDATES

So far, seven members have declared for positions on the NSGEU's executive committee, which will be elected during Convention 2011 from May 25 to 28:



PRESIDENT

Joan Jessome **PAGE 17**



1st VICE PRESIDENT

Don Goss **PAGE 18**

Jason MacLean **PAGE 19**



2nd VICE PRESIDENT

Dawn Ferris **PAGE 21**



3rd VICE PRESIDENT

Kelly Murphy **PAGE 22**

Rick Wiseman **PAGE 23**



Secretary-Treasurer

Darren McPhee **PAGE 20**

AROUND THE UNION



For the second year running, Local 6 Deputy Sheriff Rory Fraser (far left) and Local 480F Correctional Officer Chris Deal (far right) have rallied dozens of their co-workers to help raise money for breast cancer research through their "Justice For The Cure" exhibition hockey game.

DEPUTIES, CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS RAISE THOUSANDS FOR BREAST CANCER

Two friends have great success turning friendly rivalry into fundraising gold

NSGEU Correctional Officers and Deputy Sheriffs helped raise more than \$6,000 for breast cancer research during their annual "Justice For The Cure" hockey game on March 27 in Cole Harbour.

Organized by Correctional Officer Chris Deal (Local 480F) and Deputy Sheriff Rory Fraser (Local 6), the event drew hundreds of fans along with the support of corporate sponsors Scotiabank and The Fight Store Martial Arts Gear & Apparel.

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The two friends were also able to hustle up signed donations from a variety of celebrities—including Sidney Crosby, Bobby Orr, Wayne Gretzky, George St. Pierre, Bret "The Hitman" Hart, and Gene Simmons—that were auctioned off to raise even more money.

"We decided it would be great to raise some money for a good cause," says Deal. "Breast cancer runs in my family. It is also very close to home for many of my co-workers."

The game itself was played under gentleman's rules of no checking and no slapshots, and it was a little one-sided. The Correctional Officers, who play together often as The Burnside Slammers (they arrived complete with a two-man coaching staff and co-ordinated pink socks and stick tape in honour of the breast-cancer cause) won the match by a healthy 11-4 margin.

Don't feel too badly for the Sheriffs, though.

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While the game raged, Rory Fraser (in the Oilers jersey) and Chris Deal (in the vest and pink-striped shirt) encouraged fans to bid on some of the fantastic celebrity donations they'd gathered and put up for silent auction.



Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage MLA
Becky Kent dropped the puck and
NSGEU President Joan Jessome
enjoyed the game from the stands.



The Deputies may have lost the game, but their fans were loud and proud, and their camera-toting co-workers got some great shots of their four goals.

Unions Make A *Difference* In Our Lives

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AROUND THE UNION

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What they lacked in regular practice, they more than made up for with spirit. Their fans were loud and proud in the stands, and they brought with them two photographers (Local 6 Deputy Sheriffs Jason Godreau and Tony Bremner) who seemed to be looking the other way whenever the Slammers put one in the Sheriffs' net.

The only score that really mattered, though, was the impressive \$6,000 raised for charity, which is double what they raised during the inaugural match last year.

Rory and Chris are now hard at work at their next fund-raising competition between Correctional Officers and Deputy Sheriffs: the Second Annual "Make a Wish" baseball game, which will take place this summer. "Last summer we raised enough money to fulfill the dreams of two sick children with the help of Scotiabank, which matched the donations we raised dollar-for-dollar," says Deal. "That feels really good and makes all the extra work we put in worth it in the end."

How you can nurture a culture of safety within your workplace

By Allison Himmelman, Local 55

Safe workplaces don't just happen. They are created and maintained by people with a passion for keeping their co-workers safe from harm. They are the result of commitment and specific action. The bottom line: they exist because the organization has a positive safety culture.

So what exactly is a culture of safety? And why foster one within an organization?

According to Mark Fleming, psychology professor with Saint Mary's University, an organization's safety culture is about the priority safety is given relative to other factors and goals within the organization.

"Generally, a safety culture boils down to shared perceptions about the importance of safety," says Fleming. "It consists of the values and attitudes of the people who make up the organization. When a positive safety culture exists, there are high levels of trust and people agree that safety is important; there are safety management systems in place and these are followed and effective."

Research shows that there is a definite link between the safety culture and the number of injuries within an organization.

"When we examine organizations with

Statistics still paint a grim picture on workplace safety

April 28 is the National Day of Mourning For Workers Killed or Injured On The Job, and in Nova Scotia, there are many to mourn. In 2010, 23 people lost their lives at work, a terrible toll.

Perhaps even more terrible is the general feeling of helplessness that pervades Nova Scotia workplaces when it comes to safety. According to a recent poll by the Workers' Compensation Board, almost half of Nova Scotians (43 per cent) believe that workplace injuries are an inevitable part of life. Here is what this fatalism has wrought:

- 28,089 Nova Scotians were injured on the job in 2009
- 7,206 people were injured seriously enough to miss time from work in 2009
- Over the past five years, close to 120 people have died because of a workplace injury.

We can bring these numbers down. We can spare ourselves all the pain and grief that these numbers represent. But we must first, each and every one of us, take responsibility for safety in the workplace. Speak up for safety. Refuse unsafe work. Take part in the solution before you become the next sad statistic.

a high rate of injuries or fatalities, we typically find that the employees do not believe that managers and supervisors are truly committed to safety, which tells us the organization has a poor safety culture," explains Fleming. "While the workers might have been aware of the danger or potential safety threat, unfortunately, getting the job done was perceived to be more important than their own safety."

Simply put, workplaces with a positive safety culture have a lower injury rate. And a lower injury rate has tremendous benefits for any organization – from the bottom line to improved employee morale and a

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SOLIDARITY FOR OUR DEMOCRACY!

Collective bargaining and freedom of association are under attack. It is time for us to stand together: push back against policies of 'austerity' and tax cuts.

By Thane Paris, Local 7

In a very real way, the last few months have been an almost unprecedented time in human history. All over the world, people are struggling to survive earth-shattering natural disasters, mass political uprisings and all too often violent attacks on the most basic of civil liberties.

For those of us in the labour movement, the last few months have given rise to

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a newly re-energized and very sinister attack on unions in the United States. The Republican Party has launched an open

attack on worker rights; more disturbing is an organized and calculated attack on democracy itself.

At one time, our brothers and sisters in the United States had rates of unionization close to our own. Canada now has a unionization rate of approximately 29.6 per cent. This means almost 1 in 3 workers in Canada enjoy the rights and benefits of a collective agreement. The United States has a unionization rate of approximately 12.3 per cent.

Unions have always been under fire, and we are almost always defending what we have rather than fighting for more. Since the first formation of unions in Canada around 1867 they have been viewed by some as "criminal conspiracies."

The modern attack on labour started in the 1980s when Ronald Reagan deregulated air traffic control in the U.S., eventually breaking the union that represented controllers. Since then, our unionized brothers and sisters in the U.S. have seen their unionization rates drop significantly.

Now in Wisconsin, Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana and Michigan to name a few states, laws have been brought forth that would take away the right to bargain collectively, even the right to democratic



Labour and Workforce Development Clerk Thane Paris exercises his democratic rights during a picket at Province House in support of wage parity for Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority workers.

process. The Koch brothers from Wichita, Kansas, billionaires who made a vast fortune from paper products and petroleum, have given millions towards this cause.

Through my union activism and my job as a Labour Inspector, I see every day that the rhetoric and lies about unions are steadily gaining more and more support.

In almost every speech you hear from a politician, you hear the word "austerity." In economics, austerity is really just policy; policy to cut deficit through lower spending and a reduction in public services. These austerity policies are often used by governments to reduce their deficit and are sometimes coupled with decreases in taxes.

As the most recent federal budget address on March 22, 2011 showed, our federal government would like to reduce spending and has made it resoundingly clear that it will not increase taxes,

corporate taxes in particular. The Harper Tories have no plans to increase taxes such as GST/HST. My question to them is why not increase corporate taxes? It seems very unfair that a citizen pays a higher tax rate than a multi-million-dollar corporation. (One other note about Harper's Conservative government: it was found in contempt of Parliament; a first for any commonwealth government in history.)

As unionized workers, we often take for granted the hard-fought benefits of our collective agreements. We sometimes forget that we have real job protections that guarantee we cannot be fired without just cause. We forget that we have monetary and non-monetary benefits that non-unionized workers simply do not have. If unions do not defend what we have now, we might lose our unionization rates like the U.S. At times, we tend to forget that the struggle of all workers is our struggle as well.

In these turbulent times, we must make a stand for what is right. We must stand together from the Middle East to the American mid-west to Nova Scotia. It is time we all do some research into the candidates. It is time we vote for the candidate that has OUR interests in their campaign platform, not those of a corporation or the ultra-wealthy.

I say to you: if you are a public employee, it is time to go to your local meetings and get involved. If you are a Civil Service employee, report vacancies in your unit to the NSGEU's Cut Stoppers campaign (www.nsgeu.ca/cutstoppers). If you just want to see the government work for you, talk to your MLA and spread the word about our shared struggle. We need to make choices that benefit us, not the wealthy and privileged.

All workers, from teachers to fire fighters to post office workers, from construction workers to nurses to government office workers: we must stand together in SOLIDARITY forever!

Thane A. Paris is a Labour Inspector at the Department of Labour and Workforce Development.

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AROUND THE UNION

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strong reputation. The number of workplace injuries and fatalities in Nova Scotia alone speaks to the need for more organizations to adopt positive safety cultures. The province's rates are among the highest in the country, with one in 10 Nova Scotians injured on the job each year.

The good news is that this number is continuously decreasing, thanks to workers and employers across the province who are stepping up and making safety a priority for their organizations. But more needs to be done and more organizations need to follow their lead.

The Mainstay Awards celebrate safety excellence by identifying individuals, organizations and companies who are creating and reinforcing a culture of safety in Nova Scotia.

So what are these organizations doing differently? How have they created a culture of safety? It's been through strong leadership, established safety policies and employees who take action to minimize risks and ensure injuries are prevented.

For Black & McDonald, the 2010 Mainstay Safety Award of Excellence winner, it's about sticking to the goal of zero lost-time incidents and staying true to their motto, "No one gets hurt today or tomorrow." It's about making safety a defining characteristic of their operations.

Although a culture of safety starts at the top of any organization, ultimately everyone shares the responsibility. Because when it comes down to it, one Nova Scotian injured on the job is too many. For resources and tips to help create a culture of safety within your organization, visit www.worksafeforlife.ca.

This article was originally written for the Nova Scotia Business Journal by Allison Himmelman, who was recently hired as a Communications Advisor with the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia. She just signed her membership card last month. Welcome to the union, Allison!

Workplace safety is also an issue on our highways

By Robert Tupper, Local 7

Brothers and Sisters, I am writing to remind you all not to drive while talking on a cellular phone because there is a risk of making a terrible mistake while driving if you do.

I drive a lot and have been in 12 near misses in a six-month period because of drivers talking on their cellular phones while driving. It is against the law and could cost you dearly if you are in an accident.

It is better to be safe than sorry! If you need to answer a call, please pull over to the side of the highway with your four-way flashers on.

While I'm on the subject, please double check your car before hitting the highway this spring to make sure it is safe.

Be sure to check your lights to ensure they are all working and your oil and windshield fluid levels to make sure they are topped up. One of the most important things is to make sure you have your spare tire in your car in case you get a flat.

It is very important to keep up on your MVI inspection and have your safety equipment on hand to give other drivers warning that your car is out of service or that help is needed or on the way.

Also remember to have a cellular phone with you. It will come in handy in case you see another accident or if you are involved in an accident.

Have safe travels and watch out for children!

Robert Tupper is a Clerk at the Registry of Deeds.



Robert Tupper

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Fighting poverty on International Women's Day



WIC members Kim Manthorne (left) and Nancy Boudreau speaking with Minister of Labour and Workforce Development Marilyn More.



Anti-poverty activists Jymy Tanner (left) and Lillian Kai.



NSGEU President Joan Jessome (left to right), Sharon Murphy of Canada without Poverty, Hon. Marilyn More, and Transition Houses of Nova Scotia Director Pamela Harrison

March 8 was the 100th International Women's Day. In celebration, the Women's Issues Committee (WIC) hosted a breakfast event dedicated to the fight against poverty.

The goal of the "World Cafe" style breakfast was simple: inspire women of prominence in Nova Scotia to begin using their influence against poverty by introducing them to women who have first-voice experience with life below the poverty line.

The original plan was to bring 30 women together, but the idea caught on and 50 ended up attending.

It was a wonderful event filled with incredible conversation and connection. Work is already underway to host an even more ambitious event during next year's International Women's Day.

'I KNOW WHERE I CAN HELP'

CDHA physiotherapist Judy Lugar swallowed her fears and used her vacation to aid earthquake-ravaged Haiti

Judy Lugar had been thinking for a while about travelling to Haiti to lend her labour to people in need. "People all walk the same way no matter what language they speak," says the physiotherapist at Nova Scotia Rehab (Local 42). "So I knew I could be of help."

Some of her colleagues at Rehab had been travelling to the poverty-stricken nation regularly through an organization called Team Canada Healing Hands (www.tchh.org), and Lugar thought that in a few years, once her son was off to university, she'd follow in their footsteps.

But then the earthquake shook the country to its very core. "I have to admit that I was anxious because I didn't know exactly what I was getting myself into," says Lugar, who is a member of the Nova Scotia Sports Hall

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of Fame for her success as a competitive sailor. "But my focus is helping people with spinal cord injuries, and I decided it was time for me to get involved."

She cashed in a week of her vacation, got all her vaccines and booster shots, and boarded a plane for Port au Prince. It was one of the most meaningful decisions of her life.

Just as she'd read in the news and seen on TV, she arrived in a country that looked like it had been brought to its knees. Signs of destruction were everywhere: blocks upon blocks of buildings laid in waste, massive chunks of rubble still littering the streets.

But as she acclimatized to all the outward signs of ruin, she began to see, and be inspired by, how much the Haitians were already being able to rebuild.

"Life isn't going to be normal there for a very long time, but there are lots of very bright spots in the dark haze," she says. "My approach became: I know where I can help. I know that I can teach Haitian physiotherapists to give treatments and to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injuries. All the rest of it, I don't have a lot of control over. So it would be lost sleep for no benefit."

For five days, Lugar travelled with other "Team Canada" members to their newly remodelled clinic in Port au Prince and visited a large Medecins Sans Frontieres clinic. Wherever she could, she passed on the most simple but effective techniques that they



Judy Lugar assembles a wheelchair in Haiti: "We have a lot we could offer, and with the help of Team Canada Healing Hands, it's not that difficult to go if you want to."

could use to help as many people as possible.

"They didn't have a lot of experience or training in spinal cord injury physio, so I could give them insight into an area of medicine that they hadn't really been exposed to," she explains. "One patient with a neck injury was experiencing a lot of stiffness, so it was difficult for him to do the therapy."

"I was able to suggest that he should be doing his stretching while on his hands and knees instead of in a sitting position. It was just a different way for them to approach the problem, and it really helped," she says. "Helping them redirect their therapy, that was the kind of thing that really made the trip feel worthwhile."

Lugar's five days flew by and, before she knew it, she was back in Canada. However, she has plans to return again soon for a longer stay, and encourages other health professionals to think about doing the same.

"Haiti's entire medical system is having to be reorganized because of the earthquake," she says. "We have a lot we could offer, and with the help of Team Canada Healing Hands, it's not that difficult to go if you want to."



Donor Testing Lab Technologist Melissa Carrier: "If it was you in the hospital, or your grandmother in the hospital, it's very important that you know that the blood taken off the shelf was tested to the utmost standards."

THE **LIFEBLOOD** OF HEALTHCARE

The team of Health Professionals at Canadian Blood Services work behind the scenes to help keep people alive

By David Redwood

Lab workers on the third floor of the Canadian Blood Services Laboratory in Halifax don't always see the full impact of their work at the office. But the life-saving blood products they handle show up in dramatic fashion when they get home. Transfusions have helped their relatives, their parents, even themselves.

"I've received blood to save my life," says Lab Assistant Cammy Mercier. "I know the rewards behind it and what it did for my family." Mercier is busy this weekday morning preparing a shipment of 40 units of red blood cells. The units, each in its own plastic bag, are destined for a Newfoundland hospital.

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Scanning bar codes on the bags leaving the laboratory, Mercier bundles the units inside Styrofoam-lined boxes. Two cold gel packs inside will preserve the blood cells for up to 24 hours. From this room, the boxes will be driven to Stanfield International Airport and placed on a commercial flight. Within hours, or perhaps a day, of them arriving in St. John's, they will be used in a surgery or a transfusion.



Lab Assistant Mark Berrigan knows how precious blood can be. He's donated dozens of times.



"These platelets are like gold because they are for patients who are in dire straits," says Lead Lab Assistant Betty Lawrence (above), part of a team of dozens that includes Cindy Slaunwhite (far right) and Carolyn Barrett.

Some blood products must travel from donor to patient – from vein to vein – within five days. Inside that tight window, Mercier and her colleagues in Local 43 are busy.

Mark Berrigan flips through a legal-sized printout that shows where today's work originated. "We had 140 units collected yesterday," says the 30-year-old Lab Assistant. He touches the paper each time he names the donor clinics: Charlottetown, Sydney, Kentville.

Those 140 bags now sit all around him in the production lab. Some are actually above him, suspended on poles. Whole blood can be separated into its different components: Red blood cells, platelets and plasma. Doctors need different combinations of components to care for different patients. To meet the need, blood labs makes a bewildering range of products.

The Lab Assistants work at stations and rotate each hour. At one station, centrifuges spin the whole blood to separate components. At another, bags are loaded into machines that squeeze them, a process that pushes components apart.

Finished products are lifted onto shelves in walk-in freezers, ready to be retrieved when the call comes from a hospital.

Berrigan knows each bag has great value. His four-month-old niece needed transfusions this year. Yet fewer than four per cent of Canadians donate blood. The rest don't think to, are prevented for medical reasons, or can't stomach the idea.

"A lot of people don't like donating blood. They don't like needles. My younger brother passes out when he sees needles, where I've donated – I think I'm up to 55 times," says Berrigan.

On this morning, eight names are penned on a white board. They are patients, people usually undergoing chemotherapy. Each needs a certain kind of platelets. When hospitals send in an order, the board is updated to help the lab organize its production.

"Those platelets are like gold, because they are for patients who are in dire straits," says Betty Lawrence, Lead Lab Assistant in the production room. "That's probably the most beneficial thing for me. We actually make the product that is going to go directly to the patient."

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

NSGEU HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Why we're doing this campaign

The 4,500 Health Care Professionals in NSGEU Locals 22, 42, and 43 provide vital health care services to all Nova Scotians. Working in 172 separate occupational classifications, this group is working night and day at CDHA, the IWK, and Canadian Blood Services to protect the health and welfare of all Nova Scotians.

Unfortunately, much of this work goes on behind closed doors, unseen by the public. The work performed by many of these individuals is varied and unique. Without their specialized skills, health care as we know it could not be delivered.

The Health Care Professionals webpage — nsgeu.ca/healthprofessionals — is an opportunity for us to celebrate the important work we do and to promote ourselves to one another and the public.

If you would like to speak up for your particular profession, please register yourself with our website and then click on the Tell Your Story button. We look forward to hearing from you.

- Kevin Rogers
CDHA Radiographic
Assistant
President, Local 42



Donor Testing Lab Technologist Donna Young: "Patients are relying on you to get these test results out the door so units can get on the shelf and be issued."

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

The lab workers see each name in strict confidence. And they will see the name disappear.

In some instances, that's because the patient dies. In others, it is because the transfusions have made a difference. The patient gets better and platelets are no longer needed.

"We are saving lives, even though we don't see it directly," says Berrigan.

Lawrence says in the 10 years she has worked in the lab she has never met anyone whose name appeared on the board.

"Some of these patients we've had for years and years almost become like a friend or a colleague," said Lawrence.

When patients succumb, a colleague may recognize the name in a newspaper obituary. Some obits are clipped and posted.

Down a hallway from the production room, Lab Technologists are analyzing samples from the same 140 units now being turned into blood products. Melissa Carrier tests blood for diseases like HIV and Hepatitis B and C. She lifts a rack that holds 28 blood samples. It will join nine other racks inside a machine about the size of a pizza oven. On its side, fridge magnets hold up an array of log sheets and maintenance schedules.

"You have no idea how many rules and standard operating procedures we have here, but they are in place and everyone

follows them," says Carrier.

The New Brunswick Community College graduate spent two months learning how to use this analyzer. Every donation in Atlantic Canada is tested. If a sample comes back positive, Public Health is notified and the blood incinerated. The donor is then notified and advised to see their physician for follow-up.

Carrier says testing is key for confidence in Canada's blood supply.

"If it was you in the hospital, or your grandmother in the hospital, it's very important that you know that the blood taken off the shelf was tested to the utmost standards."

Next door, a machine that staff call the PK (real name: PK7300) analyzes blood types and looks for diseases like syphilis.

Lab Technologist Donna Young says the testing must be done carefully and quickly.

"Patients are relying on you to get these test results out the door so units can get on the shelf and be issued," she said.

Automation speeds the job up.

As with all instruments, however, maintenance and breakdowns can stop work for short periods.

Young and her colleagues joke that that's when they pull out all the stops.

"When they are not working," she says, placing her hand gently on the machine, "we say, 'Good machine.' Just like a pet at home. 'Good PK.'"

She pats PK. Several colleagues laugh.

The distribution room is where hospital orders arrive and where shipments leave. This morning is quiet, with only the paperwork for the Newfoundland order sitting on the desk. A courier has already taken the daily 11 a.m. shipment for the Halifax hospitals.

But life in distribution can get hairy.

Cathy Ross, a Lab Technologist who has worked here for 35 years, says a car crash somewhere in Atlantic Canada can change the atmosphere in an instant. Traumas can lead to organ donations and then, of course, transplants. That's when large orders for blood products arrive in a hurry.

But even when dealing directly with hospitals, Ross says there are limits to knowing what happens. "We kind of miss out at this end knowing how things work out sometimes," says Ross.

Across the hallway, the 40 units of red blood cells destined for Newfoundland are almost ready. Brown cardboard hides the valuable cargo inside.

Few details of the medical drama unfolding in St. John's will filter back to this lab. A hospital feedback form will eventually return and indicate errors or highlight strengths. On occasion these forms note an extra effort by Canadian Blood Services workers and offer thanks.

Those special forms will be photocopied and posted. Otherwise, lab workers turn their attention to processing the next day's batch of donated blood.

YOUNG ACTIVISTS CHALLENGE THEMSELVES TO 'EXPECT MORE'



Activism comes in many shapes and forms. The time is fast approaching when our younger population is going to be faced with the reality that the responsibility of leadership and activism rests on our shoulders. The NSGEU's ad hoc Young Activist Committee's goal is to be prepared when the time comes. We need your help!

The Young Activist Committee is dedicated to creating awareness of the NSGEU, while encouraging young workers to become more active within the labour movement.

With support from experienced activists, the committee engages members between the ages of 18 and 35 in order to promote succession planning and bridge the generational gap within the labour movement.

If you're interested in finding out more, contact us through inquiry@nsgeu.ca or, better yet, through an activist in your own workplace. Just like everything else in the union, it all starts at the local meeting. We look forward to hearing from you.

MEET SOME OF THE YOUNG ACTIVIST COMMITTEE



Name: James Schofield

Job Title: Education Assistant at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board.

Union Involvement: Local 73 Vice President and Steward and NSGEU education facilitator.

I began working as an E.A. in 2006 and started getting involved in the union late in the same year after being involved in some "non-disciplinary" meetings during which I was refused representation. I

felt these meetings were wrong, but didn't know what to do about it until the union helped me realize I have rights in the workplace.



Name: Cynthia Black

Job Title: Administrative Assistant for the Departments of Applied Human Nutrition and Family Studies & Gerontology at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax.

Union Involvement: Local 81 Representative on the Post Secondary Education Occupational Council, Chief Steward (Local 81), Member of the NSGEU Board of Directors, Young Activist Committee Chair.

I have always attended my local meetings, but it wasn't until I spent a weekend at the Women's Conference that I realized the union was more than paying dues and attending meetings. The people I met that weekend and their stories inspired me to be more involved in the union and the labour movement. I started applying for courses, attending week-long School, and taking part in rallies and other events, enjoying every minute of it.



Name: Kelly Murphy

Job Title: Residential Support Worker (supporting adults with mental illnesses) at Metro Community Living Ltd. in Halifax.

Union Involvement: Local 63 President, Metro B Regional Council Chair, Nova Scotia Federation of Labour General Vice President Representing Young Workers.

I became active within my Local in 2004, when the company I work for was first unionized. I started participating in conferences and training through NSGEU and I learned that I could truly make a difference. Every rally, conference, meeting or training session I have attended has been an incredible experience and motivates me that much more. I am proud to be a member of NSGEU and I am excited for what's to come.



Name: Rick Wiseman

Job Title: Residential Counselor for adults with developmental disabilities at Colchester Residential Services Society in Truro.

Union Involvement: President and Chief Steward of Local 64, and training to become a Bully-Free Workplaces Facilitator.

Born and raised in Cape Breton, I have been active in the union since becoming a member in early 2007. I enjoy working as a facilitator during union education events, and am passionate about mental health, pension reform, and issues facing young workers today.

NURSES COUNCIL WORKING TO GIVE RNs A GREATER VOICE WITH RN COLLEGE

The NSGEU Nurses Council is leading a charge to ensure that the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS) is fair and responsive to the concerns of individual RNs. They are calling on all NSGEU RNs to help.

Karin Harrison and Karen Ferguson have introduced a half-dozen resolutions that will be debated and voted upon during the college's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, April 27, in Dartmouth.

One of their resolutions would give individual RNs a more powerful way to voice concerns about the way health care is being delivered by their employer or any corporation, partnership, or association involved in the health system.

The other resolutions deal with how the college investigates RNs for alleged practice or ethics infractions, putting specific timelines on how long investigations last, how quickly decisions must be rendered, and how long complaints remain on record.

All practicing RNs are eligible to attend the AGM and vote on these resolutions. You can also take part and even vote online. To register to participate—either in person or online—visit the college's website at www.crnns.ca.

You can find the exact wording of the resolutions on the college's website, or on our website at www.nsgeu.ca/nurses.

**NATIONAL NURSING
WEEK: MAY 9 to 15**

Visit www.nsgeu.ca/nurses for info!



DISCOUNT LIST

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NSGEU DISCOUNT LIST

These are just some of the savings signed members can get from businesses across N.S. Check www.nsgeu.ca for more!

ACCOMMODATIONS

Holiday Inn Harbourview

101 Wyse Road, Dartmouth
(902) 463-1100, 1-888-434-0440
info@hiharbourview.ca
\$96 + taxes, preferred rate for NSGEU members, includes Internet & parking.

Citadel Halifax

1960 Brunswick Street, Halifax
(902) 422-1391
\$99 + taxes, preferred rate for NSGEU members, includes Internet & parking.

Bridgewater Bogan Villa Inn

35 High St., Bridgewater
(902) 543-8171 or 1-800-565-8171
10% off regular rates.

Cape Cod Colony Motel

234 Water St., Shelburne
(902) 875-3411
10% discount

Delta Sydney

300 Esplanade, Sydney
(902) 562-7500 or 1-800-565-1001
Please call for information on rates.

Le Manoir Samson Inn

1756 Highway 1 Church Point, Digby Co.
(902) 769-2526
10% discount. Free continental breakfast.
In-suite microwave and mini-fridge.

HOME HEATING

Superline Fuels

Halifax, Truro, Pictou Co., North Shore, Amherst, Springhill, Parrsboro.
(902) 429-0740
\$0.04 per litre off posted price in effect at the time and place of delivery. Members must contact Superline in order to have the discount applied to their account.

CAR SERVICE

M & B Transmission

5560 Cunard St., Halifax
(902) 453-4816 or 453-4817
10% discount on parts and labour

Midas Muffler Shop

2662 Robie St., Halifax
(902) 454-7496
10% off Midas in-stock parts (special order parts do not apply).

DON'T HAVE AN NSGEU MEMBERSHIP CARD?

To get many of the discounts on these pages you'll have to present your NSGEU Membership Card. To get a card, or to replace a lost card, call the Labour Resource Centre at (902) 424-4063 or 1-877-556-7438, or email inquiry@nsgeu.ca

Mighty Muffler & Brakes

6 locations in metro
M-F 7:30 - 7:00 Sat. 8:00-3:00; Castrol Oil loyalty card - 5th oil change free; 10% discount on regular priced parts.

Scotia Tire Service Limited

4 Locations: 2803 Robie St; 267 Bedford Hwy.; 217 Wyse Rd; 975 Cole Harbour Rd
5% off regular tire prices, \$2 off per tire on balancing, \$10 of wheel alignments

Target Detailing Systems

Bayers Lake Business Park (902) 450-1100
15% off all regular-priced services upon inspection, heavily soiled vehicles would not apply, NSGEU membership card required.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Glidden Paints / Colour Your World

75 Akerley Blvd, Burnside, 468-3965;
177 Wyse Road, Dartmouth, 463-5222;
5651 Kaye Street, Halifax, 453-2560;
Tacoma Drive, Dartmouth, 434-8292;
Bayers Lake, Halifax, 445-5267;
Bedford Highway, Bedford, 835-1300
Sydney, 562-1170

www.epaintstore.com

NSGEU ID at time of purchase, up to a 40% discount on all ICI Glidden manufactured paint.
20% on all other in-store accessories

LumberMart

751 Herring Cove Rd., Halifax; 15 Wright Ave. Burnside (902) 477-6500
Guaranteed lowest price in metro on same/similar product. NSGEU card required.

Roofmasters

27 Stratford Dr., Cole Harbour (902) 462-0696
New roofs, renovations, repairs, cedar shingles
10% discount

CONVENTION 2011

UNITING OUR VOICE

On the eve of NSGEU'S Biennial Convention, words of advice and inspiration for new delegates

It is the most exciting and important event on the NSGEU's calendar: Biennial Convention. Representatives from a cross-section of our membership gather together to decide how well the union is doing, and what kinds of things it should do next. From the founding Convention in 1958, these gatherings have shaped the organization and are the cornerstone of everything it stands for.

This year's Convention, which takes place May 25 to May 28 at the Westin Hotel in Halifax, will be the largest yet. As the union's membership nears 30,000, more than 300 voting delegates are scheduled to attend. For four days, they will have a rare chance to step outside their day-to-day lives and immerse themselves in the politics and solidarity of the NSGEU, taking an active role not just in the inner workings of the union, but also marshalling the power of our numbers for the issues and causes about which they are passionate.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The 300-plus delegates to this year's Biennial Convention will decide on the union's priorities and direction over the next two years. It's up to the five-person Executive Committee to ensure those priorities and direction are enacted and carried out. This committee is elected by the Convention delegates on the final day of the event: May 28. Any Convention delegate can run for one of these positions, and has until May 27 to seek nomination. So far, seven people have been nominated to run for the Executive Committee. On the following pages, they introduce themselves.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

One of the duties of the Executive Committee is to serve on the NSGEU's Board of Directors, which meets regularly to carry out the business of the union and oversee directions and priorities set during Convention. Along with the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors is made up of members who have been elected by the union's eight Regional Councils and 13 Occupational Councils.

If you're interested in being elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the upcoming term, it's a two-step process:

- **You must first be elected by your local to sit as a member of your Regional or Occupational Council. These elections take place during your Local's Biennial Meeting, which must be held by the end of June 2011.**
- **Then in the fall, when the new Regional and Occupational Councils first meet, the members of these councils will elect their representatives to the Board of Directors.**

**In order to be nominated to run for the Board of Directors, you must be a signed member of the NSGEU, and have attended at least 40 per cent of your local's regular meetings over the preceding 12 months.*

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

This year's Convention is bound to be an empowering and exciting experience: it always is. Friends are made, connections are forged, and ideas are exchanged in a safe and supportive environment.

But Convention can also be a little overwhelming. Like any organization that values fair, safe and open debate, the NSGEU has adopted a number of policies and procedures—called the “rules of order”—that govern when people can speak, what they can speak about it.

To help new delegates get a feel for these rules, and also about the union itself and what kinds of things it can accomplish during Convention, there's a New Delegate Seminar held on the first day. It's an invaluable workshop and highly recommended.

To give new—and even returning—delegates a head start (and perhaps even all members to begin working towards becoming a delegate to the next Convention 2013), we asked Convention veterans to share their thoughts on how to make the most of this incredible event:

Introduce yourself to as many brothers and sisters as possible and ask questions of them on what knowledge or challenges they encountered within the union and listen carefully to the speakers. —Anne Davis, Service Nova Scotia Clerk, Local 17

Mealtimes are a great time to meet members from other locals. Each mealtime,



sit at a different table so you can get to know members who work at a different job than you. It will soon make you realize how large NSGEU really is and how everyone works together to create something great.

**—Donna MacGregor,
Chignecto-Central Regional School
Board Secretary, Local 71c**

Convention is a very good learning opportunity with a nice mix of work and socializing where you learn lots about the Union and get to meet lots of activists. Don't be discouraged if at first it seems overwhelming, it will all fall in place.

**—Bernice Doucet,
Digby General Hospital
Registered Dental Hygienist, Local 95**

Members should make sure they are familiar with the union's Constitution and their local's Collective Agreement (bring a copy with you!). If possible, learn about the rules of order. —Cynthia Tompkins, Nova Scotia Hearing & Speech Audiologist, Local 20

Find someone who has attended Convention before and ask them to mentor you. Pick their brains.

**—Donald White, Dartmouth General
Hospital Utility Worker, Local 19**

I can remember being a first-time delegate and let me tell you, it was overwhelming. Team up with a mentor to help you understand the whole process, and to encourage you to speak at the microphone about what they think.

**—Maria Thomas, Northwood Home
Care Staffing Officer, Local 38**

Don't be afraid to ask questions; chances are someone else is sitting there wondering the same thing and is afraid to ask it as well.

**—Dawn Ferris, Dalhousie University
Secretary, Local 77**

Listen, take notes, and always look at the “big” picture—there's always a negative and a positive. And don't forget: you could be the next Joan Jessome!

**—Claire Williams, Stock
Transportation Bus Driver, Local 78b**

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Try to speak as early as possible on any given resolution or motion. Get involved in the life of the Convention, but don't forget to get some sleep and rest as well.

**—Ian Johnson, NSGEU Specialized
Services Coordinator
and former member who was a
delegate to Convention**

Presidential Candidate

JOAN JESSOME

I want to thank you for your support over the past 12 years as your President. It has been an honour to represent you in the many struggles we have encountered.

Twenty one years ago I became a member of NSGEU and have been an activist ever since. For twelve of these years, I have had the privilege of leading this great union. I am writing to personally request your support in re-electing me as your President.

LOCAL
246

Leading a Union as diverse as NSGEU is both challenging and rewarding. Our successes reflects the commitment of you the members and the NSGEU staff. We are fortunate to have dedicated activists, Board of Directors and staff. My commitment, energy, and integrity as President remains strong. I commit to you to continue to work with all of you to protect our jobs, benefits, and public services.

We are living in interesting times to say the least; it is difficult sometimes to turn the television on, to read a newspaper, to listen to talk shows, to converse with our neighbours, colleagues, and even family when we are constantly being put on the defensive to defend our pensions, benefits, wages and public services.

When did public services become a dirty word? When did going to work everyday to deliver services to the sick, to the children, to the public become the reason for the debt and deficit of our province and country? We must stop this attack on public services! This is our fight, and we all have to be in the game. I would be honoured to lead this fight with you by my side protecting your jobs and our public services.

There are many challenges ahead for NSGEU: another major round of bargaining on the eve of this round which isn't finished, targeted reduction in the civil service by 10%, casualization of the workplace, government program review, budget reductions in education, healthcare, municipalities, government departments and the many non-government agencies (NGO's) where we represent our members.

Over the next two years as your President, I commit to you to:

- Continue to be a champion for public services and build on our successes;
- Continue to be a leader at the bargaining tables;
- Increase our presence in your workplaces;
- Mobilize and train our members to take on the many struggles ahead;
- Strengthen and expand our education program to meet the changing needs of our members;
- Use new technology to reach more members at their convenience;
- Improve communications to you;
- Invest in our stewards to be the protectors in the



workplace;

- Continue with coalitions that benefit you and your families;
- Continue to be a mental health advocate;
- Actively and aggressively oppose any attacks on our jobs and services;
- Continue to be active in the larger Nova Scotian community;
- Work towards the elimination of poverty in Nova Scotia;
- Grow and strengthen our Bully-Free Workplaces program;
- Continue to lobby for improvements in Health and Safety;
- Take a leadership role in protecting and enhancing human rights and labour rights;
- Work with stakeholders to be creative and proactive in finding solutions that will create healthier workplaces which will benefit the working lives of our members;
- Remain proud of the public services you deliver everyday.

My commitment to you, if re-elected to serve for another term as President is to continue to lead this great Union with integrity, energy, transparency and accountability.

See you at convention!

In Solidarity,

Joan Jessome

1st Vice-Presidential Candidate

DON GOSS

I am pleased to have this opportunity to offer for the position of 1st Vice President of the NSGEU. I seek your support. And I would like to thank you for allowing me to serve as your 2nd Vice President these past two years. I have worked as effectively as I could on your behalf, and it has been a positive and enjoyable experience for me.

As a library worker, I take pride in providing good and quality public services, as do the thousands of public sector workers throughout our province who belong to our union.

LOCAL
7

As a Cataloguer in the Nova Scotia Provincial Library, it is precisely because I do believe that public services are important and worth fighting for that I want to be your 1st Vice President.

These past two years have been challenging to us. With the near economic collapse of Wall Street three years ago, there has been ongoing economic uncertainty – whether through job losses felt in our workplaces and communities; the evaporation of hard-earned RRSPs and other savings; or the continuing assaults on our pension plans. We are under attack.

I have no hesitation to say that this attack is coming from those who have twisted reality and manufactured the fiction, the big lie: that greedy union members – you and I – are somehow to blame for the economic woes resulting from their incompetent fiscal management. We know better.

They want to strip our benefits, take away our pensions and privatize our jobs. There are individuals and companies who plan to enrich themselves at our expense. And we say no.

In the last few months a number of American States have gutted collective agreements, laid off thousands of public sector workers, and destroyed seniority rights all in the name of 'fiscal necessity'. This 'tea party' ideology is coming to our door step. We will fight it.

As well, the Canada Health Accord will be revisited in 2014. This Accord allows Canadians across the country to have the universal healthcare system we enjoy. Without a fair Health Accord, Nova Scotians will not be able to afford and keep the services we currently have. We say no to two-tier healthcare.

Instead of weakening the Canadian healthcare system, we should be strengthening and protecting healthcare in Canada. We cannot wait until 2014 to start the campaign to save Medicare. An early start to saving our healthcare system is needed now. With your help we will.

As a longtime NSGEU and human rights activist I have worked and fought for positive change. The NSGEU has a strong tradition of fighting for equality and human rights. I



believe that Labour Rights are Human Rights. Unions are good for everyone.

My career as a NSGEU activist started when I was elected as a steward more than twenty years ago. Over the years I have held many, various positions at local, executive and board levels. There is nothing wrong with experience.

I take my union work seriously and give it a great deal of priority, dedication, and commitment in my life. It is because of my experience, leadership, and my passion for the NSGEU that I feel I can continue to be an asset to you as your First Vice President.

There will be many serious challenges faced by us over the next few years. By working together and remaining united – by showing solidarity, I know that we will overcome all difficulties. I ask for your consideration for the position of First Vice President.

Please contact me at dongoss@eastlink.ca or visit me on Facebook if you have any questions or suggestions.

1st Vice-Presidential Candidate

JASON MacLEAN

Hello NSGEU members. I would like to take this time to announce my intention to re-offer for the position of 1st Vice-President. It has been a privilege representing the Members of NSGEU on the Executive Committee since 2005.

I have been a Correctional Worker at the Cape Breton Correctional Facility located in Sydney since 1995. At the 2005 NSGEU Biennial Convention I first was elected as your 3rd Vice-President and I certainly do not forget my promise to make all members proud. I learned at that Convention that there was a need for a diverse perspective.

Back then I didn't fully understand the dedication and knowledge needed to perform in the position, but I quickly learned and I feel that I continue to make our members proud. I vowed at the past three Conventions to be a voice, and I remain committed to that promise.

If re-elected as your 1st Vice President, I will continue to represent EVERY member, by bringing a wealth of experience and a reputation that is highlighted by integrity and sound decision making abilities.

This past term I was appointed Strike Coordinator in June 2010 for Local 60A who were locked out for over four weeks. I also served as the Strike Coordinator for Local 18B in October 2010. Both Locals remained strong and worked on the lines from 10 to 12 hours a day, and thanks to the solidarity and resilience of both Locals, I was able to accomplish the tasks assigned to me successfully.

In this term I've been Executive Liaison to the NSGEU Adhoc Young Activists Committee who worked diligently to develop a Terms of Reference and to bridge the generational gap between all members. I am also the Executive Liaison for the Constitutional Amendments Committee, who will be presenting amendments at our upcoming Convention; and the Political Action Committee, who made an outstanding submission to the Utility Review Board which helped reduce the cost of Pay Day Loans in Nova Scotia. I want to thank all members on all committees for having the dedication and volunteering their own time to represent us, NSGEU members.

I have also represented the NSGEU in the broader labour movement, as Vice President Representative of Workers of Colour and Aboriginal Peoples with the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) where I remained Chair of the NSFL Anti Racism/Human Rights Committee who headed up Labour's entry in the Halifax Pride and Cape Breton Pride Parades. I am still an active member of the Cape Breton District Labour Council and an Employment Insurance Board of Referees



Workers Representative.

As your 1st Vice-President, I have represented the NSGEU nationally serving as a Vice President of the National Executive Board of NUPGE, a participant at the Canadian Labour Congress's X, Y, or Boomer program in NB, a delegate at the NUPGE Convention in BC, a participant at the CLC/NUPGE Pensions Summit in PEI, and as a fraternal guest at the New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees Convention.

I feel I need to restate my commitment and I want to assure all members that I know the importance of this position and I do not take your support for granted. If re-elected I will continue to dedicate my time and apply my knowledge and experience to the best of my abilities for the next term as your 1st Vice President.

Thank you to the members of NSGEU, the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and the staff of NSGEU for your continued support and guidance this past term.

As a proud NSGEU member, I will not disappoint you!

LOCAL
480

Secretary-Treasurer Candidate

DARREN MCPHEE

I take this time to communicate to the members of NSGEU, my intention to re-offer for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. It has been a privilege to represent you again this past term.

I have had an avid interest being a part of shaping our union and its financial position since first being elected as Treasurer of my Local in 1996. I have held many positions and roles within NSGEU since this time and have served as your elected Secretary-Treasurer for the past four terms. Of my many responsibilities this past term, I was privileged to lead the NSGEU Adhoc Strategic Planning Committee as chair. I completed this task with feelings of pride and great anticipation, as the Board of Directors of NSGEU completed their planning and commitment to the union's priorities and direction for the upcoming five years.

I believe it is essential that all decisions made represent the wishes of the general membership and not our own personal beliefs or biases. This belief has guided my recommendations in strengthening our Union fiscally and in solidarity. It is only with your continued dedication and support NSGEU continues to be entrusted with our union's most valuable resource – Your Dues. As Chief Financial Officer of NSGEU, I have created and presented yearly budgets and recommendations for fiscal and policy revisions. I have also personally reviewed, signed, and accounted for all monies disbursed by the NSGEU during my terms in office. In my role, I worked closely with elected NSGEU financial officers in their training and throughout the term.

I am fair, honest and approachable and have consistently demonstrated my ability to work effectively on behalf of the NSGEU membership again this past term. As your Secretary-Treasurer, I completed my work as both a leader and team member while working with; the NSGEU Executive, Board of Directors, Committees, Locals, Regional Councils, Staff, our National Union, and our National Component Unions.

I have participated in many Union sponsored workshops and training courses with NSGEU and through our National Union. I have also represented NSGEU at the past three National Union Conventions, serving on the convention Finance Committee. This experience, as well as other meetings with National Union Treasurers, has allowed me to share knowledge and experience with other Public Sector Financial Officers from



across Canada. This has further assisted me in developing a provincial, national and international union perspective.

I am currently employed with Community Services as a Care Co-Coordinator.

I would like to express my appreciation to the NSGEU membership, Executive, Board of Directors, and the staff of NSGEU for their continued support and guidance. It has been a journey of many successes working together to complete another term.

I would once again like to thank my wife Allana and my sons Lachlan and Kieran for their years of full and continual support of my union involvement. It is only with this foundation I am able to re-offer my commitment to the membership to run for election as Secretary Treasurer for NSGEU.

As a Union, we need to strengthen our ability to ensure ALL our resources are both protected and available for all members to build better working conditions for us collectively as a whole, and individually in bargaining for better work contracts.

Thank You.

Darren McPhee

2nd Vice-Presidential Candidate

DAWN FERRIS

I want to start by saying Thank You. Thank you for putting your trust in me and giving me this great opportunity when you elected me as your 3rd Vice President. I hope I have made you proud as I have definitely enjoyed every minute of these two years.

I am now asking for your trust again as I offer for 2nd Vice President. I have worked very hard in the past two years and I have learned a lot.

LOCAL
77

In this past term I have had the wonderful experience of being the Executive Liaison to the Women's Committee, the Social Recreation Committee, Metro C Regional Council, the Valley Regional Council, and the Administrative Professionals Conference Adhoc Committee. I have also had the honour of representing the NSGEU on the National Union's (NUPGE) Women's Issues Advisory Committee; which was very educational. It was a real pleasure to have worked with all of these committees in helping them achieve their mandates for this past term.

I was trained last year through the CLC to be a facilitator and was given the opportunity to facilitate Political Lobbying at our Week-Long Labour School last spring and I look forward again to co-facilitating the Leadership course this June. I have also had the opportunity to co-facilitate Steward I training sessions. I created the template for the secretary's training and facilitated the sessions which were held during the Local Training at the start of this term. These are only a few of the responsibilities I have had the opportunity to do as your 3rd Vice President. I look forward to being able to do more for our membership.

For those of you who do not know me, let me share with you some personal details. I have lived in Cole Harbour since 2003. I am married to a great guy who has retired from the Navy and now works for a small company in Burnside. It has helped that the kids are older and my husband is very supportive as it has given me the time to devote to my passion for the NSGEU and our members.

We have three daughters; one has moved out and is graduating from Dalhousie in May; one is finishing her first year at Dalhousie's School of Nursing; and one is graduating High School this June and will be taking her BSc at Dalhousie. I work at Dalhousie in an Administrative Support position and I do get a half-price tuition discount. The tuition discount is probably the only way I could have afforded any post secondary education for the girls.

I am an extremely organized and efficient person which



has helped me better serve you during my term as 3rd Vice President. I feel I am now ready to take on the role of 2nd Vice President and I would be proud and honoured to represent you in this role in the coming term.

We've had a rough term with bargaining and protecting our rights as unionized workers and we will certainly face a tougher round in the future with the economic climate and the right wing agenda seeming to have a grip on our population. I look forward to working with you and doing whatever is necessary to protect our rights, protect our wages and jobs and in educating our members and the general population about these very important issues.

My promise to you is that I will continue to represent you with everything I have. Please consider supporting me at Convention for 2nd Vice President.

Thank you.

Dawn Ferris

3rd Vice-Presidential Candidate

KELLY MURPHY

Hello Brothers and Sisters. My name is Kelly Murphy and I am excited to have this opportunity to announce my intention of running for 3rd Vice President of the NSGEU.

I believe that with my dedication, experience and knowledge I have as an activist, I will serve all members of the NSGEU proudly as your 3rd Vice President.

Since 2001, I have been a Residential Support Worker with Metro Community Living, Local 63, where I support adults with mental illnesses in a Small Options

LOCAL
63

Home. I first became active when my workplace became unionized in 2004. I began as a steward, a member of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and a member of the Negotiating Committee. I wasn't aware of all the other ways I could become active within NSGEU until I attended a Human Rights Conference and New Activist Course. These events really opened my eyes as to what the NSGEU stands for and how I can make a difference within my Local, our Union and the broader labour movement.

I have been very fortunate to be able to attend many workshops that the NSGEU offers such as Steward Level 1, Steward Level 2, and Week-Long schools (Advanced Steward and Communications). I also had the opportunity to take part in the Steward Mentoring Program, where I shadowed staff members of our Union. This was an incredible experience where I learned first hand just how hard staff work for all members. After each workshop I walked away knowing that I have gained more knowledge and confidence to continue as an activist through supporting members and fighting for all workers' rights.

I'm currently the President of Local 63, as well as a member of the Benefits Committee, delegate to Halifax/Dartmouth District Labour Council and alternate for Occupational Council. After becoming a Metro B Regional Councillor, I was elected as Chair and alternate to the Board of Directors. In 2009 I was selected to be a member of the NSGEU Ad-Hoc Young Activist Committee (YAC) where we are working on bridging the generational gap amongst our membership and increasing activism among the younger working population. With the NSGEU YAC I also attended the NUPGE/CLC meeting and lobby on pension reform in PEI.

In 2009, I attended the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) Convention and was honoured to have been elected as the first ever NSFL Vice President Representing Young Workers. Through this position I became the Chair of the NSFL Young Workers Committee, attended the X, Y or Boomer training through the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in NB, and am



looking forward to attending the CLC Triennial Convention in May 2011.

I also worked with NSGEU Organizing Officer, Lori Smith, in assisting with organizing new work places. This was an amazing and empowering experience because I know that not only will these new members benefit by now being employed in a unionized workplace but their families and communities will benefit as well. Among the above noted, I walked the picket line in support of locked out members of NSGEU Local 60A and CEP Local 40N. Since taking the CLC Train the Trainer program, I have become a facilitator and am looking forward to continuing to facilitate NSGEU and CLC courses.

As a Trade Unionist I believe in Solidarity, and with my passion, commitment and experience, given the opportunity, I can assure you that I will represent all members respectfully and fairly. I am confident that I can prove this to you if elected as your 3rd Vice President.

In Solidarity,
Kelly Murphy

3rd Vice-Presidential Candidate

RICK WISEMAN

Hello to my brothers and sisters of the NSGEU! I would like to take the opportunity at this time to announce my intention to run for the position of 3rd Vice President at this year's Convention.

I am a Residential Counselor with Colchester Residential Services Society based in Truro where I provide day to day support for adults with developmental disabilities.

LOCAL
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Before moving to Truro, I was born and raised in Cape Breton. Living in Glace Bay for almost 20 years, I come from a strong union community and have strong union ties throughout my family. Through my school years I recall us as students taking the time to celebrate William Davis on Miners' Memorial Day and recognizing the efforts of those workers coming together and promoting solidarity on the issues at the time.

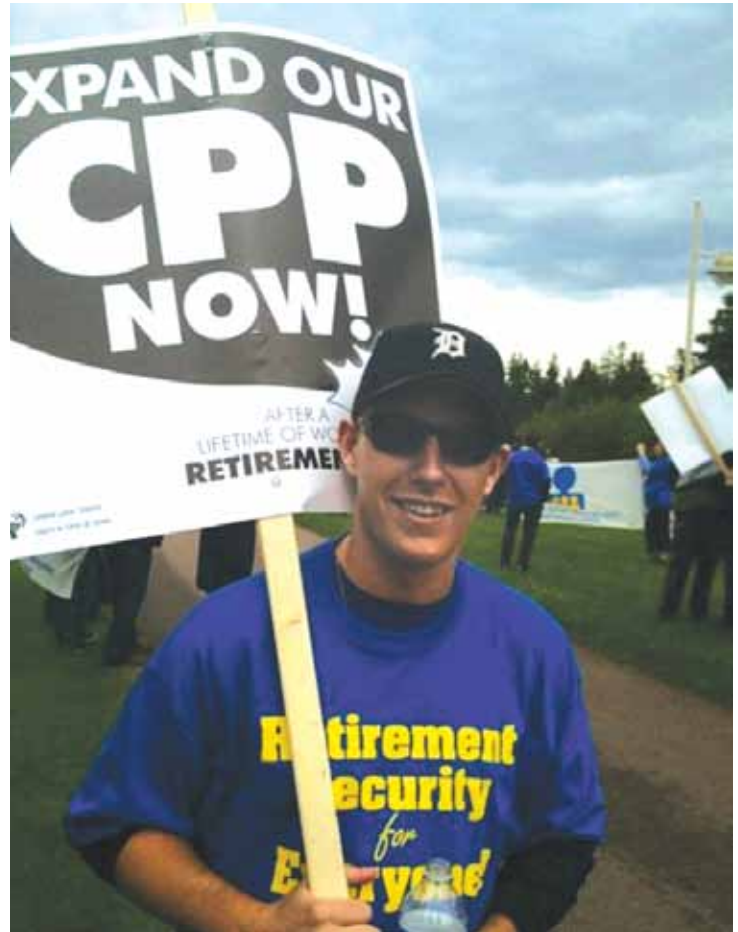
In my years of experience with the NSGEU, I have served in many roles. I have been active in my local as President for the past two terms and served dual roles on our local executive by serving as Chief Steward for the recent term. I have served on the Cumberland/Colchester Regional Council where I was elected an alternate to the Board of Directors and was fortunate enough to attend some meetings over this term.

When the Board of Directors developed their strategic plan for this term, I was a part of this process and was also selected to serve on a sub-committee of the Board to further develop this strategic plan. This was an experience that provided great insight on the direction our union is heading in the coming years and also was an opportunity to directly contribute to this movement.

I was selected to serve on our Young Activist Committee that is comprised of young workers from all over the province and our mandate is to support our union by engaging young workers. We're facing a generation gap within our union, as is the labour movement itself, and the work of this committee is to reduce the effects of this gap by having our younger workers get out there today.

I am also a facilitator with the NSGEU's educational programs and our Bully-Free Workplaces program. Bullying in the workplace is an issue that can not be tolerated and needs to be stopped today.

While there are many important issues facing us today, there are a few that I feel very passionate about. The lack of a strategic plan within our country to deal with mental health and related issues is a key one. Mental health concerns in the



workplace is one that affects us all, no matter the work we do and it can have a crippling effect on our work and home lives. This is an area where we all must do more, however similar to pension reform, it is one that we rely on the powers that be for progress. However, through activism we can have our voices heard and we can make a difference.

Young workers are also a target for me. We have tremendous young minds in this province that can make a difference today. I believe we face a double edged issue where we need to mobilize the younger workers and have the experienced ones who have fought this for decades accept them with open arms. Our brothers and sisters who are on the verge of retirement possess a level of knowledge, experience and skills that we can not afford to lose. We need to share this resource now while we still have time.



Local 97 President Gianpaulo Amati (top left) leads a local meeting focussed on responding to CDHA's offer of 1 per cent and nothing else.

BARGAINING UPDATES: LOCAL 97 CALLS STRIKE VOTE AFTER LOW OFFER

Offered 1% and nothing else, RNs follow in Local 42's footsteps

CDHA – Nurses Bargaining Unit Local 97

Number of members: 2,568

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean, Neil McNeil

Proposals were exchanged on June 30, 2010. Negotiations continued throughout the fall, and early winter but broke down on Jan. 20. The Union proposed a four per cent wage increase in each year of a three-year Collective Agreement, as well as improvements in vacation, leaves, premiums and increments, as well as new provisions on nursing issues. The Employer's offer contained a one per cent wage increase in each year of a two-year Collective Agreement and nothing else. In fact, the Employer's offer included several proposals which amounted to takeaways: payment for actual time for telephone consulting instead of the callback rate, integrated scheduling, and job postings for multiple sites. At press time, conciliation dates were being scheduled. Like Local 42 (CDHA Healthcare Bargaining Unit), Local 97's Bargaining Committee called a strike vote to improve its bargaining position heading into conciliation. **THE DEADLINE FOR BALLOTS TO ARRIVE AT THE NSGEU OFFICE IS APRIL 21 AT 5 P.M.**



One of the many ballots Local 42 members cast in favour of a strike.

CDHA – Healthcare Bargaining Unit Local 42

Number of members: 3,889

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean, Neil McNeil

Proposals were exchanged on June 10, 2010. The employer offered one per cent raises in each of two years with no other contract improvements.

In January, the Bargaining Committee filed for conciliation, which was scheduled to begin on March 14. Leading into conciliation, the committee called a strike vote, and a majority of members voted in favour. After seven full days of unproductive conciliation, the bargaining committee told the employer it was ready to walk away and begin planning for a strike; only then, in the early morning hours of March 26, did the employer put an offer on the table that the committee could recommend and a tentative agreement was reached. At press time, a mail-in ratification vote was in process. **THE DEADLINE FOR BALLOTS TO ARRIVE AT THE NSGEU OFFICE IS APRIL 15 AT 5 P.M.**

CDHA – Office & Clerical Bargaining Unit **Local 246**

Number of members: 1557

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiators: Ann Barrett

Several meetings to prepare the bargaining proposals have been held, and bargaining dates with the employer have been requested.

CDHA – Support Services Bargaining Unit **Local 19**

Number of members: 1,221

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean & Neil McNeil

The Bargaining Committee has completed its review of input surveys and developed proposals.

Workers Compensation Board **Local 55**

Number of members: 343

Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean

Contract expiry date: December 31, 2009

Proposals were exchanged on Jan. 12, 2011. The parties continued negotiations through January, February and March, and at press time, were scheduled to continue in May.

Correctional Officers **Local 480**

Number of members: 440

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

In 2009, the union and the employer considered the possibility of transferring the Local 480 members into the Civil Service, but members voted 53 per cent to reject the idea. Local 480 continues to bargain as its own unit. The bargaining committee presented revised proposals to the employer on Sept. 22 and met again on Nov. 2 for the employer's response to the proposals. The bargaining committee is now discussing the next steps in the process.

Home Support Locals 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 76, 83, 84 and VON Locals 31, 35, 40 & 85

Number of members: 1,1323

Contract expiry: March 31, 2010

A bargaining convention for all NSGEU Home Support Bargaining Committee members was held in September 2010. Committee members



NSGEU President Joan Jessome participates in an information picket outside Province House to help support Local 47 members who have been struggling for two years to achieve their first contract with the Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority.

Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority **Local 47**

Number of members: 35

Contract expiry date: First Contract

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

Status of Negotiations: Proposals were exchanged December 2009. Through two years of sporadic negotiations, the employer insisted it didn't have a "mandate" to go beyond economic increases of one per cent, despite the fact these members make less than members doing exactly the same work at other housing authorities in the province. Negotiations broke down and conciliation was held Feb. 1, 2011, but failed to yield an agreement. On Feb. 13, members voted 85 per cent in favour of strike to back their demands at the bargaining table. On March 28, the conciliator filed his report, starting the 14-day countdown towards legal job action. The next day local members, supported by NSGEU members from the Civil Service, Health Care, Community Social Service, and Post-Secondary Education, held an information picket outside Province House just as politicians arrived for the opening of the spring session of the Legislature, hoping to pressure a deal before they could strike or be locked out on April 14.

reviewed the results of the bargaining input surveys and identified and itemized bargaining priorities, and meetings continued across the province. At press time, another bargaining convention for these locals was scheduled for April 15 in Halifax.

Eastern Mainland Housing Authority **Local 2A**

Number of members: 9

Contract expiry date: March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

The parties exchanged proposals on Feb. 28., and at press time, negotiations were scheduled to take place April 8 and 18.

Cobequid Housing Authority

Local 26

Number of members: 37

Contract expiry: March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

The parties exchanged proposals on Dec. 13,

2010, and negotiations took place in January and March and are scheduled to continue.

Canadian Association for Community Living, Antigonish Branch **Local 61**

Number of members: 22

Contract expiry: First Contract (Certified July '09)

Staff Negotiator: Jo-Ann Bailey

The parties exchanged proposals on Jan. 26, 2010. Negotiations reached an impasse. The union applied for conciliation, and a tentative agreement was reached in early March, which the members ratified by 94% on March 28.

EDC (Agricultural College) **Local 3**

Number of members: 68

Contract expiry date: March 31, 2008

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

Proposals were exchanged in June 2008, and negotiations were held throughout 2008, 2009

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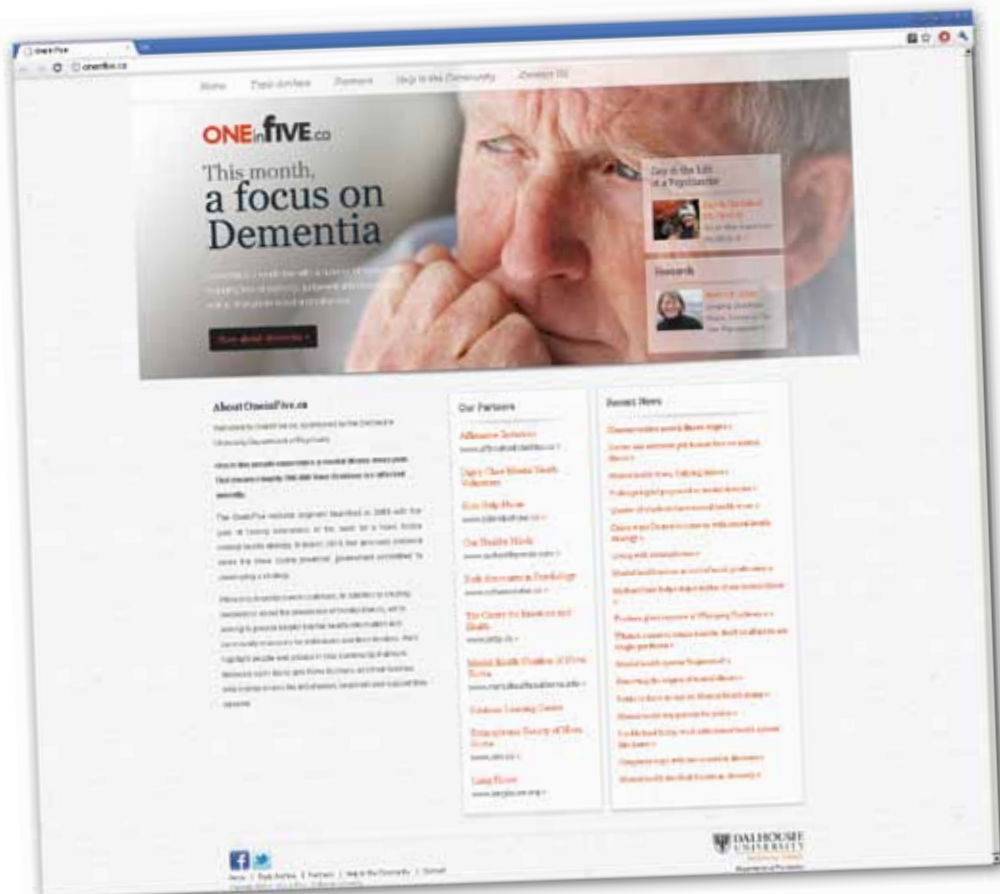
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and 2010 (including a hearing before the Civil Service Employee Relations Board) but have now been referred to interest arbitration. The major issue is parity with universities. At press time, the parties were working with the Civil Service Employee Relations Board to set up the Interest Arbitration Board.

Dalhousie University Local 77
Number of members: 838
Contract expiry: June 30, 2010
Staff Negotiator: Tina Webber
The parties exchanged proposals on Nov. 24, 2010. Several days of negotiations took place in December and January. On Jan. 31, the union filed for conciliation, but then agreed to two more days of negotiations in late March. In addition to wage increases, key proposals for the local include improvements to the job evaluation process, salary ranges and classification point ranges, vacation, bereavement leave and layoff provisions.

Nova Scotia Community College – Support Staff Local 267
Number of members: 596
Contract expiry: March 31, 2010
Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan
The parties met and exchanged proposals on Oct. 14, 2010 and several days of negotiations have taken place since.

First Student Canada Local 98
Number of members: 108
Contract expiry: First contract for group- certified on March 31, 2010
Staff Negotiator: Neil McNeil
Proposals were exchanged in November 2010, and negotiations were held that month and March 2011 and are scheduled to continue in May.

Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation – Stores, Warehouse and Clerical Locals 470, 470E
Number of members: 35
Contract expiry: March 31, 2010
Staff Negotiator: Neil McNeil
The parties met and exchanged proposals on Jan. 10. Negotiations took place throughout January and February. Talks have broken down and the union has filed for conciliation, and at press time, conciliation dates were being scheduled.



Oneinfive.ca is an excellent website focussing on mental health issues in Nova Scotian and Canada.

MENTAL ILLNESS IS A CRISIS; HEALTH CARE WORKERS MUST MAKE IT A BARGAINING ISSUE

It is the social problem of our time. Governments haven't been able to solve it. It's time for us to force the issue.

Reaching the breaking point:

- 10 per cent of the visits to the emergency room; 16 per cent of admissions; and fully 50 per cent of hospital time.
- Short-Term Illness (STI) claims average 33 days or \$9,000 for a physical illness versus 65 days or \$18,000 for mental illness.
- There were 60,000 mental health beds in 1950; now, there are 6,000 beds.
- To support one person with mental illness for a year in hospital costs \$170,000, but supporting that person in the community costs \$38,000.

By Karen Ferguson

As a community mental health nurse, I deal daily with people suffering from mental illness. Often they're not getting the help they need. This is no secret: governments and commissions have been saying so for years. But from the front-line, I only see that the situation is growing worse. Delivering mental health care in under-funded and under-staffed silos has to stop.

As health care workers, we need to fight hard for fair wages and working conditions. But for mental health, we need to fight even harder.

Once again, for me, the need for this fight was validated while attending a national conference on mental health

issues organized by the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) last fall. I feel very fortunate to have been chosen to attend this conference as a representative of the NSGEU. I hope what I learned will help bring to light some of the statistics and issues faced by Canadians today with mental health concerns and needs.

Andre Picard was one of the guest speakers at the conference. He is a public health reporter with *The Globe and Mail* and he talked to us about how to force the government to take action.

"One needs to put it into their language, which is dollars," he told the conference attendees.

It is the social policy issue of our time: three million Canadians suffer mental illness and most of them are hidden in plain sight. As a society mental illness is costing us \$51 billion per year. This is twice what cardiac disease costs us and three times what cancer costs.

At the workplace, 500,000 people are absent daily in Canada due to mental illness and it accounts for 41 per cent of sick leave claims.

The World Health Organization estimates that by 2020, depression will be the world's leading disability.

Picard suggested that a minister for mental health be appointed to deal with this issue and focus the spending on mental health. Currently, the spending is spread out across 11 different ministries. It's been this way since the 1980s when the government began the laudable policy of de-institutionalizing people suffering with mental illness. But we didn't support the policy financially. Funding from the institutions was never transferred to the community-based caregivers, and they simply can't provide the support services that are needed. This has caused a large increase in homelessness, addictions, abuse, suicides, and medical disabilities.

Picard closed with a quote from Michael Wilson, a former Tory cabinet minister whose son Cameron suffered depression and ultimately committed suicide.

"We should care for those with mental illness. They are a cause not a lost cause."

Karen Ferguson is a Community Mental Health Nurse (Local 97) in Dartmouth. She is a member of the NSGEU Board of Directors and the NSGEU Nurses Council.

Has one of your co-workers left their job for any reason and not been replaced? If so, we need to know.



Remember: We need your information, not your name.

In April 2010, the provincial government announced it was planning to cut the civil service by 10% by the end of 2013. This translates to approximately 1200 fewer workers in the civil service. Based on this estimate, we can assume that the government will be looking to see nearly 300 fewer employees by the end of this year.

We know the provincial civil service is already lean and that many of you have enormous amounts of work that you are not able to get done in the run of a day.

We know the services you provide are important to you and the public you support. We know these reductions in staff will just make it worse. We need to fight these reductions. To do that, we need to know where they are happening.

DON'T BE LEFT BEHIND

Right now the NSGEU has no way of knowing where these reductions will be made. We do not know which departments are being hit hardest or which regions are feeling them the most – unless you tell us. We do not receive this information from the employer.

We want your information not your name.

In your workplace, has a co-worker left for any reason and not been replaced in the last two years?

So far we've heard from hundreds of you about unfilled vacancies. But we need to hear from more of you.

With this information we will be better able to help you protect the important services you provide.

www.nsg.eu.ca/cutstoppers

Are you one of the 43 per cent of Nova Scotians
who believe workplace accidents
are an inevitable part of the job?



Tell that to the family and friends
of the 23 people who didn't come home
from work last year.

Day *of* Mourning

*for workers killed
or injured on the job*
Thursday, April 28

YOU can help make your workplace safer.
Turn to *Page 6* to find out how to start.



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