

# CELEBRATE

60 years with NSGEU this summer



NSGEU's Board of Directors: Representing members from our diverse occupations and regions across the province

# THE NO-ON STAND

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

SUMMER 2018



### CONNECT WITH US!

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

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Dear members,

This year we are celebrating our 60th Anniversary.

Sixty years ago, in 1958, people working in the public sector had a much different work experience than they do today. People could be hired and fired without any justification. If you had an issue on the job, such as safe working conditions you were left with nowhere to go for help. If your supervisor wasn't interested in your concerns you were pretty much on your own. Workers eventually grew tired of this and formed an association that would represent their best interests. By coming together they could use their strength in numbers to have each other's back. They could protect themselves against unfair firings, advocate for safe working conditions and create a system where their voices and concerns had to be heard and acknowledged.

This association of hard working dedicated people grew and became the NSGEU that we know today. Together, we continue to stand up for what is right and make sure everyone is treated fairly in a safe and respectful work environment.

The NSGEU is only as strong as our members – and you have each shown your commitment to each other and our Union. I would personally like to invite you to join us this summer at one of our family friendly events across the province in celebration of our 60th birthday. You can find the events and dates on our website [here](#) and check your email for specific invitations to each event.

This summer we should all take a little more time to enjoy these events with our friends and colleagues as it's been a challenging year fighting for new collective agreements in many locals across the province. Solidarity has never been so important.

The last five- years has reinforced the need for strong unions – and we've risen to the challenge. Nova Scotia's Liberal Government has gone out of its way to attack the people who deliver so many services and programs people count on. This continued in the spring with another attack on teachers and school boards. The Liberal Government dismantled school boards and removed Principals and Vice Principals from the NSTU. After creating years of crisis in our Health care system, the Nova Scotia Liberals are bringing the same misguided chaos to our kid's classrooms.

Our health care members have endured a long and frustrating process in their task of concluding a new collective agreement for the NSHA and IWK members. Since 2013 the government used legislation –Bills 37, Bill 1, Bill 69, and Bill 148 - to slow collective bargaining and skew the process in their favour. Our first province-wide health care agreement, was only possible because of the pressure caused by the overwhelmingly positive strike vote. The strike vote, in addition to the IWK concluding an essential services agreement, forced the government to take the negotiations seriously. Together, we protected key benefits, secured wage increases, and ensured all four bargaining units (Administrative Professionals, Health Care, Nursing, and Support) will have collective agreements by the end of the year. The pressure created by our members forced the Liberal Government to do what it said it wouldn't: allow for all outstanding issues to be awarded by a third party Mediator/Arbitrator. This turned the tide and will make sure our health care members get some stability after years of upheaval.

Members working for the Nova Scotia Community College also conducted a province-wide strike vote which resulted in an agreement that could be recommended. Bargaining Committee members at the Workers' Compensation Board, whose workplace is going through extensive transformation as a part of WCB2020, were able to improve language that protects against layoffs during the restructuring process. Once again, the strength of our members to deliver a strong strike vote heading into the conciliation process helped deliver a positive outcome.

What we know is, the right to strike is a fundamental labour and human right. Without it, there is no pressure on the employer to take our concerns and issues seriously. The right to strike levels the playing field and creates the conditions for agreements to be made.

In solidarity,

Jason MacLean  
President, NSGEU



NSGEU Executive celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary kickoff.

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- Sheldon MacLeod @TheMacLeodShow June 29**  
Unions...Government...working together? Joining us now, @NSGEU President Jason MacLean aka @JMACL3AN to talk about Slow Down, Move Over
- NS Fed. of Labour @NS\_Labour June 6**  
Its time for 10 paid days for domestic violence leave. @NSGEU @cupenovascotia @NS\_nurses @SEIU2NS @NSTeachersUnion @cupw @PSACAtlantic
- Unifor Canada @UniforTheUnion May 18**  
NS hospital workers vote 92 % to ratify mediation-arbitration deal. Media release from #Unifor @NSGEU & @cupenovascotia & @NS\_nurses @Lanampayne #nspoli #canlab 1 of 2 Read Media Release:
- Natasha Pace @NatashaPace May 7**  
@NSGEU says members of Local 55, who work for the Workers' Compensation Board, have voted 83% in favour of strike action to back their demands at the bargaining table #nspoli #NS #NovaScotia #nslabour
- Jean Laroche @larochebc April 26**  
Prez @NSGEU Jason MacLean says @HealthNS repeatedly dismissed safety concerns before pregnant nurse was beaten. #nspoli

## THE STAND

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# A History of Health Care Bargaining...

Prior to September of 2014, collective bargaining for health care workers in Nova Scotia had proceeded in the same way for decades.

Four unions, NSGEU, CUPE, NSNU and Unifor, each represented their own members in bargaining. Each union negotiated agreements that represented the priorities of their memberships.

In 2014 and 2015 the Provincial Liberal Government led by Stephen McNeil passed several pieces of legislation aimed at sharply reducing the bargaining power of the health care unions and their members.

The province passed two pieces of essential services legislation at the end of February and into March of 2014. The first, Bill 30, was aimed at home support workers who were on strike. The second was Bill 37, which was

aimed at all health care workers. These laws were an attempt to weaken the unions' bargaining power by requiring a dramatic increase in the number of workers who would have to remain at work in the event of a strike. For health care workers, it left the final numbers to be negotiated by the union and the employers before

a strike could take place and created a significant delay in the current round of bargaining. Essential services took many months to negotiate allowing the employers to almost ignore union proposals as there was no threat of imminent job action.

During the summer months the unions worked together to create a proposal for government called a Bargaining Council. Government refused this proposal and in September of 2014 the province introduced

another new law, Bill 1, The Health Authorities Act, which created the NSHA and the IWK.

The language of Bill 1 would force health care members into unions that were not of their choosing. It was a huge and dramatic fight. The NSGEU stood to lose all of our health care members. After taking to the streets in protest after

protest, it was an arbitrator, James Dorsey, who upheld the constitutional right of members to belong to the union of their choice – the one they belonged to before Bill 1 was introduced. Following this decision, the Premier created four Councils of Unions with Bill 69.



Above/below: Members protest Bill 1 outside Province House.



## and where we are today

The law created the Health Care Council, the Support Services Council, the Administrative Professionals Council and the Nursing Council. (See the document entitled "Key Facts; Nova Scotia Councils of Unions" for further details on the makeup of the Councils).

Each Council was tasked with negotiating single collective agreements for their bargaining units at the IWK and the NSHA. Each union would continue to administer the agreements for their own members between rounds of bargaining. This work involved having the unions combine 55 collective agreements into single agreements for each of the two new employers.

The Unions undertook that work in 2015 and completed it in the summer of 2016. The Unions chose to lead bargaining with the Health Care Bargaining Unit in October of 2016.

But before bargaining even began, Premier McNeil introduced another new law, Bill 148. This law limited wage increases in the public sector to 0% in year one, 0% in year two, 1% in the third year, and 1.5% in the fourth year, with an additional 0.5% on the last day of the fourth year. That law also froze the retirement allowance for all public sector employees effective April 1, 2015.

Emboldened by what they saw as a weakened bargaining position of health care workers, the NSHA and the IWK spent almost 40 days of bargaining trying to take away key rights and benefits that health care workers have negotiated over the past 40 years.

The Council of Unions and the Health Care Bargaining Committee bargained each day unwilling to concede to these demands.

On March 21, 2018, the Health Care Bargaining Committee informed the employer that it was going to seek a strike vote. The committee then sent an update to all 6,500 members across the province asking for a strong strike vote mandate to protect these hard-earned benefits.

Union members mobilized with overwhelming enthusiasm to help inform health care members of what was at stake and to vote in favour of the first ever province-side health care strike.

Members staffed phone banks, toured health care facilities, and drove strike information vans to health care facilities. NSGEU President Jason MacLean hosted information sessions and telephone town hall meetings to answer questions and help deliver a strike vote mandate.

### A Win in Essential Services - IWK

On March 27, 2018, the Council referred outstanding issues related to the essential services agreement at the IWK to the Labour Board. The Board came back and rejected the IWK's position that the Council of Unions must provide additional time, beyond what is required in the

Trade Union Act, in the event of a strike. This also set a precedent for staffing levels for other bargaining units impacted by the essential services legislation.

The Labour Board decision put the IWK in position to strike, depending on the result of the strike vote. This put the employer and the government under increased pressure as they were now one step closer to facing Nova Scotia's first province-wide health care strike.



NSGEU member protest Bill 1 outside Province House.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

### Government Shifts Strategy

With the strike vote in full swing and an essential services agreement now in place at the IWK the government put forward a new proposal that, if accepted, would conclude all collective agreements by the end of the year.

On April 30, all four Council of Unions Bargaining Committees (Health Care, Administrative Professionals, Support Services, and Nursing) recommended their members accept the proposal. The Council of Unions announced a ratification vote would take place.

This news was quickly followed with the announcement that Health Care members voted 93% in support of a strike. It appeared as though the strike vote and essential services decision at the IWK had achieved their goals – it had pressured the employers to take bargaining seriously.

### The Mediation-Arbitration Tentative Agreement

Increases in pay rates over a 6 year term

- 1% on November 1, 2016
- 1.5% on November 1, 2017
- 0.5% on October 31, 2018
- 1.5% on November 1, 2018
- 0.5% on October 31, 2019
- 1.5% on November 1, 2019
- 0.5% on October 31, 2020

\* 5th unit increases are all 5 months later unless the parties

negotiate otherwise.

- The proposal allowed each member to decide whether they want to receive an immediate payout of their retirement allowance.
- Option of early payout of retirement allowances accrued to March 31, 2015 at salary in effect on October 31, 2017



Labour Lawyer Ray Larkin speaks to the Council of Health Care Unions.

- Wage rate adjustments, retroactive pay, and payout of retirement allowances would begin as soon as possible after ratification of the agreement and would not need to wait until agreements are finalized in the fall.
- If parties do not conclude an agreement in mediation the mediator/arbitrator will make a final and binding award on the remaining issues. If there is no

agreement on sick pay and retiree benefits in mediation the arbitrator must award status quo.

- That is, unless the parties negotiated something different, those in the Short Term Illness (STI) plan would stay in the STI plan. Those in the accumulated sick leave plan would stay in their plan. That same applies to retiree benefits.
- These status quo benefits will apply to all new hires not just current employees.
- Those NSGEU members in Public Health, Addictions, and Continuing Care will retain their STI and retiree benefits as they currently exist, unless the parties negotiate something different.
- A schedule for completion of all four collective agreements (Health Care, Nursing, Support Services, Administrative Professionals) by the end of 2018
- Health Care agreement must be done\* by September 1, 2018
- Nursing Agreement must be done\* by October 31, 2018



- Administrative Professionals must be done by November 30, 2018
- Support Services must be done by December 31, 2018
- \* Done means completed bargaining, mediation and arbitration

### Members approve Mediation-Arbitration Tentative Agreement

On May 18, the Councils of Health Care Unions voted 92% to ratify the agreement with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK.

Each bargaining unit will have the opportunity to bargain with the employers for the priorities that matter most to them. Any remaining issues, where agreement can not be reached, will be decided by the mediator-arbitrator, William Kaplan.

Mr. Kaplan has provided dates for mediation/arbitration for all four bargaining units.

The Health Care Bargaining Unit mediation/arbitration will run from July 30 to August 4. The Council and the employers have agreed that Support Services will go into mediation/arbitration second and is scheduled for September 18. This will give the parties time to negotiate ahead of that date. Kaplan anticipates only one day will be required for the mediation/arbitration because many of the outstanding issues will be resolved from the Health Care mediation/arbitration.

The parties have also agreed that the Administrative Professional Bargaining Unit mediation/ arbitration will be third and will take place on September 19. Again,

this leaves time for the parties to bargain at the table and the mediation/arbitration will only require a day because most outstanding issues will be resolved at the Health Care table.

The parties have further agreed to send nursing to the table last. There are a number of unique nursing related issues that will need to be dealt with in bargaining and in mediation/arbitration so Mr. Kaplan set aside

November 19-23 for the Nursing Bargaining Unit mediation / arbitration. The Employer and the Council of Unions have mutually agreed to these dates.

### Next Steps

The Health Care Bargaining Committee and employers are holding some final bargaining dates in an attempt to resolve as many issues as possible ahead of the Mediation-Arbitration in July.

These final days of bargaining will make sure that those issues of the highest priority will be presented to Mr. Kaplan.

The employers have started the work to create options and a system to facilitate the pay out of the retirement allowance, including looking at the system and options used by the civil service agreement. The employers are also working on a date when the retro pay will be paid out.

This has been a long and difficult process and we thank you for your patience and support. The finish line is in sight but there is still a lot of work to do for all four bargaining units.



Above/below: Councils of Health Care Unions vote on May 18.





# Taking a Stand for Workplace Health & Safety

## Two members turned a toxic work environment into a lasting friendship

Heather Avery and Heather MacIvor knew something wasn't right when their employer moved them into a relatively new office building in 2010. Within a few months, multiple coworkers became sick and had to be moved from the building. Avery and MacIvor both work for Nova Scotia Health Authority and provide Public Health, Mental Health, and Addiction Services to Pictou County residents. Ironically, they weren't able to adequately provide those services as their own health was at risk due to a toxic work environment.

"There is a process that should have been followed with a new building," says MacIvor. "The linoleum, the carpet, the new furniture, the paint... everything needs to be off-gassed. The process includes increasing the heat and the ventilation for a given time period. That was bypassed in a rush to finish things, of course we didn't know that at the time."

MacIvor recounts: "There were other things we didn't know, and would only find out years later after pushing for independent contractors to investigate ongoing air quality issues. The floor wasn't sealed properly and some of the air handling units were not actually hooked up. The building had previously been used as a racquetball club and there were walls within walls that cut off air circulation to sections of the building."

The issue of who was responsible for the building and therefore who would cover the costs of remediation also delayed action and made things more complicated. Avery explains: "We lease space, so the Health Authority is responsible for anything that happens in the building itself. The owners are responsible for anything that goes on outside the building. So a recurring question was where do they end and where do we begin? We were caught in the middle."



ERO Donnie MacNeil



Member Heather Avery, Chief Steward and Health & Safety Rep. for Local 193

Member Heather MacIvor, Steward and Health & Safety Rep. for Local 193

Avery and MacIvor describe the first two years as the most difficult time because they weren't fully aware of the extent of their OHS rights. "During the first two years, we would bring members' complaints to the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHS) and hope the Employer was following up with the owner of the building. This could take time. We would see maintenance people on the roof and would see them making adjustments and we were told to be patient and see if the adjustments worked," says MacIvor.

"They would blame a lot of these things on the (changing) seasons," she recalls. "There were all these reasons why we could be experiencing these symptoms. They seemed rational. They seemed reasonable. Much of the time we appeared unreasonable. But

people were still not feeling well. We were going nowhere with internal remediation."

Avery is a Chief Steward, has experience with the union, and sits on the JOHSC along with representatives from management, CUPE and NSNU. "We have really good people on the JOHSC and work within our mandate to represent the OHS concerns of the membership," she says.

"After the two years, people were feeling worse and not knowing what to do," says MacIvor. "We had a lot of respiratory symptoms in our department. People would lose their voice. They would have burning, red, and sore eyes - not just dry. They had facial flushing, and unusual headaches. People weren't really speaking

up - they didn't want to complain."

With the help and support received from the NSGEU OHS Officer Paul Cormier, and Employee Relations Officer Donnie MacNeil, as well as an OHS Officer from the Department of Labour and Pictou County Health Authority OHS consultant were able to convince the Employer to bring in an independent consultant to assess the building. "He went through the building and there were adjustments made and some things were found. Some things started to improve," says MacIvor.

However, as time went on people grew sicker and started missing more time at work. "It was primarily respiratory," says MacIvor. "People were feeling faint and foggy, as though they were going to pass out. The flushing feeling and feelings of light headedness continued."

"We kept looking for a smoking gun... but it was not there," adds Avery.

"When we called the Department of Labour for the second time, we were very fortunate that we had the same officer," recalls MacIvor. "She knew the history and knew where to pick up. She met with us and facilitated us working together. She was really great. I attribute a lot to her."

Still, the symptoms continued for many.

"It started to scare people," says MacIvor. "People were breaking out in rashes before your eyes - it was very concerning. You felt so bad for someone else. You might not feel that for yourself. But when you are looking at a colleague you sit beside every day and you have to tell them 'you are not looking well, what is happening to you' and they are having these terrible things happen to them - you want to fight for them."

Following instructions was absolutely necessary throughout the process. "When you have bad air quality - it can be like an invisible monster," explains MacIvor. "The Department of Labour's OHS Officer told us we had to work through a process of elimination. So we started with the simplest of things. We took plants



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

out of the building, fans, cardboard boxes, old tape. Anything that could carry mold.”

Avery and MacIvor continued to attend JOHSC meetings and bring documentation forward pushing for answers, which couldn't be ignored. This was stressful. As advocates, they felt badly about having to continually repeat themselves and push management for action

“During this time, we were so grateful for the support we were offered from our NSGEU ERO Donnie MacNeil, and our OHS Officer Paul Cormier,” says Avery. “I think if it wasn't for them, we would never have left the building.”

MacNeil and Cormier also organized a meeting of employees from other unions working in the building to discuss their symptoms. Avery recalls, “It was clear that the building didn't discriminate. Anyone who worked in the building felt the effects of the bad air quality – even patients.”

During this time Avery and MacIvor came to know and trust each other for support and guidance. “There are those tense times you need to know who you can trust and Avery is one of those people,” says MacIvor. “She's enthusiastic, energetic and will take anything on. She's a champion.”

Avery has strong and inspiring words about MacIvor as well. “I have never met anyone who was so determined,” she says. “She would say to me, ‘Honestly, this is not going away. We are not going to let it go away. Nothing is going to be swept under the rug anymore. We are taking a stand and going to go with this...we do have the right to know this.’”

In 2015, members working in Public Health presented their symptoms at the JOHSC and asked to be accommodated at another location. “Over 80% of the employees were having severe symptoms,” says MacIvor. “We took this information to the JOHSC along with graphs and charts and the committee voted that we should leave until there is a resolution and investigation into that area of the building.”

The members working in Mental Health and Addictions handled their OHS concerns a little differently. Beginning in 2016, members filed individual work refusals or went to the doctor and got accommodated

through their managers and the OHS department or the OH nurse. “It wasn't like a walkout – it happened over months and months,” says Avery. “Some casuals took longer to leave, but in the end, all of our NSGEU members left. Our team was accommodated and moved temporarily to Pictou.”

Employees working in the Public Health area were away from the building for two and a half years, and the vast majority of the Mental Health and Addictions staff were off site for approximately 16 months.

Once the majority of people were out of the building,



and the owner took responsibility and remediation was relatively quick. “Apparently now everything has been done properly with the flooring so that all the moisture and water will not come to the surface – there is a complete barrier now,” says Avery.

As of December 2017, both groups of workers had been returned to the building. Unfortunately, working in a contaminated building can make you extremely sensitive to air problems and there are still people reporting symptoms. “Once you have worked in an environment for so long, you are like a canary,” says

Avery.

“You can't make something brand new again,” adds MacIvor. “People who have developed allergies and sensitivities will have those for their whole life. The issues with the building are ongoing.”

The JOHSC meetings now are focused on tests and results and concrete action. “At our September JOHSC meeting, we sat down to determine what we wanted to see happen to the building. We weren't just going to take anyone's word for it,” MacIvor explains.

“I think the hardest part, probably, was people standing up for themselves and feeling like they were going to be protected,” says MacIvor. “When you make that decision and you think something is wrong, you have to stand up.”

We really needed the support of ERO Donnie MacNeil, our OHS Officer Paul Cormier, and our Department of Labour OHS Officer,” says Avery.

Unfortunately, OHS issues with this building may never be permanently resolved. If there continues to be symptoms reported, investigations will need to be done, again and again.

Everyone has the right to work in an environment that is not harmful to their health. Avery and MacIvor want other members to know that standing up for workplace health is important.

“Even though people are still going to have the cynical outlook every now and then, the tides have changed and there are more people on our side who believe change is possible. We really did improve things.”

### Staff Update

We are pleased to announce that Paul Cormier, CRSP, is now a full-time Occupational Health & Safety Officer. Please give the union a call if your Local is in need of some OHS support or training.

**OHS Officer, Paul Cormier, CRSP**



Both Avery and MacIvor feel the current management is focused on OHS and proactive and supportive.

The lessons are strong and clear according to Avery: “As far as what others should do who find themselves in this situation? Document your symptoms. If your department has a process in place to report symptoms ensure the proper reports are filled out. Bring in the Department of Labour for guidance. Contact your union and set up a meeting with your representative and your OHS representative.”



# Women's Committee Plans to Match NSGEU Milestone for a Good Cause

In honour of the NSGEU's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Women's Issues Committee has pledged to volunteer 60 hours for charity. They kicked off their work at Feed Nova Scotia on May 25<sup>th</sup>, where the committee headed to the new FNS office and helped sort donated food.

NSGEU has been supporting Feed Nova Scotia for over a decade. At the 2016 convention members voted to donate \$14,000 a year to support the organization. Members of the Committee also pooled their toonies to provide 60 meals for \$20.00.

The Women's Committee presented a cheque to Feed NS from Local 78 B, Drivers, Monitors, and Mechanics of Stock Transportation. This provided an additional 360 meals to families throughout Nova Scotia.



Members of the Women's Issues Committee volunteer their services at Feed NS on May, 25<sup>th</sup>. Left to right: Christine Rushton, Michelle Jardine, Karen Grandy, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Sandra Mullen, Natalie Hillier, Tracy Goves, Brian Kelly with Feed NS, and Susan Macumber.







## 50 years strong with NSGEU

**M**eet NSGEU member Sheldon Bisson, a Biomedical and Anaesthesia Tech. Assistant with the Nova Scotia Health Authority. This is Sheldon's 50th year with the union, and he says the support has been great.

"I wouldn't have a job without the union," says Bisson. "They helped get my position sorted out when amalgamation took place. It took a year, but in the end it was all worth it."

Bisson began his career as a Certified Nursing Assistant in 1968, and continued taking courses on the job. Through the years he's worked as an Operating Room Technician, CPR Instructor, Orthopedic Technologist, and his current role as a Biomedical and Anaesthesia Tech. Assistant. "It's a unique job because I am the only employee at the NS Health Authority in this role," says Bisson.

As a member of local 100, Bisson has taken job action twice, the first lasting over two weeks. "It was a good outcome, it strengthened our collective agreement," says Bisson. He also mentions the importance of having a Monday to Friday position. "Luckily I work during the week, and I don't have to come in on weekends. The NSGEU fought for us to have those hours."

When asked about the value of belonging to a union, Bisson says job security has played a major role in the longevity of his career. "The union is there to back you, and has helped me immensely in the past. "It's always better to have representation when sitting down with management."

September marks his golden anniversary with the Health Authority and he doesn't see himself slowing down anytime soon. "I'm lucky enough to do what I love, why would I give that up?" ■



## Guest submission by Bernie Conrad, President of The Nova Scotia Government Retired Employees Association

The Nova Scotia Government Retired Employees Association, (NSGREA) is the official organization representing Provincial Government retirees. As of April 2018 the NSGREA represents 3300 dues paying members. Our membership is open to all persons in receipt of a Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Benefit (pension), the spouse of a deceased member, and all former members (retired) of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU).

We are the "Voice to Government," on behalf of retired employees of Nova Scotia. The NSGREA has a broad membership and is dedicated to the well-being of retirees receiving a pension from the Nova Scotia Public Servant Pension Plan. NSGREA's main purpose is to monitor our Pension & Health Plan. However, we also have a keen interest and are involved in Senior's issues across Nova Scotia.

The aims and purposes of NSGREA are:

- 1) To promote the general interests of its members and to advance the economic and social welfare of the membership;
- 2) To bring together retired members to discuss

issues pertaining to the membership;

- 3) To make presentations to any and all committees of governments that would be of benefit to the membership;
- 4) To secure legislation that will safeguard and promote the principles, rights and liberties of the membership;
- 5) To encourage the membership to participate in their democratic institutions by exercising their full rights and responsibilities of citizens by voting in elections;
- 6) To assist groups with their retirement preparation and programs and
- 7) To work with the NSGEU and other Unions to further the aims of NSGREA.

We offer dental and travel insurance through Group Medical Services (GMS) to our members. Our members can also obtain the MHCSI Pharmacy Benefit card as well as the Lawton's merchandise card.

## Unions make a difference in our lives.

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

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

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





## NSGEU's 1st VP Sandra Mullen attended the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

This March, 1st VP Sandra Mullen was selected by our National Union to be one of their delegates on the Canadian Labour Congress's delegation to the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

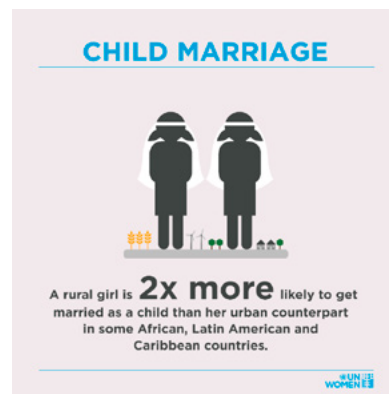
The theme for 2018 was: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. The review theme was: Participation in and Access of Women to the Media, and Information and Communications Technologies and Their Impact on and use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women. One of the most important outcomes of these annual sessions are the Agreed to Conclusions. You can see the draft Agreed to Conclusions here <https://bit.ly/2MB8dYn>



"I was truly honoured to attend the UNCSW62 on behalf of NUPGE, as part of the labour delegation. These 120 labour leaders from Canada and around the world were truly inspirational to be with for an incredibly busy week. Some 275 official events, 400 side events, running concurrently with 4300 people attending the conference, representing 600 civil society organizations,

left me with memories and experiences of a lifetime. As labour leaders we also participated in rallies and marches that were organized by women from around the world, all while reviewing documents as we fought for our language to be part of the agreed conclusions. I thank Marie Clark Walker and Vickie Smallman from the Canadian Labour Congress for their guidance throughout the UNCSW, to President MacLean, the Executive and Board of Directors of NSGEU, I am forever grateful. While Canadians have much to be thankful for, there is still work to be done to protect the rights of all women and girls here and around the world. What we do know - we are stronger together!"

Sandra Mullen, NSGEU 1st VP



As part of the Trade Union delegation from the CLC, Sandra and her fellow members had objectives and lobbied for a number of issues at the session.

### They lobbied for:

- **Decent work** – for Canada to actively support access to freedom of association for rural women
- **Stop gender-based violence in the world of work** – we mobilized support for an ILO Convention
- **Public services and financing** – to promote public-public and public-community partnerships to provide public services in rural areas, incorporating women in decision making (as opposed to Private-Public-Partnerships, P3s)
- **Quality public education for rural women and girls**
- **Climate justice** – to integrate rural and indigenous women in planning processes for disaster response and integrate them into the climate change decision making process
- **Human rights** – adhere to Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) General recommendations No. 34 on the Rights of Rural Women.



March 12 - Met with Francyne Joe, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), who took part of the CLC's presentation. Francyne thanked the NSGEU for supporting the inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women in Nova Scotia (MMIW). Our support "helps families in their healing process." #donewaiting



March 15 - Met a member of parliament from Kenya, Hon. Cecily Mutitu Mbarire who spoke of terrible threats she endured during her run for office. Harassment has no boundaries - gender, race, or class. Sandra describes her as amazing and passionate. Hon. Mbarire recommended everyone read Hillary Clinton's book "What happened."



March 13 – Met these young women from a high school in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, at the "Rural girls with a disability - their access to education" session with speakers from India, Norway, and Women Empowerment International, among others. She says it is very inspiring to sit with these young women as we learn about challenges and solutions for inclusion and equality around the world.



March 14 - Met two sisters, Christine and Cecilia Terina from Kenya, and learned that they too have applied for a scholarship at the Coady Institute in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.



March 14 -Spoke with Hon. Kelly Regan, Nova Scotia MLA, Minster (in photo above) who is responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and her husband Geoff Regan, MP, and Speaker of the House of Commons.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

It was established by UN Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

This year, around 100 women trade unionists from at least 32 countries were part of the Global Trade Union delegation. Member States (Canada is one) agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up. You can learn more about the UNCSW here:

<https://bit.ly/2Kxr3Pp>





NSGEU President Jason MacLean addresses members attending the Admin. Professionals Conference in May.



# Admin. Professionals Conference 2018

In 2011 the NSGEU passed a resolution to hold an annual Admin. Professionals conference. This May, the NSGEU hosted the conference and roughly 100 members were selected to participate.

Presentations over the day included: professional development, mental health relief techniques, and improving workplace morale.



3rd Vice President Tammy Gillis and 2nd Vice President Kim Jenkins helped organized the event.





# Nova Scotia Community College Members Sign New Collective Agreement

Our members provide a variety of operational support services at Community College campuses across the province and keep them running smoothly. They are: Administrative Assistants, Clerical Assistants, Marketing Associates, Customer Service Assistants, Student Life Assistants, Residence Coordinators, Research Associates, Information Services staff, Student Financial Analysts, Safety Officers, Computer Systems Specialists, Facilities Support staff, Carpenters, Building Services Assistants, Facilities Operators, Food Services, Cooks, General Service Assistants, CAD Technicians, Bookstore and Inventory Coordinators, Library Assistants, Day Care Assistants, Technical Illustrators, Geomatics Technical Assistants, Employment Specialists, Accounts Receivable Coordinators, Web Graphic Designers, just to name a few.

Negotiations can be difficult, but this round of bargaining at the NSCC included the impact of Bill 148 and the rollercoaster ride of the Teacher's negotiations. Even with the help of a Conciliation Officer, bargaining

broke off on March 21. It was clear to the bargaining committee that members were going to have to take a stand in order to get a deal at the table. It was decided that a strike vote should be held and we should meet face-to-face with members to discuss the current state of negotiations. President MacLean and ERO Paul Cormier attended meetings held across the province to hear from membership. Telephone town halls were held to reach members who weren't able to attend the information sessions.

An overwhelming vote in favour of a strike gave the Bargaining Committee the strength they needed to reach an agreement with the Employer on April 12.

The tentative agreement was ratified on May 7 by the membership and its term runs until March 31, 2021 or until the next agreement is negotiated.

Thank you to all the members who supported the Bargaining Committee and thanks and congratulations to the Bargaining Committee who worked so diligently to achieve this agreement.



President Jason MacLean, Executive Director Robin MacLean, ERO Paul Cormier and members of the Local 267 Bargaining Committee Deborah Martinello, Janice Nugent, Rose Sawler, met with NSCC President, Don Bureaux, VP Org. Dev. Rosalind Penfound and Bargaining Committee.

# WCB Collective Agreement

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) is undergoing extensive transformation as part of what they call WCB 2020. Fundamental changes are underway to systems and processes which will result in the contracting out or elimination of 10 – 15% of the workforce. NSGEU members working at the WCB support modernizing the delivery of service at the WCB, but not at the expense of the service or Nova Scotian jobs.

The Bargaining Committee for Local 55 was determined to improve collective agreement job security provisions in the contract in light of the Employer's WCB 2020 initiative. This led to tough negotiations and ultimately to President MacLean's call for a strike vote. The membership stood together and voted overwhelmingly

in favour of a strike to back their demands at the table. This mandate gave the Bargaining Committee the support they needed to negotiate an agreement during conciliation, which has since been ratified by the membership. The Committee was able to improve a Memorandum of Agreement on voluntary resignation and severance which will mitigate the effects of layoffs.

Members of this Bargaining Committee were: Co-Chief Negotiators, Robin MacLean and ERO Darryl Warren, along with Lloyd Samson, Brian Dimmer, Pamela Harnish, and Terry Anthony.



Above/below: Members of local 55 bargaining committee hold an information session for members.



Strike vote information picket.



# Around the Union in Photos



Above: Members of Local 80B, who work for the Atlantic Provinces Special Educational Authority (APSEA) met with NSGEU ERO John Cook. In the photo (in no particular order) Susanne Miller, Julie Boyle, Jessica Roche Evans, Charlene Thomas, Marilyn McLean, and Sarah Lewis.



Above/below: NSGEU stands with SEIU as they fought for fairness around racial discrimination at the Justice for Janitors protest.



Above: The government used the hammer of legislation against the NS Teachers Union in February. Here we stood in solidarity at a joint press conference. From left, Cathy Retieffe, of the Service Employees International Union, CUPE Nova Scotia president Nan McFadgen, Danny Cavanagh, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and NSGEU President Jason MacLean.

# Meeting the Membership

President MacLean took a tour of the elementary and middle schools in CCRCE



Member Lucy Brennan, a Secretary at Trenton Middle School.



Member Marian Cyr, a Library Specialist at Pictou Academy.



NSGEU Member Jean MacDonald who has been an Administrative Professional for nine years and works at Scotsburn Elementary.

# Keeping Our Blood Supply Public



On April 10, NSGEU President Jason MacLean hosted a press conference with Executive Director of [Bloodwatch.org](http://Bloodwatch.org) Kat Lanteigne, Chris Parsons from the Nova Scotia Health Coalition, and President of the Nova Scotia Nurses Union Janet Hazelton. They called on the provincial government to pass legislation banning for-profit plasma and blood brokers in Nova Scotia. Bloodwatch.org has been raising the alarm over the growing private interests in Canadian public blood collection and distribution. Global and CBC covered the event, but we need to continue to press the government for action to protect our blood supply. You can help by contacting your MLA, and let them know you want to see our public blood supply protected.





A warm welcome to members of the NSGEU's newest Locals! Please call the union if you have any questions and make sure you ask about our education programs, scholarships and discount list.

### Local 130 Shannex - Orchard Court

On June 1, 2018, employees of Shannex – Orchard Court voted overwhelmingly to join the NSGEU. Orchard Court is a long term care facility located in Kentville.



Members of local 130 voted to join NSGEU. From left Treasurer Angie Dill, Chief Steward Helen Nickerson, President Mitch (Stevan) Smardon, Secretary Tara Kaiser, and Vice President Gillian Gesnor.

### New Local 112 - Riverview Enhanced Living Society

Riverview Enhanced Living Society is comprised of three small options homes and an apartment program, serving adults with special needs located in Bridgewater. There are currently 23 new members in this local.

### New Local 111a – Kendall Lane Housing Society

Kendall Lane Housing Society provides residential and support services for individuals with physical challenges, operating in Windsor. There are 12 members in this Local and they are Regional Rehab Workers.

### New Local 111b - Victoria Park Guest House Inc

Victoria Park Guest House is a adult residential facility in Windsor. It includes Hants Community Homes, two small option homes providing residential and support services for individuals with physical challenges. There are 16 members in this Local and they are LPN's and RRW's.

### New Local 1783 - Black Loyalist Heritage Society

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society is committed to discovering, interpreting, safeguarding, and promoting the history and heritage of the Black Loyalists and is located in Shelburne.

There are five new members in this Local and their classifications are: Maintenance Worker, Interpretive Guide, Programming and Outreach Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant.



# Crisis

[cri-sis]  
(noun)

Patients are facing year-long waits for mental health services, but NS Liberals won't admit there's a health care crisis.



## Spell it Out

There is no doubt Nova Scotia is facing a Crisis in Health Care and while it's not 100% the fault of our current government. Stephen McNeil and his Liberal government have created chaos in our hospitals, stranded more than 100,000 people without a family doctor, and seniors are struggling without the long term care they need – yet McNeil continues to deny that there is a crisis in health care. The Nova Scotia Liberals own this crisis and patient care is suffering throughout the province. To illustrate the impact of their crisis the NSGEU launched its #Spellitout Campaign in February. Today, families with loved ones needing mental health supports are left waiting. Hallway medicine has become the rule rather than exception. Seniors with complex health care needs, who in the past could get into a long term care bed, are being sent home to use a home care system that is bursting at the seams.

Stephen McNeil and the Nova Scotia Liberals continue to deny there is a crisis in health care and in fact are making matters worse by closing two Cape Breton Hospitals.

Everyone who works in health care says there is a crisis, anyone who has sat for hours in an emergency department to get their prescription refilled says there is a crisis, yet Stephen McNeil and Nova Scotia Liberals would rather bury their collective heads in the sand

than admit they've created chaos and pushed health care into crisis. They need to come clean and admit there is a crisis so together we can start working on a solution.

Do they really need a kid to spell it out for them? Apparently so.

On June 25, people from across Nova Scotia responded with shock and anger at the Liberal government announcement that the Northside Consolidated Hospital and New Waterford General Hospital will close and be replaced with Community Health Centres. Is this really their answer to temporary ER closures?

It is Premier McNeil's job to acknowledge there is a crisis. Without that acknowledgement there is no path forward to real solutions. Our health care system has seen increased ER closures, over 100,000 Nova Scotians without a family doctor, a shortage of long term care beds for seniors, a lack of mental health services, and long waits for help. Premier McNeil and the Nova Scotia Liberals are the only people denying there is a crisis.

The NSGEU "Spell it Out" campaign still exists online. Check it out at [spellitout.ca](http://spellitout.ca) and share the information on social media. We need to make them listen.





# NSGEU Gives Back

Between 2016 & 2017 the NSGEU has given back to the community in excess of **\$134,000** in the form of donations to Nova Scotia charities and disaster relief efforts, approved by your Board of Directors.

- FEED NS **\$28,000** |
- AIDS COALITION OF NS **\$10,000** |
- MENTAL HEALTH COALITION OF NS **\$15,000** |
- NSGEU CANCER SUPPORT FUND **\$10,000** |
- NUPGE'S SOCIAL JUSTICE SOLIDARITY FUND **\$5,444** |
- NUPGE'S INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE SOLIDARITY FUND **\$5,444** |
- TRANSITION HOUSES ASSOCIATION OF NS **\$20,000** |
- MAYWORKS **\$3,000** | KIDS HELP PHONE **\$12,000** |
- CANADIAN RED CROSS ALBERTA **\$2,500** |



NSGEU donates in support of the Aids Coalition of Nova Scotia.



NSGEU donates in support of the Kids Help Phone.







# Slow Down, Move Over

NOVA SCOTIA NSGEU

The NSGEU has launched a new joint safety campaign with government to bring awareness to the need to slow down and move over for public service vehicles.

The campaign started before the Canada Day long weekend and runs during the busy summer months until Labour Day. Our members often work on the side of the road so their lives depend on the safety of drivers.

Did you know that along with police, fire, and ambulances, you must move over for Conservation Officers, Correctional Services, Motor Vehicle Officers, Deputy Sheriffs, and Wildfire Crew.

These workers could be a neighbour, family member, or a friend. So please remember to Slow Down and Move Over - their lives depend on it.

#SlowDownMoveOver

# Happy Pride!

From our 31,000 members who provide valuable public services throughout Nova Scotia every day

click [here](#) for events across the province



## Celebrate 60 Years with NSGEU this summer!

Visit <https://bit.ly/2tAGRdJ> to register!

### August 18<sup>th</sup> Upper Clements Park 11am-3pm

2931 Hwy 1, Annapolis Royal, NS (rain date August 19) \$5 voucher on discounted admission. With voucher and reduced rate, regular admission is reduced to \$13.

### August 25<sup>th</sup> Two Rivers Wildlife Park 12pm-4pm

4581 Grand Mira Rd., Huntington, NS (rain date August 26) Free Admission

### September 22 River Breeze Corn Maze 12pm-4pm

660 Onslow Rd., Upper Onslow, NS (rain date September 23) \$5 per person 4 & under free







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