



OUR YEAR IN REVIEW:

NSGEU 2014 THE STAND

Sisters and Brothers,

It probably comes as little surprise to hear that 2014 was one of the most challenging years in your union's history. We faced a number of concerted attacks by a Liberal government with Bills 30 and 37, and of course, Bill 1. We now know that this is a government bound and determined to prove to the public that they "mean business" when it comes to their dealings with unions, even if it means trampling workers' rights.

I'm proud to say that we stood up together and pushed back against the Liberals all year long. We spent a great deal of time at the Legislature, making impassioned speeches to politicians, protesting, and raising public awareness. Many members discovered that they are, in fact, passionate and vocal activists, as well! I am so proud of all the workers who stepped up and were at our side for each and every one of these battles.

But our work is far from over.

Arbitrator James Dorsey, was appointed in October to sort out the labour relations component of the Health Authorities Act (also known as Bill 1). In his recent arbitration decision, which was released on January 19, Mr. Dorsey made it clear that he is not planning to comply with the government's "cynical" plan to force health care workers into unions they have not selected.

This is very good news for us, but there is still much to be worked out over the coming weeks, as we near the April 1st deadline for the creation of the new Provincial Health Authority. The NSGEU is committed to working with Mr. Dorsey, while doing our best to ensure we can continue to represent all of our members in the affected locals.

Government has also indicated they plan to further privatize our home support services. This could very well lead to new employers slashing wages and benefits in order to land a contract and make a sizable profit, which will only serve to push wages down in a predominantly female-based sector and further depress our economy. That's what happened in Ontario in the 1990s. Its move to contract out home support and home nursing services to private, for-profit companies led to insecure employment and overwhelmingly poor working conditions, which in turn, have resulted in drastic staffing shortages and poorer quality of care. With so many vulnerable Nova Scotians relying on



NSGEU President Joan Jessome speaks on the steps of the Legislature.

home care services, we simply cannot afford to repeat Ontario's mistakes.

At the same time, we are steeling ourselves for what promises to be a very difficult round of negotiations for our Civil Service members. In the Liberals' Speech from the Throne in September, Premier Stephen McNeil made it very clear that this government intends to come after civil servants next: they've discussed wage freezes, openly complained about language in your collective agreement that prevents them from cutting jobs, and floated the idea of taking away the Public Service Award.

Let me be clear: the NSGEU intends to fight this government, to protect the rights and benefits we've managed to achieve over the years for all of our members. But we simply can't do this alone.

We will be calling on you to join us: to participate in telephone town hall phone calls, meetings and rallies; to speak with your family, friends, neighbours and local politicians; and to help us put pressure on this government to demonstrate that they respect the Nova Scotians who deliver public services in our province.

Your hard earned wages, job security and benefits have been fairly negotiated; they are worth fighting for to protect. I look forward to working with all of you as we take on this significant challenge on fairness.

"Courage, my friends; 'tis not too late to build a better world." - Tommy Douglas

In Solidarity,
Joan Jessome

Joan Jessome

President, NSGEU

THE STAND

is a publication of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
255 John Savage Ave.
Dartmouth, NS, B3B 0J3

Contributors
Joan Jessome
Holly Fraughton
Shannon MacIntyre
Deedee Slye
Ian Johnson
Corinne Carey
Susan Coldwell

Contact NSGEU
902-424-4063
1-877-556-7438
inquiry@nsgeu.ca

Executive Officers
President
Joan Jessome
902-471-4566
1st Vice President
Jason MacLean
902-549-1888
2nd Vice President
Kelly Murphy
902-830-1499
3rd Vice President
Dustin Rioux
902-977-0010
Secretary-Treasurer
Darren McPhee
902-449-7778

The NSGEU is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the National Union of Public and General Employees.
www.alltogethernow.nupge.ca



The Union Stand is proudly produced by NSGEU with the help of members of the Unifor Union of Canada in Local 165.



NSGEU



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS Members of the Ad-Hoc Health Care Committee officially launched their resource guide to mental health, on Blue Monday.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 4 **BILL 1 UPDATE** Get up to speed on what's happening with the Liberals' latest round of legislation.
- 6 **FEATURE** The government started with health care workers, but their sights are clearly set on the Civil Service next!
- 9 **BROTEN REPORT** We want your feedback
- 10 **LIBERAL LIES** A quick synopsis of what this government has accomplished so far (hint: not much).
- 14 **EDUCATION** The NSGEU responds to the education review panel report.
- 16 **A FOND FAREWELL** After 38 years of public service, NSGEU's Executive Director is retiring.
- 17 **OH&S WEEK** Safety conference to be held at NSGEU
- 20 **WINNERS ANNOUNCED** NSGEU Scholarship and Bursary winners

CONNECT WITH US!

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



FEATURED TWEETS

- Rank & File (@rankandfileca)**
Dalhousie Agricultural College staff with @NSGEU vote to strike if demands not met trurodaily.com/News/Local/201... #canlab#nspoli #cdnpse
- Abad Khan (@AbadKhanNS)**
Ian Johnson of @NSGEU discussing the need to double the CPP. It's been done before, and it's time again. It's sustainable and it works.
- S. Boudrea (@Boudreausm)**
@larochebc @NSGEU @MacdonaTrish @421karl Every member of @NSLiberal in Nova Scotia should be hanging their head in shame
- Miles Howe (@MilesHowe)**
"This is a great day for labour" @NSGEU prez Jessome on#Dorsey decision. Write-up by @DevetRobert, via @HfxMediaCoop bit.ly/1unD6Fv
- Jean Laroche (@larochebc)**
NS largest public sector union @NSGEU says Supreme Court ruling today changes everything. #cbcns #nspoli
- Tony Tracy (@Tony_Tracy)**
For-profit home care a perilous path, says @NSGEU President Joan Jessome (@prezjoan): herald.ca/3tw#. VJVzNIKtg... #NSpoli#CBpoli #NSGEU #canlab
- Brian Tapper (@BPTapper)**
If Premier McNeil is threatening long service awards for public service are health care workers next?

An update on Bill 1:



Joan is interviewed by CBC following the Bill 1 arbitration decision

On Monday, January 19th, arbitrator James Dorsey provided the government and all four unions representing health care workers with his decision regarding the labour component of the Health Authorities Act (more commonly referred to as Bill 1).

The decision, which is a 196-page document, is very complex and provides a great deal of historical context (if you are interested in reading it in its entirety, you can find it on our website at <http://bit.ly/1CBZCt2>).

Ultimately, Mr. Dorsey has not assigned each of the four bargaining units to each of the four unions, as was specified in Bill 1.

Instead, his decision suggests a number of possible outcomes, and lays out a path forward that we believe will allow NSGEU members to stay with NSGEU. Mr. Dorsey has given the unions an opportunity to bargain collective agreements in another form of bargaining associations – Amalgamated Health Care Unions – provided all unions are able to work together cooperatively.

Currently, the NSGEU holds the majority of members at both the IWK and PHA for both the Clerical and Health Care bargaining units. No union holds the

ARBITRATING BILL 1: (left) President Joan Jessome is interviewed by CBC anchor Amy Smith on Jan. 19, 2015. (Right) Members gathered at the NSGEU office on Jan. 19 to hear about Mr. Dorsey's decision from President Jessome, senior staff, and legal counsel.

clear double majority in either Nursing or Support Services.

In his decision, Mr. Dorsey states that, as per the legislation, all LPNs will be included in the new Nursing bargaining unit.

He concludes that workers who stay in their current positions will keep their current collective agreement provisions until their new bargaining agents negotiate new agreements. This is good news, because it means NSGEU members will not see changes to their agreements immediately, and any proposed changes will have to be ratified by the membership in their new bargaining units.

Mr. Dorsey also rules that he does not have the authority to order a vote, but suggested the Minister of Health and Wellness could choose to do so. However, in statements made to the media, Minister Glavine was very clear that he did not plan to allow health care workers to vote on any aspect of their union representation.

In his decision, Mr. Dorsey relied on current membership numbers as an expression of the wishes of healthcare workers rather than abiding by the Liberals' scheme of forcing people out of their chosen unions. He ruled the NSGEU constitutional challenge did not need to be considered because he interpreted and applied the Act in a way that respected the rights of employees to join a union of their choosing.

Mr. Dorsey made this interpretation by concluding that



Members listen to Joan speak about Arbitrator Jim Dorsey's decision in January.

he did not believe elected MLAs would want to override the democratic wishes of unionized healthcare workers: "Such cavalier or cynical intentions to interfere so radically in the autonomy of employees to have independent trade union bargaining agents they select or establish to represent them cannot be attributed to members of the legislative assembly," Mr. Dorsey wrote, before concluding that developing a single bargaining agent comprised of multiple unions was one option that would work.

Union and employer representatives met for another round of arbitration hearings with Mr. Dorsey from February 2nd to 6th.

Over that time, lawyers representing the employer, the government, NSGEU, CUPE, Unifor, and NSNU have discussed the concept of an amalgamated union and their respective proposed orders for Mr. Dorsey.

NSGEU, CUPE, and Unifor proposed the formation of an amalgamated union in each of the four bargaining units (Nursing, Health Care, Clerical, and Support Services) in an effort to ensure all members could remain with their current unions. This is one of the possible options outlined in Mr. Dorsey's decision of January 19th.

The NSNU was the only union which supported the recent government regulation on Nursing, which is also supported by the government and employer, stating whoever holds the majority of members across both employers in the Nursing unit would represent all nurses in the province. Mr. Dorsey has committed to issuing his final decision by February 20th at the latest. We will share this information

with affected members as soon as possible. ■

TIP: For the most up-to-date news on Bill 1 (The Health Authorities Act) we recommend you check your email and the NSGEU website regularly for updates!

Cuts to public services will only make the economy worse

By Deedee Slye

The McNeil government continues to use the deficit to justify an attack on labour and labour rights, and public services and the public sector. They have announced their intention to bring in wage restraint, and cuts to benefits such as the Public Service Award/Retirement Allowance. They have also opened the door to the privatization of home-support services and increased the number of private NSLC agency stores. They have been consistent and relentless. Not only are these actions and policies demoralizing to the people who provide public services and pay taxes, research shows that these policies will only make the deficit worse and further destabilize our economy giving more Nova Scotians reasons to leave.

This common and misguided approach to managing deficits and recessions is called austerity – and it raises inequality and hurts communities and families.

In his book, (*Unmasking Austerity*), author and researcher Dexter Whitfield demonstrates how austerity policies fuel the fire of recession rather than stimulate growth. “The idea that governments have no option other than to adopt austerity policies is incorrect,” Whitfield writes. “It was based on flawed economic theory.” He explains that governments have ended up with destabilized and weaker economies along with less democratic/public control over the economy as it has been sold off to private business.

To improve the economy, government should invest in public sector jobs, innovation, and strong public services. This will be the engine that helps to renew and develop a vibrant private sector. University research and development fuel business opportunities and economic potential for our province. Our colleges and public schools train the next generation of workers and teachers. Our government provides a strong core of services and jobs for Nova Scotians throughout the province. Strong public services are essential to a democracy with relative equality and dignity for all.

“We need stimulation and investment to keep people in Nova Scotia working toward a stronger future”

The McNeil government announced in their Speech from the Throne last fall that they were reviewing our public services to see which ones could be delivered by the private sector. Whitfield notes, “austerity policies...created new opportunities to advance private ownership...and to reduce the cost and power of labour.” Privatization is an integral part and consequence of the austerity approach. It means workers earn less and their jobs are less secure, while the owners have more. This has shown to increase inequality, and destabilize the economy as these policies decrease revenue returned to the government in personal income taxes and HST. The quality of service goes down with privatization – a race to the bottom.

In mid-December the Minister of Health said he was opening up home support funding in Nova Scotia to a tendering process. If and when this happens, it may result in the privatization of home support services. Currently, most provincial home support services are provided by unionized non-profit organizations whose collective agreements include living wages and benefits and often, pension plans. Unless the tendering process contains strict guidelines regarding employee rights and working conditions, we expect the lowest bidder – with the lowest paid employees – to get the job. This will especially impact smaller communities across the province where jobs are hard to find.

We know that Northwood, a non-profit, already lost one competition to a private company because they could not provide a quality service for what Capital Health was willing to pay. They competed against a private-for-profit company who would not pay their workers the same wages, benefits, and pensions as Northwood. Private-for-profit companies bid low, pay workers less, and take their profits out of the province if they are owned by multinationals.

The McNeil government should bring home-support

services into the public system – the opposite of what is happening. They should invest in public services and put people to work improving community services.

Other privatization initiatives include targeting support services such as restaurant and laundry services during the reorganization of the District Health Authorities. We have strong job security language in our support services collective agreements. If our members are forced into another union through Bill 1 with a collective agreement without these job security provisions, they will be at greater risk for contracting out. As well, the McNeil government increased the number of NSLC agency stores which are not staffed by unionized NSLC members. This has lowered the quality of service for rural Nova Scotians and the quality of jobs available.

In the fall of 2014, McNeil confirmed he would be looking for wage restraint in the public sector in upcoming negotiations. He indicated he was also coming after benefits such as the Public Service Award/Retirement Allowance. This is a familiar demand for governments with an austerity approach to the deficit. This does not work. Research has shown that for every dollar the government pulls out of the economy through wage restraint and cuts, there is a greater loss in the GDP (estimates are between 0.7 and 1.7 times). Based on the experiences of other economies, the province will not see any savings and, in fact, will have less revenue. The money workers

spend in the local economy supports the private sector and communities.

When studying other governments Whitfield notes, “the attack on public sector unions, workers’ rights and legislation ...ran parallel with public sector cuts and privatization.” So too has this happened here in Nova Scotia. The McNeil government attacked the NSGEU

directly in Bill 1 by attempting to legislate away thousands of our members and reduce our influence in labour negotiations. Earlier in their term, government brought in essential service legislation to stop effective strikes by NSGEU home support workers and NSGEU nurses with Bill 30 and Bill 37. We are challenging the constitutionality of this legislation in the Courts.

Public programs and services will also be cut and consolidated

in 2015 through ongoing departmental reviews. McNeil said this would result in the disappearance of some services and programs and the complete revamping of others. One of these programs may be the delivery of child welfare services in two rural communities in Nova Scotia.

In February the government cut five positions in child welfare services in Guysborough and Barrington and one additional income assistance position in Guysborough. When the cuts were challenged, the Minister of Community Services responded this would improve the service – asking the public to believe that, somehow magically, cutting services will make the service better.



¹ Pg. 32, *Unmasking Austerity*, Dexter Whitfield, Spokesman Press, 2014

² Pg 38. *Unmasking Austerity*, Dexter Whitfield, Spokesman Press, 2014

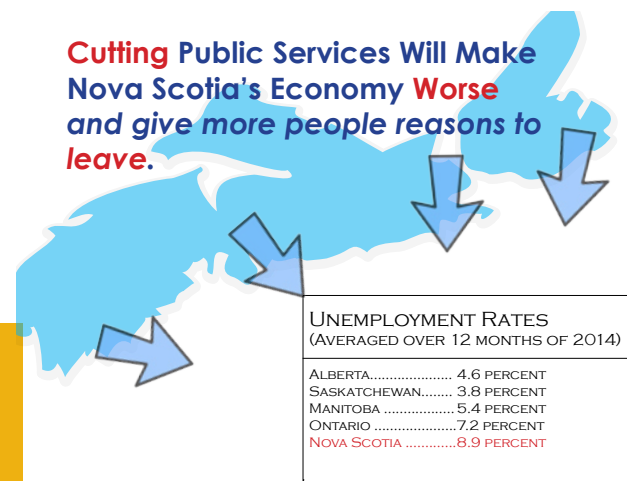
Continued...

NSGEU President Jessome has said we believe these cuts are only the beginning of what the government plans to do to our public services in rural Nova Scotia.

The McNeil government's cuts to public services, its threats of wage restraint, privatization, and cuts to public sector benefits, are all part of a familiar and failed approach to tackling the deficit.

We are continuing to fight against government legislation that takes away workers' right to negotiate a fair collective agreement. We are standing up for our constitutional rights enshrined in our right to free collective bargaining and free association. We are pleased there have been positive Supreme Court decisions that reaffirm our labour rights, and look forward to decisions on Bill 30 and, 37 and Bill 1.

We need you to do your part to protect and strengthen public services. Talk to people about this issue. Cuts to public services will only put the economy, our communities, and our families in crisis. We need stimulation and investment to keep people in Nova Scotia working toward a stronger future. ■



Broten Report Demands Response from NSGEU Members

On February 27, 2014, Nova Scotia's Finance and Treasury Board Minister, Diana Whalen, announced that Laurel Broten (a former Ontario Liberal Cabinet Minister) would be conducting a comprehensive review of taxes, regulations, and fees in the province. The final \$154,000 report was released on November 19. It contained 20 recommendations about taxes and 20 recommendations about fees and regulations.

What Ms. Broten produced is a blueprint and battle plan for the McNeil government to continue their war against public services and public sector workers. Over the past 18 months we have seen attacks on healthcare workers. This is an economic plan that proposes freezing program spending, moving away from a progressive tax system to increased consumption taxes, and tax breaks for higher income Nova Scotians and big business. In the end, this plan will adversely affect most Nova Scotians.

Broten's report uses some hidden language in buzzwords like: "zero based budgeting," "reimagining the way public services are delivered," "alternative service delivery," "alternative financing models," "flatlining department expenses." Make no mistake, this is government-speak for wage freezes, privatization, private-public partnerships, contracting out, more agency stores, and job cuts. If Premier McNeil and his Cabinet take this advice, it will lead to a significant erosion of public services for Nova Scotians, and take much needed income out of communities across Nova Scotia.

It seems public servants are easy targets for governments, but what this report forgot to consider is that public sector workers are the life blood of many communities. Too often, we read of the adverse economic impacts, if corporation A or B were to leave a community. We need to start flipping that question around and throw it back. NSGEU members across this province contribute to their local and provincial economies. If wages are frozen or jobs eliminated, where will the income come from to replace these losses?

We all know that much of Halifax's prosperity comes from the federal, provincial, and municipal jobs located here. But the same is true in small towns across Nova Scotia. Workers in healthcare and the civil service help sustain the economic viability of our communities, and this is something we should all be proud of, and constantly mention to our families, friends

and neighbours. Implementation of this report will be a major step backwards for Nova Scotia that will work against the very economic and fiscal recovery which the government should be seeking. Reducing the standard of living for most Nova Scotians seems completely contrary to what is needed if we are truly to chart a path for much needed social and economic development in this province. Unfortunately, it fits into a pattern for the McNeil government of going after the rights and benefits of working people.

With Bills 30, and 37 and Bill 1, government has worked to undermine full and free collective bargaining. Now we could soon be facing significant reductions in the number and range of public services which Nova Scotians depend on every day, as well as in the affordability of many essential goods and services which most Nova Scotians need if the recommendations on ending HST exemptions are heeded.

The Broten Report has now given the government the ammunition it needs to bring in a regressive budget in the Spring. All Nova Scotians must join together to do everything we can to oppose this plan of significant restraint and austerity that will hurt this province and its people for many years to come.

The Finance and Treasury Board Minister is currently holding hearings and accepting written submissions on what the government response to the Broten Report should be. For more information on this "Let's Talk Taxes" consultation process, go to <http://novascotia.ca/budget/> NSGEU members should be taking the opportunity speak out about the regressive recommendations in the report.

We have heard many times that people feel their voices won't be heard, but just in the last month we have seen the McNeil Government react to pressure brought on by volunteer firefighters and volunteer search and rescue associations. They mounted a campaign to protect their income tax rebate and won with the Premier announcing it would be protected.

We need progressive voices from across Nova Scotia to stand up and be heard (either at the local meetings or in writing) by February 28. If you want further info on how you can be heard, please feel free to contact us at 902-424-4063 (HRM), 1-877-556-7438 (toll-free), or inquiry@nsgeu.ca ■

The McNeil Liberals' dishonesty & broken promises

The Liberals made some lofty promises to get themselves elected back in 2013: they pledged to end Nova Scotia Power's monopoly on power in this province, to end gas regulation, and to respect workers' rights to full, free and fair collective bargaining (they even took out ads in *The Chronicle Herald*, stating their commitment to workers' rights).

Just 14 months later, and it's abundantly clear that the Liberals have been dishonest to Nova Scotians.

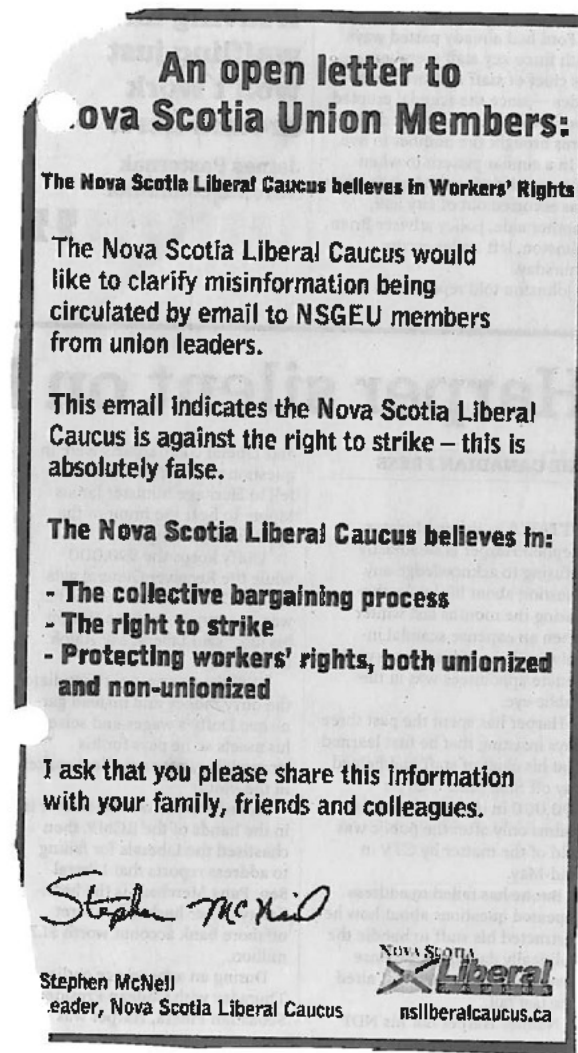
Since coming into power in October 2013, they have done absolutely nothing to end Nova Scotia Power's monopoly. They've decided to spend \$1.5 million to study gas regulation. And they've broken the promises they made – in black and white – to all workers in this province.

Their first attack came in February 2014, when they introduced legislation ([Bill 30](#)) deeming home support workers' an essential service, taking away their right to any meaningful form of strike.

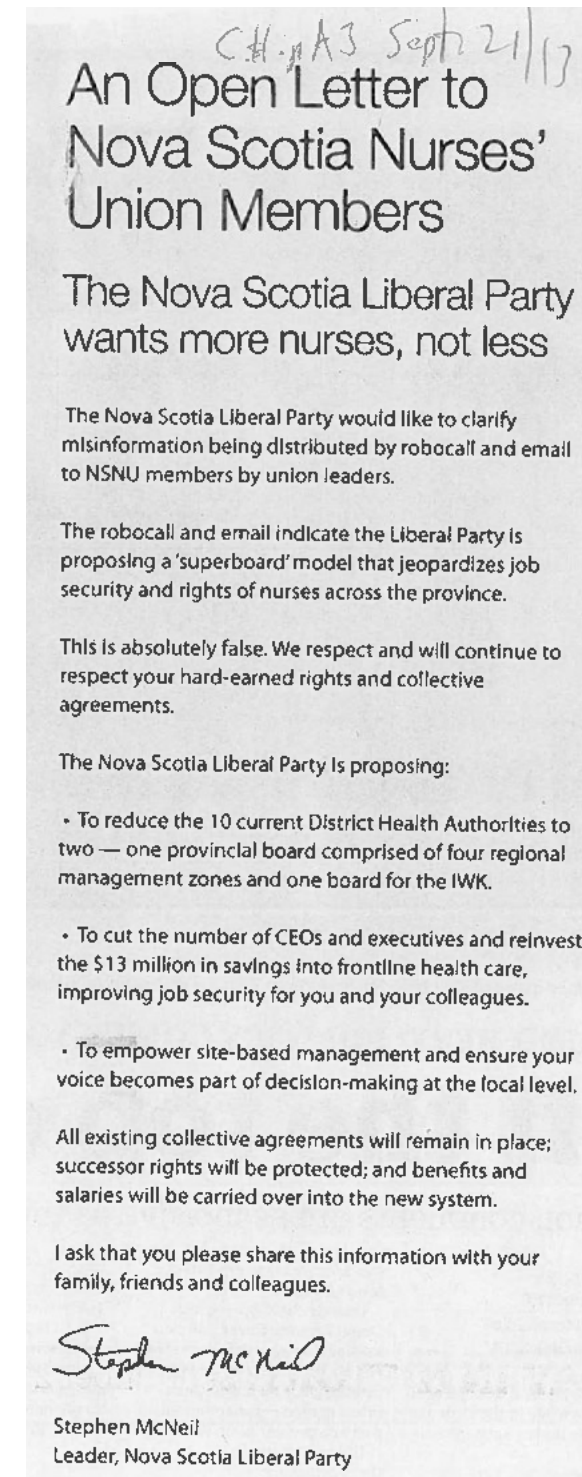
Just two months later, when registered nurses of Local 97 walked out on strike in support of their demands for nurse to patient ratios and patient safety concerns, Liberals slapped them with [Bill 37](#), legislation that took away the right to strike from any health care or community service workers.

Then, in October, government pulled the rug out from under the four unions representing all acute health care workers. At the request of the Minister of Health and Wellness, union leaders had been working cooperatively to develop a proposal for bargaining associations, which would ensure workers' rights and benefits were protected, and that they could remain with the unions who had historically represented them. But all that work was for naught: the Liberals rejected the unions' proposal and instead, introduced [Bill 1](#), an unprecedented piece of legislation that allows a third-party to decide on which union will represent each grouping of healthcare workers and impose a first contract on all workers.

While officials claimed the legislation was necessary to streamline the collective bargaining process, the government's true intent was to weaken the NSGEU.



OPEN & HONEST? The ads above and to the right ran in *The Chronicle Herald* leading up to the election. Both assert the Liberals' support of the right to strike, the collective bargaining process, and protecting workers' rights.



Metro columnist Stephen Kimber described the situation very clearly:

"The new law — and the arbitrator's carefully constrained mandate — will likely force nurses and LPNs into the government's union of choice: the Nova Scotia Nurses Union, leaving the NSGEU with fewer, lower-paid members.

That will not only effectively decimate the NSGEU financially but also weaken its bargaining power for its remaining public-sector workers...

Dumping on the NSGEU may be politically popular but it appears to be a slap in the face to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms' freedom-of-association provision, not to mention a dog's breakfast of international labour laws and treaties to which Canada is a signatory."

The Liberals have already backpedaled on their claims that their health care restructuring will immediately save \$13 million per year, after Patrick Lee, the man in charge of overseeing the merger transition, admitted that there would likely be no savings in the initial years of the merger. "That will be there, but it's just going to take a longer path to get there" ... "That's what I realize as health minister now," Glavine told reporters at the time.

This certainly is not the first Liberal government that has attacked Nova Scotia's public sector workers. Back in the '90s, the NSGEU faced Premier John Savage, who instituted wage freezes, rollbacks and other austerity measures, and faced the political consequences during the next election.

We fully intend to ensure this Liberal government feels the same pain at the polls in 2017 for the promises they've broken to the workers of this province. ■

New facility has improved design: must continue to improve Burnside

NSGEU representatives recently got a tour of the new correctional facility in Priestville, and they were very impressed with the facility's design. Our representatives were Occupational Health & Safety Officer Paul Cormier, Correctional Officer/Local President Dave Leddicote, Correctional Officer/Health, Safety & Environment Chair Hugh Gillis, and Correctional Officer/NSGEU 1st Vice President Jason MacLean.

Cormier reported it is well laid out with a much larger and improved intake area. The new facility is designed with a direct supervision model in mind, which has been shown to improve conditions for both staff and inmates in other facilities across the country. With direct supervision, correctional officers will be able to build relationships with the offender population and potentially diffuse problems before they start.

It also has a nicely designed gym for the members to use on their breaks and the lunchroom has access to picnic tables outside where members can take a mental health break from a very stressful job. Our members are currently receiving training to familiarize them with the controls and operations before they open.

We are pleased this facility will be opening soon and it will play a key role in corrections as it will hold up to 100 inmates and take some pressure off other facilities in the province. However, during the same week that this tour took place, there were media reports about the number of assaults at Burnside multiplying in 2014, as compared to 2013.

Although some are looking to the new facility in Priestville as a solution, it will not solve all of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) issues at Burnside. The new facility will help to lower the numbers of inmates in the latter facility. However,

Burnside will continue to receive federally remanded inmates, and to serve as the main jail for the Metro area due to its proximity to the Courts.

In a Feb. 3 media release, NSGEU responded to the fact that there were 32 assaults on Officers in 2014, as opposed to just 6 in 2013. President Jessome said, "Our members are proud of the public service they provide as Correctional Officers in the largest and busiest provincial correctional facility. Even though they work in an often hostile environment, they shouldn't have to fear for their safety at work."

The union is currently working with management on the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHSC) to address issues of violence in the workplace and other OHS issues in the workplace. We will continue to push for improvements. ■



Under construction: Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility

If NS wants to improve tourism- why close visitor centres early?

According to recently released tourism figures, Nova Scotia's 2014 peak tourism season from June to September saw a five percent increase in accommodation revenues and 1.8 million visitors as of November 30. Considering that tourism is a \$2 billion industry, it is clear how important it is to our economy, and to people and communities across the province.

An important part of our welcoming infrastructure to assist tourists and residents alike each year is a number of Visitor Information Centres (VICs). They are operated by our members who work for the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. There are three year-round VICs at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport, the Halifax Waterfront and in Amherst. There are also five seasonal VICs at Yarmouth, Digby, Pictou, Port Hastings and Peggy's Cove.

However, what was of no small concern to our members at these Centres was that the government decided in 2014 to close four of them several weeks earlier than had been the case in recent years. In particular, the Port Hastings and Pictou VICs had their season cut by six weeks, that is, by November 1, and the Digby and Yarmouth VICs were closed as of October 14.

This was surprising to us, considering that our members report the numbers of people visiting their VICs in Port Hastings and Pictou were on par with other years. In addition, some of the public advertising for the VICs indicated that the Port Hastings and Pictou VICs were to be open until December.

On October 24, President Jessome wrote to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development (Michel Samson) and Tourism to express these concerns. On November 24, he wrote back to indicate that these earlier made operational sense with the winding down of the tourism season and with changes in how our visitors access travel planning information. There were also

an operating efficiencies of approximately \$70,000.

President Jessome also wrote on December 8 to the Minister of Natural Resources (Zach Churchill) to point out an apparent contradiction between his department's efforts to encourage more people to visit and make greater use of the provincial parks system, and the early closure of four VICs. On January 21, he wrote back to indicate that 75 percent of park users are Nova Scotians who do not rely on the VICs for help, and that they see a general trend toward on-line web-based information services, but there is also an ongoing review of their information and marketing products.

We expect to work closely with our members at the VICs and in the provincial parks system to help promote the important services they provide to visitors and Nova Scotians, and to do all we can to prevent further reductions in their periods of operation. ■



Inverness Visitor Information Centre.

Support staff not recognized throughout education review process

By Ian Johnson

On February 19, 2014, the Minister of Education and Early Development announced the establishment of an Education Review Panel. It was to be led by former Lieutenant Governor Myra Freeman, and include five other persons. The purpose of this Review was to consider what is working in public education and what needs to be improved, with a final report due by October. It was supposedly the first such review in 25 years.

One issue that arose early in this Review was the failure of the government to ensure support staff were recognized and represented in this process, especially on the partners' advisory group. President Jessome wrote on February 20 to make this request which the Minister turned down on March 25. In turn, this reply led to a second letter from the President to repeat our request on April 14, to which the Minister did not respond.

With a deadline for submissions of June 13, our School Board Occupational Council met on May 2 to discuss how we might respond to this process. The Occupational Council focused on four main topics of the discussion guide provided for this Review, namely, supports for students, equity and human rights, school climate, partnerships, and organization of schools. These comments formed the basis of our submission on June 12.

We also asked for a meeting with the Education Review Panel, which Ms. Freeman wrote in reply, might be possible after the deadline for submissions. However, we never had a meeting with her or the Panel. On June 18, the Minister announced more than 19,000 thousand Nova Scotians had responded to the call for submissions, including 1,000 from school and board administrators and staff.

On October 30, the final report of the Education Review Panel was released, entitled "Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student". We were invited to a stakeholder briefing on the Report that morning. Based on 19,000 responses from Nova Scotians, the Panel recommended significant changes to the way public school education is delivered. They made 30 recommendations under 7 themes, but once again, support staff was neglected as a legitimate stakeholder group.

Following the release of this Report, President Jessome again wrote on November 4 to ask for an opportunity to meet with the Minister as she began to prepare her action plan which she committed initially to release in January.

Our School Board Occupational Council met on December 2 to discuss the Report and possible next steps. Each of the seven themes (Curriculum, Teaching, Transitions, Inclusion, School Climate, Health and Well-Being, and Modern Structure) was discussed, and a detailed set of comments were developed.

Based on these comments, an extensive response to the Report was prepared and sent to the Minister on December 16. It included the seven sets of comments, but also, a proposed eighth theme called "Support Services" with eight recommendations about the importance of school support staff, their representation on every consultation process and decision-making body related to schools, a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy, a revision of the "Teacher Assistant Guidelines," the importance of school libraries and their being adequately staffed, and the need for professional development funds, and a professional association to promote their work.

A day after this response was sent on December 17, we did receive a reply from the Minister to the letter which had been sent on November 4 to her. In this reply, the Minister said: "I am aware of the crucial link that support staff serve in our schools and agree that the members you represent play a valuable role in the Nova

Scotia education system. In the coming months, I will be developing an action plan in response to the report." We received a second reply from the Minister dated January 26, 2015 in which she sent a similar message: "I am aware of and most grateful for the contributions made by support staff to the success of students and schools."

On January 29, the Minister released her Action Plan for Education. However, once again, we have a major report for public education making no reference, let alone, any recognition of the dedication and hard work of support staff in the public school system.

The Plan does promise "to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners in education for the implementation of the Action Plan" during 2015-16. But, at this point, we have not been informed if we or our members will be included, and how this clarification will take place.

The full title for this document is *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education the 3Rs: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild*". From what the Plan says and what the Minister has been saying, we think it might be appropriate to add a fourth R, namely, "Restructure." This is because the Minister



Ian Johnson is NSGEU's Servicing Coordinating/Policy Analyst

has asked the Auditor General to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of School Boards. This could mean possible amalgamations of boards and their functions as is taking place with the District Health Authorities. In particular, they mention purchasing, payroll, finance, and transportation services.

So, while support staff are not specifically mentioned in the Plan, they could be directly or indirectly affected by the implementation of one or more parts of the Plan. The restructuring of the Boards could be a major one, for which

the Minister was not shy about saying she might do. There could also be major changes for our members who work as teacher aids, educational assistants, or educational program assistants.

All School Board and Stock Transportation members are being asked for comments. We also expect that the School Board Occupational Council will meet in the next little while to discuss the Report. If nothing else, the importance of school support staff should be recognized as a result of this Review process. ■

Rural Nova Scotians deserve real NSLC stores

NOT AGENCY STORES

Everyone knows double standards are not fair. Living in rural Nova Scotia should not mean that you get less service for your tax dollars, that your children will have a higher exposure to alcohol than those who live in cities, or that your jobs pay less with fewer benefits. But, this is what happens when governments start cutting corners on public services, including eliminating Nova Scotia Liquor Stores in favour of Agency Stores in gas stations or corner stores. Over the past couple of years the government has increased the number of Agency Stores in the province to 60.

Workers at Agency Stores are not trained about products to the same standards as other NSLC employees. They are also not held to the same standard regarding the maintenance and enforcement of the Check 30 ID program, to prohibit purchases by underage customers. The NSLC has a number of checks to make sure their employees enforce this vital program. Not so in the Agency Stores.

Agency stores are privately owned and operated with a built-in incentive to sell more alcohol and make more profits. This is not healthy for Nova Scotians and young people in particular. Julie MacEachern, a public health policy advocate, has written a significant report titled *NSLC Agency Stores: How do they impact our communities?* In it, she explains the many reasons to maintain strong regulation and control over the sale of alcohol in Nova Scotia. Privatization through Agency Stores is the wrong direction.

Employees working in these stores do not have the same rate of pay or health/dental/pension benefits as NSLC employees. Why should these jobs in rural communities not pay as well as other NSLC positions? This is not fair.

MacEachern gathered data from her visits to Agency Stores

across the province. She took photos of beverage alcohol sold side-by-side pop and other non-alcoholic products. She also documented the proximity of these stores to schools. MacEachern points out that selling alcohol in a mixed commodity setting normalizes alcohol in the eyes of children. This is enhanced when the beverage alcohol also takes the names of popular candy and chocolates or looks just like a non-alcoholic slushie. Why must children in the rural areas come into contact with beverage alcohol like this?

The Premier said on June 7, 2013, in advance of his election victory, that "A Liberal government will not privatize or sell off the NSLC, nor will we change the manner in which alcohol is retailed/distributed in Nova Scotia." Yet, they increased the number of Agency Stores just a year later.

In a Public Accounts Committee meeting in November opposition parties asked government, on our behalf, how opening new Agency Stores will "provide rural communities with additional economic activity and employment opportunities." We know that the NSLC has already been cutting hours in rural areas, and currently reviewing a number of class one stores. If the government was truly interested in the public good, and creating well-paying jobs, they should abandon this harmful policy of increasing Agency Stores. ■

NSGEU's Executive Director, Keiren Tompkins is retiring!



This February, we are saying thank you & farewell to our Executive Director Keiren Tompkins, who is retiring after a 38 year history of public service, 22 of which have been directly with the NSGEU on staff.

Keiren became an employee of the Nova Scotia Department of Health in May of 1977, working as a Health Inspector. In 1978, he became President of Local 8 and worked closely with former NSGEU President Greg Blanchard throughout the 1980's as a union activist.

NSGEU's Board of Directors hired Keiren as an Employee Relations Officer (ERO) in 1993. He worked tirelessly on the members' behalf through the reorganizations, cuts, and rollbacks of the Savage years, alongside activists and under the leadership of President Dave Peters.

Keiren has worked closely with President Joan Jessome since 1999. He became the Servicing Co-ordinator for the Civil Service Team at that time, and Director of Negotiations and Servicing in 2006. In 2009, he became NSGEU's Executive Director.

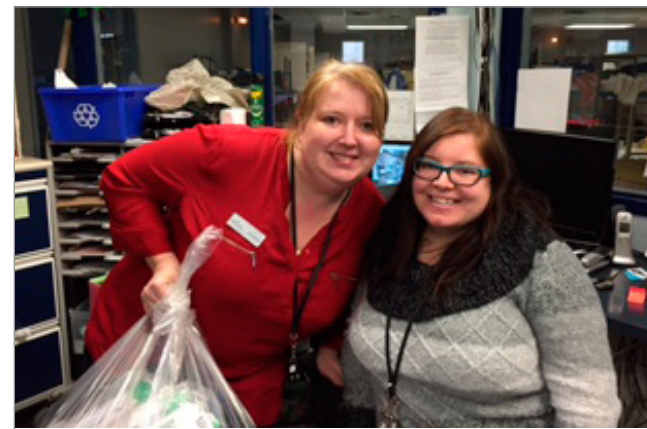
His knowledge of the Civil Service and its collective agreement is second to none. His dedication to the members and his hard work on their behalf has been appreciated by all who have worked with him.

Keiren was recognized as a hero for the first time in 1990 when he saved the life of a scuba diver who got into trouble. Last December, he was awarded the Medal of Bravery for saving the life of a young man who fell through the ice in Cape Breton in January, 2014.

An avid hockey player, golfer and outdoorsman, new grandfather, Keiren will no doubt be active in his retirement years.

We thank him for his knowledge and service to the membership and we thank his family for their continued support of his endeavors. We wish him and his family well! ■

We 'Socked It' to Poverty this year!



Thank you to all the NSGEU locals and members who organized a donation site at your workplace or donated yourself to the Sock it to Poverty Campaign for 2013-2014. This annual campaign is an initiative of the NSGEU Human Rights Committee.

This year we collected 834 pairs of socks, 397 pairs of mittens/gloves, 310 hats, 113 scarves and a total of **\$4,653.65** was collected in cash. This cash was used to purchase over 650 pairs of socks from Stanfields (a local employer).

We have received many thanks from organizations across the province who received donations from the campaign. All the money and donation items stay in the regions in which they are collected and have been much appreciated.

The Human Rights Committee is:

- Tammy Gillis – Local 2, Chair
- Jason MacLean – Local 480 C, Executive Liaison
- Adele LeBlanc – Local 72, South Shore
- Patricia MacDonald – Local 1670, Cumberland/Colchester
- Joseph MacPherson – Local 18A, Cape Breton
- Elizabeth McQuaid – Local 42, Metro A
- Elaine Webb – Local 7, Metro C ■



NSGEU

Get Ready for North American Occupational Safety & Health Week in May

Canadian Society of Safety Engineers kicks off NAOSH Week with a Safety Conference at the NSGEU on May 4.

The North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week (May 3-9, 2015) is a continent wide event spanning three countries -Canada, USA and Mexico- that highlight to the public, government, and industry the importance of increasing understanding, raising awareness and reducing injuries and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community.

The goal of the North American Occupational Safety & Health (NAOSH) Week is to focus the attention of employers, employees, the general public and all partners in occupational safety and health on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community.

We are striving to:

- Increase understanding of the benefits of investment in occupational health and safety.
- Raise awareness of the role and contribution of safety and health professionals.
- Reduce workplace injuries and illness by encouraging new health and safety activities and interest in NAOSH Week.

The success of NAOSH Week is rooted in a community-based approach. Across the country, NAOSH Week events and activities are coordinated by local, provincial and/or regional committees, comprised primarily of volunteers, who share a focus and vision of safer workplaces and communities.

In Nova Scotia, the NSGEU is helping to sponsor a health and safety conference put on by the Canadian Society of Safety Engineers (CSSE) on May 4 to launch NAOSH week. The NSGEU

HSE Committee conducts occupational health & safety survey of membership

The NSGEU's Health Safety and Environment (HSE) Committee, led by Chair Hugh Gillis, and Executive Liaison Dustin Rioux, with the support of NSGEU's OHS Officer Paul Cormier, developed an OHS survey for the membership which was sent out by email in January with a reminder sent on Feb. 3.

The HSE Committee will be collecting the data from the survey (maintaining complete confidentiality) and where appropriate they will share general results with respective employers in a productive and collaborative way. The intention of the Committee is to support all health & safety initiatives and raise knowledge and practice of workplace health & safety to optimum levels. Whether it is violence in the workplace or the way the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHSC) operates, safety is everybody's business.

The deadline is Feb. 20. We sent the survey out through our email system and reached out to approximately 20,000 of our 30,000 members. We are hoping for a good response. The survey can be found at <http://fs2.formsite.com/nsgeu/form87/index.html> ■

NSGEU

NSGEU participates in WCB strategic planning

By Ian Johnson

On August 6th, 2014, NSGEU was invited to respond to a proposed new Strategic Plan for the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) for the next five years, that is, 2016-2020. In 2012 and 2013, we responded to the proposed new Workplace Safety Strategy prepared by the WCB and by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

We were asked to reply to five questions about the proposed new WCB Strategy by November 10th. We provided a detailed response on November 7th, of which the main answers are outlined in this article.

When asked about the WCB's primary focus being to reduce workplace injuries and improve safety and timely return to work, we said we would like to see the emphasis shift to

"Having 96% of injured workers being able to return to their pre-injury employment following a workplace injury is commendable, but we have had among the highest workplace injury and fatality rates in the country. So much more is needed to prevent workplace injuries, especially fatalities."

preventing workplace injuries from occurring in the first place, and not just on reducing them. Reducing injuries implies that we are willing to accept that they will continue to occur, when we, as the largest union in the province representing public sector workers, want to see a concerted effort to prevent them from happening at all. In our view, that should certainly be the overall goal and vision for a new WCB Strategy. In our view, it is not enough that we strive to make Nova Scotia the safest place to work in Canada. That goal could be achieved, and we still might have a high level of workplace fatalities and injuries.

This new focus means a culture and paradigm shift for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) and WCB. We need a different way of thinking and a new set of indicators to measure overall progress. This means using "leading" or "upstream" indicators to predict health and safety performance, rather than "lagging" or "downstream" indicators which look at health and safety performance "after the fact."

At the same time, we recognize that moving to achieve that overall goal and vision will require doing more to assist injured workers to return to work. Having 96% of injured workers being able to return to their pre-injury employment following a workplace injury is commendable, but we have had among the highest workplace injury and fatalities rates in the country. So much more is needed to prevent workplace injuries, especially fatalities.

When asked about what the WCB should do to reduce workplace injuries and help injured workers to return to work

in a more safe and timely manner, we suggested a much greater emphasis on prevention, changing the definition of accident to include workers suffering from chronic mental illness, and providing universal coverage so that all workplaces under provincial jurisdiction will automatically be covered under the WCB system unless they have a compelling reason to request an exemption.

When asked about what would help to create a safer workplace, we mentioned strengthening the Internal Responsibility System, finalizing and proclaiming a number of outstanding regulations such as the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Training Regulations, ensuring there is quality OH&S training delivered by accredited providers, and implementing initiatives to address workplace mental health.

In general, we said we felt that there must be strong leadership on OH&S at both the political and organizational level. The provincial government and the WCB must do more to demonstrate leadership in OH&S. This can be demonstrated internally, with the government leading by example; and externally, by being visible on the issue and enacting good legislation on a timely basis. There are some organizations that have strong leadership in OH&S and demonstrate a good culture every day, but most organizations do not care or simply do not know what good OH&S behaviour and culture looks like.

We are quite certain neither the existing WCB Strategic Plan nor the new Workplace Safety Strategy is very well-known in workplaces across the province. Much more outreach, education and training are needed.

At the same time, we see the proposed new WCB Strategic Plan and the new Workplace Safety Strategy as being complementary. They should not be treated as separate and distinct documents. They are both crucial to achieving significant progress in addressing OH&S in this province.

After we made this submission, NSGEU sent two representatives to a WCB Summit about the draft plan on November 14. At that time, we learned that it is to be finalized by next June after another stakeholder review in March. ■

SEEN Rural Coordinator Hired!

In early December 2014, Saint Mary's University Continuing Education hired a Rural Coordinator to work with NSGEU on getting the SEEN project underway. Some NSGEU Regional Council Reps were involved in the hiring process.

The SEEN (Silver Economy Engagement Network initiative) started in September 2013 when NSGEU and Saint Mary's University Continuing Education signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding to begin the process of planning and delivering a SEEN pilot project to NSGEU members and retired members. This followed a year or so of discussions to explore the concept and develop this agreement.

SEEN programming will be a value-added service for retiring and retired members to allow them to use their knowledge and skills to contribute to the health, economic and social well-being of their communities. A joint working group of four representatives of each organization was set up to help give overall direction, it has met three times to date.

The new coordinator is Dayle Eshelby. She is from Lockeport where she is a Town Councillor. She has been working for the last year or so with Community Services, and has also been a member in Local 5. Secretary-Treasurer Darren McPhee introduced her to our Board of Directors on December 4.

This hiring builds on meetings which Saint Mary's Continuing Education reps held last June with three of our Regional Councils (Cape Breton, Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough, and South Shore.) Coming out of those meetings, it was agreed to hire a Rural Coordinator to work in two communities in two of the three regions where the initial meetings were held in June.

We are also hoping she can assist us in adding a new component to our Pre-Retirement Seminars. This new component will help educate retiring NSGEU members on the opportunities that exist for them post-retirement, so they can continue to utilize their skills and knowledge. SEEN will network with retiring members to help them pass on their skills and knowledge or help build new skills.

Dayle has already been meeting with several Regional Council members across the province to look at potential ways in which the project could develop more fully in their areas. Another meeting of the Joint SEEN Working Group took place on January 29 to help finalize a plan of work for Dayle and SEEN over the next several months.

She will be working with the three NSGEU Regional Councils in Cape Breton, South Shore, and Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough. The focus is on identifying key local contact persons for a general introductory session about SEEN and possible ways which retirees and members close to retirement can get involved in their local communities. This will start with the Regional Council in Cape Breton. This will next be followed by a similar approach with the South Shore Regional Council, and then, in the Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough region.

Are you planning to retire?

By Corinne Carey

The NSGEU started offering the one-day Pre-Retirement Seminars in 2008 following feedback which President Jessome received during a Provincial Tour the previous year. Prior to 2008, the NSGEU offered a Pre-Retirement course as part of the Annual Weeklong School. We had learned that only a limited number of members were able to access this course each year. So the move to a one-day program was aimed at educating more members on retirement issues.

Each year the NSGEU holds four to five seminars in various regions around Nova Scotia. This year, the NSGEU has seminars scheduled in the following areas:

- Mar. 21 – NSGEU Conference Centre, Dartmouth
- Apr. 25 – Grand Lake Road Fire Hall, Sydney
- May 9 – Dalhousie Agricultural College, Truro
- Oct. 3 – Digby Pines, Digby
- Nov. 14 – NSGEU Conference Centre, Dartmouth

The intent of the Pre-Retirement Seminars is to provide members with information to help with their retirement planning. The Seminars cover the history of the NSGEU's involvement in Pensions, and details of the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security Benefits as well as Pension Plan specific information (when applicable). The seminars also provide information on Nova Scotia Pharmacare Programs, Retiree Benefits and the Nova Scotia Government Retired Employee Association. (NSGREA).

This year, the NSGEU will be adding a new component to its one-day program: the Silver Economy Engagement Network (SEEN). This new component will help educate retiring members on the opportunities that exist for them post-retirement, so they can continue to utilize their skills and knowledge. SEEN will network with retiring members to help them pass on their skills and knowledge or help build new skills.

If you are interested in attending one of our Pre-Retirement seminars, please fill out an Application, which can be found on the Education Calendar at <http://nsgeu.ca/education/calendar-education/>



- Corinne Carey is NSGEU's Pension & Benefits Officer.

Scholarships & Bursaries

The NSGEU is pleased to provide financial assistance to members in good standing and their dependents who are pursuing higher education. There are bursaries for NSGEU members and a range of scholarships, bursaries, and awards for members' dependents. Bursaries and scholarships are available to those who are full-time students pursuing a degree, diploma or certificate from a university or other recognized institution of higher learning. A member or dependent may apply for assistance once every two years. Bursaries and scholarships are awarded by the NSGEU Education Committee.

This Fall, **\$39,000** in scholarships and bursaries was awarded to NSGEU members and their dependents! Here are the successful applicants:

DEPENDENT BURSARIES:

- Blake Seymour (Sharon Jewer, Local 70) Westray Memorial Bursary, \$1,000
- Brady Wood (Kathleen Wood, Local 71A) Brian Langille Bursary, \$1,000
- Kendra "Shellyse" MacDougall (Lois MacDougall, Local 94) Irving Deale Bursary, \$1,000
- Felicity MacDougall (Lois MacDougall, Local 94) Philip Cogswell Bursary, \$1,000
- Eugena Euler (Susan Euler, Local 34) Gordon Burnham Bursary, \$1,000
- John Lane (Stephen Lane, Local 480F) John Rossiter Bursary, \$1,000
- Jean-Marc LeBlanc (Karen Thibault, Local 16), \$1,000
- Shalyn Field (Tracy Field, Local 42),

- \$1,000
- Kelsey Bowman (Margaret Layes, Local 88), \$1,000
- Nicholas Lynch (Susan Lynch, Local 71B), \$1,000
- Emily Layland (Pauline Layland, Local 97), \$1,000
- MacKenzie Reeves (Patricia Dwyer, Local 91), \$1,000
- Jason Clancy-Edward (Moir Clancey, Local 8), \$1,000
- Justin Hall (Steven Hall, Local 3), \$1,000
- Shala Knocton (Jacqueline Knocton, Local 88), \$1,000

- MacLellan, Local 77) \$1,000
- Julie-Elizabeth Cameron (Laurie Howardson, Local 1), \$1,000
- Dennis Gallant (Audrey Gallant, Local 97), \$1,000
- Kyle Gillis (Diane Gillis, Local 94), \$1,000
- Meagan Howardson (Carol Howardson, Local 7), \$1,000

MEMBER BURSARIES:

- Lauren Slaunwhite (Local 19), Bill Hebert Memorial Bursary, \$750
- Veronica Escobar (Local 19), Carmen Williams Memorial Bursary, \$750
- Colleen Currie (Local 8), \$750
- Marilyn MacDougall-Redden (Local 8), \$750
- Kendra Fevens (Local 5), \$750
- Megan LeBlanc (Local 41), \$750
- Sandra MacDonald-Anderson (Local 267), \$750
- Charlotte MacLellan (Local 59), \$750
- Erika Burger (Local 42), \$750
- Melinda MacIsaac (Local 7), \$750
- Kimbly MacFadyen (Local 22), \$750
- Amber Kelly (Local 246), \$750
- Anna Gallant (Local 42), \$750
- Jamie Stanley (Local 42), \$750

SCHOLARSHIPS, MEMBERS' DEPENDENTS:

- Luke Laing (Terry Laing, Local 42), Adrian Timmons Scholarship, \$2,500
- Sarah Hollett (Darlene Brine, Local 8), Alex Buchanan Scholarship, \$1,500
- Mitchell Pinto (Cathy Pinto, Local 42), Audrey Stevens Scholarship, \$1,500
- Justine Ring (Tammy Ring, Local 73), Greg Blanchard Scholarship, \$1,500
- Courtney Gullickson, (Margaret Gullickson, Local 97), David Peters Scholarship, \$1,500
- Kathleen MacLellan (Rosemary

If you'd like more information on the NSGEU's scholarship & bursary program, you can visit nsgeu.ca or contact Stephanie Howell by calling 902-424-4063 (toll-free 1-877-556-7438)



Upcoming Workshops

Course	Dates	Location	By Local or By Sector	Eligibility & Description
New Activist	March 23 & 24, 2015	NSGEU Office, Dartmouth	Metro A, B, & C	Eligibility: Members with no prior training. Recommended for New Stewards prior to Steward I. Description: Introduction to the NSGEU and the labour movement. Review of workers rights, union processes, grievances, mobilization and the importance of strong locals.
	March 25 & 26, 2015 (Tentative Overflow Dates)	NSGEU Office, Dartmouth	Metro A, B, & C	
	April 13 & 14, 2015	NSGEU Office, Truro	Cumberland/Colchester and Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough	
	April 20 & 21, 2015	NSGEU Office, Yarmouth	South Shore & Valley	
	May 5 & 6, 2015	NSGEU Office, Sydney	Cape Breton and Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough	
	May 25 & 26, 2015	Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville	South Shore & Valley	
Steward I	March 27 & 28, 2015	NSGEU Office, Dartmouth	Metro A, B, & C	Eligibility: Stewards with no prior training. Description: Introduction to roles and responsibilities of Steward. Introduction to grievance procedure and investigation.
	April 22 & 23, 2015	Best Western, Liverpool	South Shore & Valley	
	May 7 & 8, 2015	NSGEU Office, Sydney	Cape Breton and Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough	
Steward II	April 16 & 17, 2015	NSGEU Office, Dartmouth	Metro A, B, & C; Valley; Cumberland/Colchester; and South Shore	Eligibility: Stewards with 6 months experience at Level I. Description: In-depth grievance investigation. Tools for dealing with management. Expanded roles and responsibilities of the Steward.
	May 29 & 30, 2015	NSGEU Office, Sydney	Cape Breton and Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough	
Pre-Retirement	March 21, 2015	NSGEU Office, Dartmouth		Eligibility: Usually within 1-2 years of retirement. Description: Overview of pension politics in Nova Scotia. Presentation from CPP and your pension plan, i.e., NSAHO, PSSP, etc., retirement benefits. Benefit information varies according to location and Local members.
	April 25, 2015	Fire Hall Auditorium, 850 Grand Lake Road, Sydney		
	May 9, 2015	Cox 24, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, Truro		
Working Toward Bully-Free Workplaces	April 2, 2015	NSGEU Office, Dartmouth		Description: Six-hour interactive workshop that explores bullying issues in depth with small group activities; engages participants to help understand solutions to workplace bullying.

Michael Hawkins (Local 6) received a \$750 member bursary in the Spring to go towards his studies in Construction & Industrial Electrical at NSCC.

Here's what Mike had to say about being awarded an NSGEU member bursary:

"I work with the best people in the world and I am truly humbled by being awarded this gift. My goal of lifting my family (me and my kids) up beyond our struggles has been made easier because of this. I would like to thank you and let you know I will always remember where my membership has taken me and the power I have found from being part of it."

Thank you, Mike, for the valuable work you do. Good luck with your studies!



UNION THREADS

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



\$20.00



\$15.00



\$60.00



\$25.00



\$3.00



\$10.00

Our NSGEU umbrellas and long-sleeved shirts would make a great addition to your spring wardrobe!

NSGEU DISCOUNT LIST

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

ACCOMMODATION

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

10% discount on parts and labour

FLORIST

Gerry's Nursery
Centerville, Kings County
902-678-1255
10% discount

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

CLOTHING

Tandy Leather Factory
75 Akerley Blvd., Dartmouth
(902) 468-3071
M-F: 9 am - 6 pm & Sat 9 am - 4 pm
www.tandy-leather.ca
In store shopping only - 10% discount on regular retail prices, including leather. Does not include clearance items, or items in the monthly flyer.

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

HEALTH AND WELLNESS
Aromatherapy
Roberta Austen, Cert. Aromatherapist
The Advanced Wellness Centre, 7-1480
Carlton St., Halifax (902) 423-5922
15% discount

CAR SERVICE

M & B Transmission
5560 Cunard St., Halifax
(902) 453-4816 or 453-4817

FRAMING/PRINTING

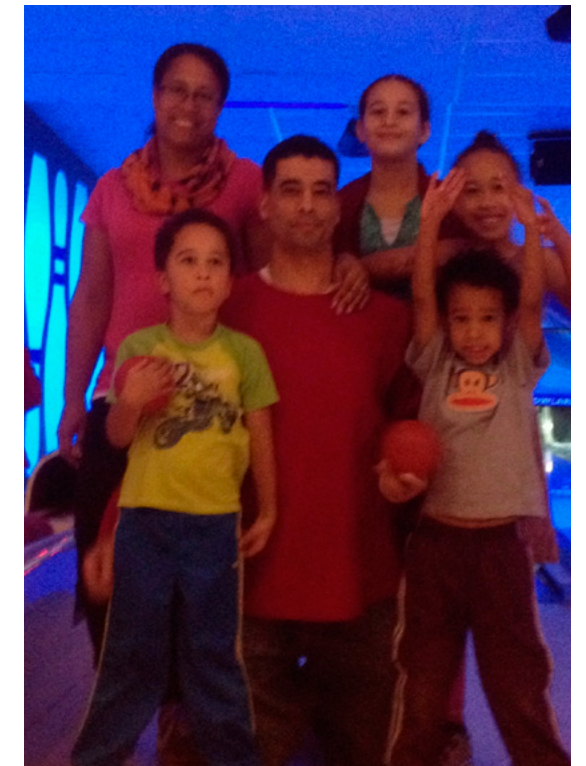
Atlantic Photo Supply
5505 Spring Garden Rd., Halifax
902-423-6724
atlanticphotosupply.com
10% discount on photo supplies (not including cameras or other equipment).
25 free 4X6 photos when you sign up for online print service.

DECORATING

Jennifer Allan Interiors
121 Illsley Ave., Dartmouth
(902) 832-2572 jenniferallaninteriors.ca
Offering with NSGEU ID at the time of pricing. Up to 50% off all custom blinds, receive an additional 10%.



Dustin Rioux, NSGEU's 3rd Vice President, attended the Coady Institute's Farewell Social on December 5th to meet Abu Brima, the 2014 NSGEU scholarship recipient.



Family out supporting the Metro B Family Bowl.



Tracey Fisk, Local 42, at the launch of the Ad-Hoc Health Care Committee's Mental Health Resource booklet.



Joan Jessome speaks at the launch of NSGEU's Mental Health Resource booklet.

Thousands of concerned citizens wrote to politicians in opposition of Bill 1. In their words, here's what they had to say about the legislation:



Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
255 John Savage Avenue, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3B 0J3
902.424.4063 | 1.877.556.7438 | nsgeu.ca | inquiry@nsgeu.ca
Publication Mail Number 40010698

CANADA	POSTES
POST	CANADA
Postage paid	Port payé
Publications Mail	Poste-publications
40010698	