

# THE NO-NC STAND

A PUBLICATION OF THE NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION

SUMMER 2021

A top-down view of a desk with a light pink background. On the left, a portion of a notebook with a white cover and a ruler is visible. In the center, the text 'Love Letters for Lab Workers' is written in a white, cursive font with a dark red outline. To the right, there are two pens: a gold one and a purple one. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional.

*Love Letters  
for Lab Workers*



### 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:



Dear members,

As we head into summer and slowly emerge from the pandemic, there is some optimism in the air – along with elections. Life is returning to “normal” as we are now in Stage 4 of the province’s reopening plan. With more Nova Scotians vaccinated and fewer COVID cases, our members who work on the front lines delivering public services are at less risk than they were just months before. Having said this, we remain vulnerable to variants of the virus and must be vigilant about our Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S). Please check to see if you have an OH&S Committee at work and ask when they had their last meeting. Every workplace with over five employees should have a committee and it should be meeting regularly.

I thank you and respect the role you have all played in bringing us through this last year-and-a-half. There have been lives lost - but not as many as there could have been if you all didn't step up and play your part. You have gone the extra mile – and now it is time to recharge. Unfortunately, this is not possible for all our members where there is understaffing, and it is difficult and sometimes impossible to get vacation time when you need it. This is not acceptable and not sustainable.

We have recently spoken up about the critical state of our Emergency Department at the Halifax Infirmary due to staffing shortages. The current staffing situation there is unsustainable. We know there are many other workplaces where our members work short, straining both mental and physical health. It is important that you contact your Employee Relations Officer and let us know if this is happening in your workplace. As your union, it is our job to support your voice in the workplace and to help you improve your working conditions. We have a stronger voice together.

With a provincial election underway and a federal one on the horizon, it is critical that you take time to assess your candidates and their platforms carefully. Public sector workers have carried us through the pandemic, and it is important to support a platform that will maintain and strengthen these services. NSGEU is non-partisan by Constitution, but we are directed to work against candidates who work against our membership. This means we have an obligation to point out areas where the candidates are working to privatize or cut public services, for example. We have a Political Action Committee that provides information on all the political parties platforms - so watch for information from our Committee.

It is busy these days at the union office. We have concluded bargaining for the lead health care bargaining unit. This first agreement in health care is the most difficult as it sets the stage for other bargaining units to come. The Civil Service Bargaining Committee (called the Union Bargaining Committee or UNC) have two dates for conciliation in mid-August. We are welcoming new members too! We have new Locals including High-Crest Sherbrooke Home for Special Care, Metro Transit Supervisors, and Richmond Municipal workers! (See page 18 for more on these locals.)

Don't forget to check out our education program and educational videos. Often invitations are sent out by email – so watch your inbox. I hope to see you at an NSGEU Education Course soon!

Have a great, safe, and restorative summer!

In solidarity,

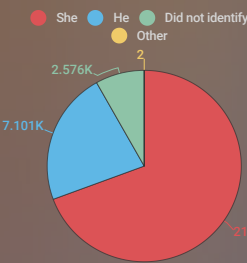
Jason MacLean, President NSGEU

## Meet your union!

The membership of the Nova Scotia Government & General Employees Union is incredibly diverse

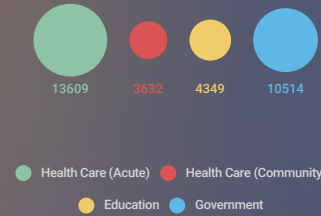
### Gender

Almost 70 per cent of NSGEU's membership identify as female. Our union has a very strong & active Women's Issues Committee to represent these members' issues.



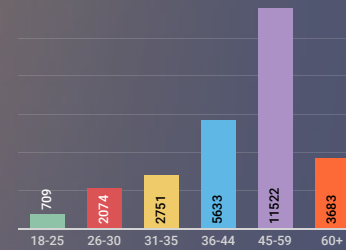
### Sectors

Our members work in a wide range of occupations, which fall under four main categories: Health Care (Acute), Health Care (Community), Government & Education.



### Ages

Our data shows that NSGEU members range in age from 18 to 60+ (some people did not disclose their age to us).

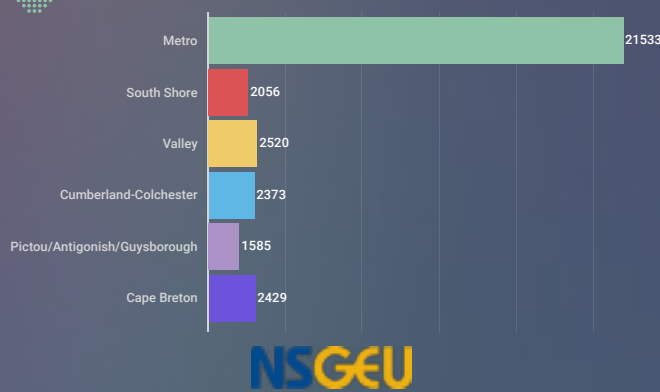


### Contracts

More than 60 full-time staff at the NSGEU help negotiate and service 87 separate collective agreements on behalf of our members.

### Where can you find us?

NSGEU members live & work in communities throughout the province: Metro HRM, Cumberland-Colchester, Cape Breton, Pictou Antigonish Guysborough, the Valley and South Shore.



## FEATURES

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## NSGEU TWEETS

Dal Faculty Assoc (@dalfacultyassoc)

If @DalhousieU had collaborated with the DFA, @NSGEU & @CUPE3912, the Fall term wouldn't be so stressful. Dal's Return to Campus Support Group meets Aug 11. It may be a safe place to share feelings, but DFA Members have a right to a safe place to work. #DFAisDal

The Rick Howe Show (@TheRickHoweShow)

Jason MacLean will join us to talk about the unprecedented nurse shortage as well as the three-year collective agreement reached by the NS Liberal government and the @NSGEU #therickhoweshow

Angela MacIvor (@AngMacIvorCBC)

Staffing shortages in NS is nothing new, especially in the summer. But @NSGEU and @NS\_nurses say it's worse than ever before due to covid <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-nurse-shortage-1.6104496>

YOUunified (@YOUunifiedca)

Thank you to the lab technologists, physiotherapists, social workers and mental health clinicians represented by the @NSGEU for all the work you do during these difficult times!

Catherine Montreuil (@cathymontreuil)

To NS Administrators, teachers, education staff, bus drivers, custodians, maintenance staff and RCE folks, thank you for this year and for holding onto your "why". So many kids and families are better for it! @PSAANS @nseducation @NSTeachersUnion @cupe @NSGEU @NovaScotiaUnion

## THE STAND

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



The Union Stand is proudly produced by NSGEU with the help of members of IAMAW Local 2797.





# Occupational Health & Safety, COVID-19, and the Third Wave

As we come out of a long and hard-fought 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of COVID-19 infections, we can reflect and remember some of the challenges we faced coming through it.

It was frustrating when on May 7<sup>th</sup>, we had to once again slam government and employers for not providing appropriate

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our home care members during this 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of the pandemic. We demanded they immediately provide N95 masks with fit tests for members who need them.

There is no excuse for our members not being properly

protected. We have been here before during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> waves and lessons were learned. Here was our press release: [https://nsgeu.ca/home\\_page/media-release-home-care-workers-being-denied-appropriate-ppe/23757/](https://nsgeu.ca/home_page/media-release-home-care-workers-being-denied-appropriate-ppe/23757/)

We had to repeat our call to allow workers who can work from home – to work from home – even though this was their own advice. You can find a copy of the letter here: <https://nsgeu.ca/uncategorized/nsgeu-calls-on-premier-to-allow-public-sector-workers-who-can-to-work-from-home/23740/>

Unfortunately, some employers did not follow recommendations and this did put workers at risk. In early May there was an exposure at the 811 office operated by Emergency Medical Care. One of our members was exposed at work and ended up in Intensive Care as a result. A family member was also exposed as a close contact. Our members answer the calls when you dial 811 - they could have been working from home. We advised our members to file a WCB claim if they tested positive and published a press release: <https://nsgeu.ca/media-releases/media-release-emci-government-fail-to-protect-811/23752/>

We called on the government to make frontline workers a priority in their vaccine rollout strategy once there was community spread. So, when numbers began to climb on May 6<sup>th</sup>, we called on government to change their approach and sent a letter to the Premier, Dr. Strang, and the Associate Deputy Minister for the

Department of Health & Wellness here: <https://nsgeu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Premier-Rankin-Dr.-Strang-Tracey-Barbrick-Vaccines-April-2021.pdf>

Throughout the pandemic, when we heard that members were not being diligent about their individual health &

safety, we reminded them of their strong role in OH&S. On May 14<sup>th</sup>, we sent this to all members: [https://nsgeu.ca/home\\_page/reminder-to-remain-vigilant-and-maintain-health-safety-protocols/23851/](https://nsgeu.ca/home_page/reminder-to-remain-vigilant-and-maintain-health-safety-protocols/23851/) This followed a message to our nurse members on May 11<sup>th</sup>: [https://nsgeu.ca/home\\_page/advocating-on-behalf-of-nurses/23818/](https://nsgeu.ca/home_page/advocating-on-behalf-of-nurses/23818/)

Our members who work for Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech, Local 20, were asked to continue doing home visits even as the numbers of positive cases hit an all-time high in the province. On May 13<sup>th</sup>, we sent a letter to the employer on our members' behalf and advised them of their right to refuse unsafe work. You can see the communication to members here: [https://nsgeu.ca/home\\_page/local-20-important-message-regarding-workplace-safety/23837/](https://nsgeu.ca/home_page/local-20-important-message-regarding-workplace-safety/23837/) and our letter to the employer here: <https://nsgeu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/hearing-and-speech-ns-masking-may-2021.pdf>

For our members who work for the Department of Community Services (DCS) as Case Aides, Social Workers, Youth Counsellors/Workers, and many others, the struggle for safe working conditions and COVID safe protocols was constant. Information from their

employer was slow and sometimes didn't come at all. PPE and OH&S safety protocols are unique in many of our members' workplaces in DCS and they require clear communication and enforcement from management. Unfortunately, our members have found that communication from the Employer has frequently been lacking and they have been left feeling unsupported and underinformed.

During the first wave, many Social Workers and Youth Workers were not supplied with adequate PPE. Now that we know so much more about the airborne transmission of the virus, OH&S safety protocols have grown in importance along with the use of PPE. Protocols like maintaining physical distance are an essential part of a safe working environment. There have been work refusals in some cases where adequate health and safety protocols have not been set up or maintained by management. In the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave, we were finally able to organize weekly meetings with Human Resources representatives from the DCS where we could address issues and concerns brought to us by the membership and discuss plans for solutions or improvements. There continues to be room for much improvement in OH&S in the DCS moving forward. We remain ready and willing to work to improve working conditions for our members.

Our members who work for the Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention Program (EIBI), conduct home visits with their clients. During this third wave of the pandemic this has become difficult to do safely for a variety of reasons including when clients have refused to wear masks. We sent a letter outlining our concerns to the employer and a communication to our members reminding them of their right to refuse unsafe work.

You can read it here: [https://nsgeu.ca/home\\_page/local-122-eibi-program-staff-important-message-regarding-home-visits/23835/](https://nsgeu.ca/home_page/local-122-eibi-program-staff-important-message-regarding-home-visits/23835/)

We also had one of our OH&S Officers face public criticism for their investigation into a tragic workplace death. We responded on behalf of all of our OH&S Officers and Investigators who do a professional job

and work hard to hold a fair investigation of a workplace fatality. You can read our response here: [https://nsgeu.ca/home\\_page/message-to-ohs-officers-and-investigators-from-president-maclean/23876/](https://nsgeu.ca/home_page/message-to-ohs-officers-and-investigators-from-president-maclean/23876/)

Over the past year, it has been clear that our Joint OH&S Committees should play an important role during these times. General OH&S guidelines can be discussed and customized at the Committee level depending on the specific work environments of the workers and their interactions with the public.

A safety committee plays an important role in the consultation and implementation of safety protections, equipment, and protocols in workplaces. Please make sure you have an OH&S Committee at your workplace and let the union know if you do not. You can ask your employer, your Steward, or your Local President if one exists at your workplace. If you do not have one, or if it hasn't met for over a year, you may benefit from some training on how a Committee should operate. You can request Committee training through the union: ask for NSGEU's Occupational Health & Safety Officer, Paul Cormier. •



## Some N.S. health-care workers still waiting for first dose of COVID-19 vaccine



Special vaccination clinics for health-care workers were abruptly shut down in early April

Press Release - CBC News, Posted May 25, 2021 6:00 AM AT | Last updated May 25



# Love Letters for Lab Workers

In mid-April, Nova Scotia experienced its third wave of COVID-19. This third wave brought with it the highest number of cases the province experienced throughout the pandemic. ICUs were quickly reaching capacity, and the acute care system was dangerously close to becoming overwhelmed.

To help get the situation under control, COVID testing efforts were ramped up exponentially. Nova Scotians came out in droves to get tested.

This shift in strategy meant that our members working in the lab at the Mackenzie building suddenly needed to process huge numbers of COVID tests -- and quickly, because many people were stuck in self-isolation until they received their negative test results.

Our members stepped up in a huge way.

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed. Martha Paynter, a registered nurse, advocate, and doctoral candidate in nursing at Dalhousie University, mused on Twitter that lab workers deserved recognition for the work they've done throughout the pandemic.

"Working behind the scenes, they do not get their photos in the news every day, even if their work is what is on everyone's minds and what everyone is talking about," Paynter said in an interview with The Halifax Examiner, "As a nurse, I'm grateful — and reliant on — lab technicians' expertise. So I just wanted to thank them, and encourage the community to do the same."

We agreed. The NSGEU quickly launched the "Love Letters for Lab Workers" campaign as a way to acknowledge the "unprecedented" number of COVID-19 tests being processed by lab workers on a daily basis, in addition to their regular testing work. We asked Nova Scotians to send their messages of appreciation in to our lab workers. And they did -- in droves. We received hundreds of submissions of heartfelt appreciation. Here are just a few of them:

As a retired nurse, I know how hard you must be working for the good of us all. This dedication to your job means so much. We would be lost without you so I want to thank each and every one of you for all the long hours you have put in.

Thank-you , thank-you, thank-you.

Thank you for your dedication and tireless efforts to keep on top of testing in our province. God bless you and keep you safe.

There are no words to say how much you are appreciated and loved for all that you are and have been doing throughout these crazy ,scary days of Covid.

From the crew of Bluenose II, THANK YOU for all you do! We appreciate your hard work and commitment to keeping Nova Scotians safe.

Thank you for everything you do each and every day! Keep up the fantastic work. Just want to send a short quick shout out to all you hard tired workers. Without you we wouldn't be able to move forward :). Thank you

Thank you guys for what you do. Lab staff are not nearly recognized enough for the important roles you play everyday. From another healthcare worker, you guys are the real MVP's!

Thank you for all your hard work. A retired health care worker myself, I have many friends and relatives in the labs of NS. You are a huge part of the team fighting this awful disease!

Thank you for doing such important work during this pandemic. And also in non-pandemic times. Your dedication is much appreciated.

You are all Super Heroes. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. I pray things will slow down and the pressure you are under will ease up. Be well and stay safe.

Thank you for the hours & hours of extra shifts I'm sure you have put in. You truly are saving lives. I'm not sure where we would be without your dedication. •

To the lab workers processing and analyzing COVID tests: thank you so much. Your time and expertise is greatly appreciated during these trying times.

Your work is literally keeping people alive. It must be exhausting for you to keep this pace up day after day, week after week. Just know that the vast majority of Nova Scotians feel an incredible debt of gratitude to you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.





# Health Care Bargaining

In early July, health care workers represented by the Health Care Council of Unions (NSGEU, CUPE & Unifor) voted to accept a tentative agreement put forward by their bargaining committee for acceptance.

That contract, which is effective from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, includes a variety of improvements, including:

- A 5.5% wage increase for all pay grades (1.5% effective Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 1.5% effective Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 1.5% effective Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and 1% effective the final day of the agreement, Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023);
- Additional wage increases for Care Team Assistants (CTAs), amounting to 2% on date of ratification and 3% on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022;
- Matching acute care paramedics' rates of pay to those of IOUE retroactive to Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020;
- And the creation of a joint Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Reconciliation Committee, composed of equal representation from employers and the unions.

This new agreement did not come to the Council easily. An enormous amount of work went into developing bargaining proposals in advance of negotiations, which began in April 2021.

Those negotiations were interrupted by the third wave of COVID lockdown, and at that point, employer representatives began to delay the Council's efforts to the return to the bargaining table. Ultimately, the Council filed for conciliation, and when we were unable to reach an agreement at the end of the final scheduled day of conciliation, the unions' began conducting a strike vote and started a public campaign, pointing out that Nova Scotia's health

care workers had lost their place as "leading in Atlantic Canada," thanks to the past seven years of austerity measures by the provincial Liberal government.

With a provincial election looming, this created an enormous amount of pressure. Two days after conciliation talks broke off, the employer and government reached out to the Council, asking them to return to the table. With the assistance of a Conciliation Officer and two additional days of talks, the employer finally presented the Council with an offer they were comfortable recommending to the membership for acceptance.

"We know that health care workers are dedicated to their jobs, and they have stepped up for Nova Scotians in a very big way throughout this pandemic," said NSGEU President Jason MacLean, "We are pleased we were ultimately able to negotiate an agreement that begins to get them back on track to where they need to be: leading in Atlantic Canada."

The bargaining committee and NSGEU staff appreciate the patience and support shown by all health care members during this round of bargaining, as it was instrumental in reaching a new collective agreement. •



# Dalhousie Labour Tigers Rise

By standing together, Dalhousie University Support Staff, Local 77/Local 92-77 was able to reach an agreement that maintains and improves their pensions over time.

Heading into this round of bargaining, Dalhousie initially tried to scare members into accepting concessions in their collective agreement by claiming enrollment would be down significantly because of COVID. Dalhousie

also wanted to use the CPP enhancements to their own benefit at the expense of our members. However, the Bargaining Committee knew the university experienced a record year of enrollment in 2020/2021. Dalhousie, in fact, has a balanced budget with millions of dollars in reserves from previous years' surpluses. As well, the provincial government provided Dalhousie with \$9.5 million in extra funding to address COVID-related

expenses. So, although the employer did not want to move from their position, which would have negatively impacted our members' pensions. In the end, to reach an agreement and avoid a strike— they did just that.

Bargaining was tough. At times, a strike seemed imminent. Members organized a phone bank and, in the hours leading up to the strike, they were in the process of activating the Steward network and organizing Picket Captains. But, because the Bargaining Committee was creative and open to alternatives, they were able to reach an agreement that improves their pension over the years to come.

This agreement was hard fought at the bargaining table. The threat of a strike was real and palpable. That strength gave the bargaining committee power at the table and resulted in the best agreement possible. Thank you to the Bargaining Committee for their strength and knowledge of their collective agreement: Pauline Fraser, John Kyle, Cherilyn MacIntosh, Tammy Zinck, and Cheryl Paris. Staff who supported and helped to lead the team were: Darryl Warren, Chief Negotiator, our former Executive Director Robin MacLean who provided wise leadership through negotiations and Lori Smith, our Education/Organizing Officer who was working to prepare the local for a strike if it came to that. It was a difficult round of bargaining, but we did it! •



**A message to Dalhousie Administration:**

**PAWS  
OFF OUR  
PENSION!**

**Help protect staff retirement security.  
Send a message of support at [www.nsgeu.ca](http://www.nsgeu.ca)**

**NSGEU**



# Political Update

Following a four week Spring session of the Nova Scotia Legislature and with declining COVID-19 cases, it appeared as Nova Scotia was on its way to a spring election. With the general perception of Nova Scotians being pleased with government's handling of the pandemic it seemed as though the Nova Scotian Liberal Party may have very well been on their way to a third straight majority.

However, in mid April COVID numbers began to climb and by the end of the month Nova Scotia was in the depth of the third wave lockdown. Election plans had to be slowed as government had to focus on beating back this third wave. It was a tough three months, but with the hard of health care and public servants across Nova Scotia, numbers receded and by June, Nova Scotia had turned a corner.

Following a few weeks of strategic announcements Premier Iain Rankin called a provincial election on Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup> for Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

Over the coming weeks political leaders will crisscross the province making their pitches as to why you should vote for them. This is a very important time for all NSGEU members to listen to what is being promised and to ask those seeking your vote where they stand on issues important to you, your families and your community.

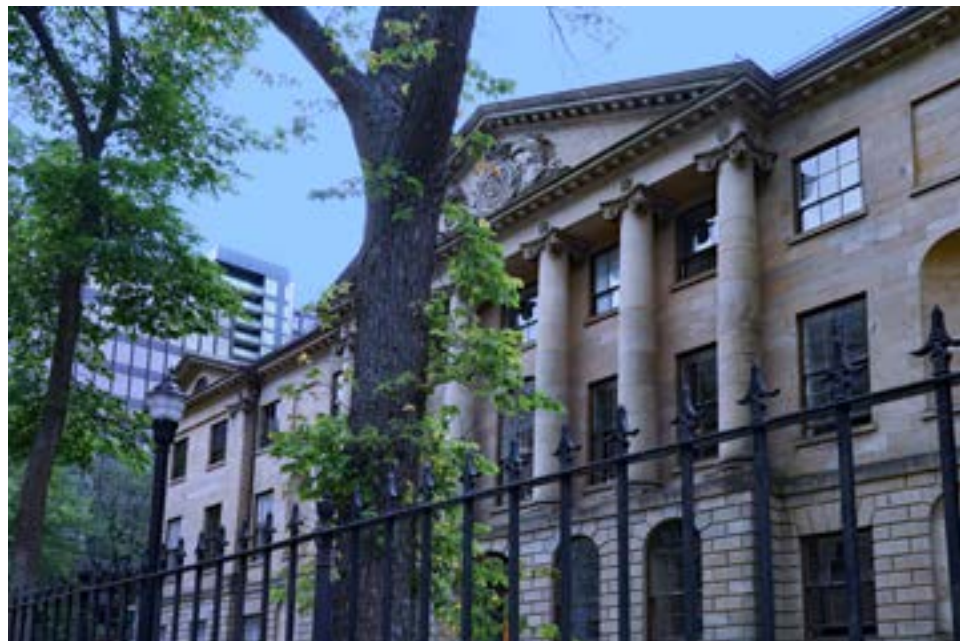
It easy to forget that what takes place in the Legislature ultimately affects all NSGEU members. This is why it is so important for each and every one of you to vote in this election. Get to know who is running in your constituency, what they stand for as individuals. But, just as importantly, get familiar with the platforms of each of the parties, because regardless of how nice a candidate is as an individual, it's the party platform and leader that dictates government action over the next four years.

The NSGEU has dealt with numerous different governments. Some were good, some were okay and

some were bad. It's only during an election that the people have power and this is why it is so important to understand what politicians really mean in their platforms. When you listen to the daily commitments during an election remember to ask yourself how these actions could possibly impact you and your family. Are their parties talking about budget reductions? Ask them how they plan to pay for services. Are parties talking about reducing taxes? How will they make up revenue shortfalls to pay for the services Nova Scotians depend on? And when it comes to anyone talking about privatization, remember that this is a direct threat to all public servants.

The NSGEU and the Political Action Committee PAC has sent a questionnaire to each of the parties asking for each party's take on issues important to NSGEU members and Nova Scotians. During the week of August 9th, we will be posting the answers we receive from each of the leaders and will share the information with you.

This election will define the future of Nova Scotia. It is the middle of summer and for all of us, its hard to focus on the daily issues, especially after the last 18 months, but voting is easy. Check out the Elections Nova Scotia website for safe, early voting option, especially if you may be away on Election Day – <https://electionsnovascotia.ca/41ProvincialGeneralElection>.



# NSGEU Education Profile

If you take any NSGEU Education Courses, you may be lucky enough to have one of our many Facilitators who help with your course. We are profiling a few of these incredible people in upcoming issues of The Stand.

## Facilitator Profile: Kim Manthorne, Local 6

Kim has 27 years of experience working in the Department of Community Services. This includes 16 years where she supported people with mental illness out in the community and 11 years as a family support worker with Child Protection.

Kim has been involved with the union her whole working life and became more active after 2009 when she was appointed to the Women's Issues Committee. She served on the Committee for two terms and was inspired and empowered by all the things they were able to accomplish. This includes starting the NSGEU Cancer Support Fund. This Fund provides support for members who have been diagnosed with cancer themselves or have a family member who has been diagnosed with cancer. For information about this fund, click here.

Kim's love of adult education, learning, and meeting new people, has driven her to teach and play leadership roles throughout her life. For the past 25 years she has consistently been in roles where she teaches life skills, including first aid. She began facilitating with the NSGEU in 2016 at Weeklong School. Kim studies adult education, which involves drawing from the experience and knowledge that exists in people who are in the room participating in the course. The goal of the educational experience, she says, is to have the participants develop confidence and knowledge.

She's looking forward to teaching an upcoming course, new to the NSGEU, called "Mental Health: Challenging Stigma in the Workplace." It is about mental health



challenges in the workplace and is taking place in Bridgewater in October. She also will be facilitating a Steward Orientation workshop. She is curious to see how everyone feels as they come together for the first time in over a year and is thinking that it may vary from individual to individual depending on comfort level.

Little known fact about Kim is that she roller skates and is in a roller derby club, the Anchor City Rollers. Her derby name is Kim Reaper and when she referees it is Reffy Schtuff.

For Kim, learning and sharing stories in an educational environment is fun - and she is all about the fun. Kim lives in Dartmouth with her partner and two kids. •

# Education 2021/2022

## New Courses

### NSGEU 101 (ONLINE) September 2021

- Any member in good standing can register

In this online workshop, members will learn the history of NSGEU, how NSGEU is structured, and why NSGEU and other unions exist.

### Steward Orientation (ONLINE) September 2021

- Must be a Local Steward

In this online workshop, Stewards will better understand their role as Educators, Grievance Handlers, Communicators, Leaders, Organizers and Activists. Tools are provided to assist Stewards in supporting local members.

### Workers in Transition (.5 day) (Chief Stewards will receive invitations via email)

- Must be a Chief Steward

In this ½ day course, Chief Stewards will better understand the role we all play to better protect the rights of our trans members and ensure they have the support they need in our workplaces, in our unions and in our communities.

### Taking Action on Racism (.5 day) (Chief Stewards will receive invitations via email)

- Must be a Chief Steward

This ½ day course will raise awareness of the issue of racism and includes possible actions members can take at the local level to build a stronger, anti-racist and more inclusive union.

### Mental Health: Challenging Stigma in the Workplace (1.5 days) (Members will receive invitations via email)

- Must be a Local Steward or Local Officer

This introductory course explores mental health, mental health concerns, and stigma in the workplace. Some of the topics covered in this course include: demystifying mental health; individual, union, and employer responsibilities; member-to-member issues; and some strategies to challenge stigma and build inclusion.

## Short Local Delivered Courses

Local Executive Officers can print the required documents or request copies from NSGEU Education by emailing [nsgeueducation@nsgeu.ca](mailto:nsgeueducation@nsgeu.ca) with a minimum of two weeks notice. The documents can be mailed or picked up at the NSGEU in Burnside.

Short courses can be found on the website in the executive portal. If you need assistance accessing the executive portal, please contact NSGEU.

### Time Management: Finding Time for the Important Things

Participants will: review some basic principles of time management, set goals and priorities and find time in their schedules for their goals and priorities

### Facing the Employer

Participants will build their confidence in facing management, identify common issues and management tactics when challenged and strategize for meetings with management

### Effective One on One Communications

Participants will choose the most effective mechanism for communicating each message to their members, use non-verbal communication skills effectively, recognize the non-verbal message when others are speaking, match how they are saying something with the message they are conveying and write and deliver an effective message.

### Public Speaking

Participants will build confidence in speaking publicly, practice body language and vocal delivery and practice giving an impromptu speech using the "5 Magic Phrases" technique.

## Ongoing Education

### Workplace Mapping

There will be ongoing training with Local Presidents on Building Local Steward Networks through Workplace Mapping.

Workplace Mapping is the process of obtaining accurate and relevant information about where, and who, the local members are. It can form the basis of most successful union activity, including recruiting, communications, developing activists and campaigning around issues. Developing strong local steward networks is the goal!

**Steward Orientation (Online)** • Must be a Local Steward (Members will receive invitations via email)

In this interactive online workshop, Stewards discuss their role as Educators, Grievance Handlers, Communicators, Leaders, Organizers and Activists. Tools are provided to assist Stewards in supporting local members.

**Dealing with Workplace Conflict (1.5 days)** (Members will receive invitations via email)

- Must be a Local Steward or Local Executive Officer

In this one-and-a-half (1.5) day workshop, we will define and analyse conflict and look at the range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. We will also look at mediation and its role in conflict resolution. Any steward or local executive officer that has not previously attended this workshop is eligible to attend.

**Domestic Violence: Why is it a Workplace Issue?** (.5 day) (Locals who have not yet attended will be contacted via email)

This will be offered via Zoom to Chief Stewards (or an Executive Officer if Chief Steward is unavailable) who were unable to attend in 2020

- In this ½ day course, Chief Stewards will learn about the impact of intimate partner violence in the workplace. Chief Stewards will be provided tools to support members who experience Intimate Partner Violence in the Workplace.

President, Steward, Secretary and Treasurer Toolkits will be updated with Domestic Violence: Why is it a Workplace Issue? resources.



## Additional Resources

A new Bargaining Guide Supplement will be available along with Running Effective Local Meetings, Effective Local Elections, Rules of Order, Workplace Mapping. Toolkits for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Steward will be regularly updated.

All Toolkits and Supplements can be found in the executive portal on the NSGEU website and here: <https://nsgeu.ca/education-3-2/stewards-resources/>

Educational videos, including an introduction to the NSGEU and short introductions to Local Executive roles as well as one on Labour/ Management Committees, and Rules of Order available on the NSGEU website here: <https://nsgeu.ca/education-videos/>

Local Officer Training - Local Officers will be sent invitations via email. Next training will be in early -fall 2021.

Domestic Violence-Why is it a Workplace Issue? Resources can be found in the executive portal and on the main web page here: <https://nsgeu.ca/education-3-2/stewards-resources/>

Pre-Retirement Seminars, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Training, Executive, Regional and Occupational Council and Board training are ongoing.

Please visit the new member library off of the Solarium in the member office area in the Main NSGEU office in Dartmouth. These books include children's books, so take some time to go discover what we have there. •

## Labour School 2022

In the New Year, all members will receive an email inviting them to apply to attend Labour School 2022.

Planned courses will be in Communications, Advanced Steward, Leadership, Mobilizing through the Generations and a new course, Political Action.



# NSGEU Staffing Changes

As staff members retire, new staff have been hired or have changed positions alongside a few organizational shifts to improve service. Here are some of the most recent changes to staffing at the NSGEU:

**Robin MacLean**, our Executive Director, has retired after 21 years at the NSGEU representing and negotiating for improved working conditions for members. We are pleased to announce the Board of Directors has ratified **Shawn Fuller**, formerly the Director of Negotiations and Servicing, to this position. Shawn has worked for the NSGEU for 12 years and has served the membership as an Employee Relations Officer (ERO) and Service Coordinator in both Health Care and Government sides of the union. As a lead negotiator, Shawn has effectively guided some of the largest and smallest locals through some of our most difficult negotiations.

**Bruce Thomson**, Director of Administrative and Financial Services, has retired after 18 years on the job, providing solid and dedicated financial and organizational leadership and support to the NSGEU Executive.

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the confirmation of **Julie MacDougall** as our new Director of Administrative and Financial Services. Julie steps into this position seamlessly with her organizational knowledge and skills. She has served as our accountant for 25 years and has been responsible for establishing and maintaining many of our organizational processes that keep things running smoothly.

**John Cook**, ERO and youth worker, has retired. John was known for his tireless advocacy and his hard work was much appreciated by the membership.

Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director, **Vicki Walsh**, has retired. Vicki has one of the longest histories with the NSGEU beginning in 1987, when she came to us from the School of Nursing at the VG when our offices were in the Young St. Tower at Robie and Young

streets in Halifax. Her skills and service will be missed personally and organizationally. We are pleased to announce **Kim Clarke**, who was most recently working in the Education Department, will be replacing Vicki as the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. Kim worked as an Administrative Assistant at the IWK for 22 years and has been with us at the NSGEU since 2017.

Administrative Professionals **Angela Fitzgerald** and **Leslie Long** have retired. Leslie came to work at the NSGEU from the Department of Justice in 2009 and Angela started at the NSGEU in 2013. Both Angela and Leslie brought great skills and dedication to serving the membership through the years.

**Colin Sutton** is the successful candidate for a vacant ERO position. Colin comes from Saint Mary's University and had many years of activism with the Union as President of his local and Board member. He began at the NSGEU in the Resource Centre in 2019.

**JoAnn Bailey**, Director, Negotiations and Servicing has retired. JoAnn has been with the NSGEU since 2004 when she was first hired as a Researcher. She went on to become an ERO, a Servicing Coordinator and then the Director.

A Servicing Coordinator position was created for the Community Care sector (Long-term care, Group Homes, Home Care, and non-profit) in order to improve support and service to the membership. **Jim Gosse** was the successful applicant for this position. Jim has a background as a Correctional Officer and has been working for the NSGEU as an ERO since 2010.

The Health Care Servicing Coordinator position is now vacant as **Lynette Johnson** has just been ratified by the Board of Directors as our new Director of Negotiations and Servicing. Lynette's background is in health care as a Medical Laboratory Technologist where she worked at the VG in 1991. She was hired as an ERO in 2008 and has been Health Care Coordinator since 2019.



Her sharp mind and strong background in health care has been a core strength during our health care negotiations. She brings her experience, knowledge, skill to her new position as Director.

**Nicole McKim** has been confirmed as a Servicing Coordinator. Nicole has been an Employee Relations Officer since 2011 and brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her new role.

We welcome **Dawn Lohnes**, who was the successful applicant for our Financial Services Coordinator position. Dawn's background is with Financial Services in the Civil Service and she has been with the NSGEU a little over five years.

**Kim Jenkins** was hired last year as an Administrative Professional. She has 23 years in health care administration.

**Juliana Mullen** is our new Membership Records Supervisor. Juliana began at the NSGEU as a

Membership Records Clerk over four years ago and came to us with an Administrative Professional from the South Shore Regional Centre for Education.

**Stephanie Howell** is our new Resource Centre Supervisor. Stephanie has been with the NSGEU for 10 years beginning as a Labour Resource Representative. She came to us from the group home sector where she worked as a Group Home Counsellor.

**Cynthia Black** from Local 81, Mount St. Vincent University, has just been ratified by the Board of Directors as a new Administrative Professional.

**Didar Nanakaly** has just been ratified into a term position as our Technical Systems and User Support Analyst and is replacing Steven Smith who is on paternity leave until March 2022.

Thank you to all for your years of service, and congratulations! •

## Robin MacLean – outgoing NSGEU Executive Director

Robin MacLean has been a modest, kind, and quiet force of resilience and solidarity in the labour movement – a woman, mother, activist, trade unionist, negotiator, strategist, manager and mentor. She has her Masters in History and her Bachelor of Law and has dedicated her working life to fighting for workers and making a difference in their lives on an individual and collective level. We have been fortunate to have her working here at the NSGEU since 1999. We were very pleased the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour voted her Sister of the Year in 2020.

Robin's experience with the NSGEU began after taking a job with the Workers' Compensation Board. She became an active member in her local as a Shop Steward in 1995 and a member of the Bargaining Committee. She represented workers who were experiencing difficulty with WCB through the Office

of the Workers' Counsellor and also worked as a policy analyst with the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour.

In 1999, Robin was hired as an Employee Relations Officer (ERO) at the NSGEU. She fearlessly defended the members' collective agreement rights and

negotiated contracts on their behalf, including advancing issues of pay equity, among other improvements at the bargaining table. In the fall of 2014, after moving from ERO to serving as Director of Negotiations and Servicing, Robin was hired as our Executive Director.

Robin has been part of the glue that holds the trade union movement together. She is not

flashy. She does not demand to be seen or heard. But she has worked tirelessly behind the scenes and has been a voice of solidarity, strength and determination when times got tough. She has been the voice at the table who speaks to the reasons for working together





towards a collective goal when all things seem to be breaking apart. She has kept our 'eyes on the prize' – and has helped us organize for better working conditions and justice for all.

Robin's open-door policy as Executive Director created an atmosphere of dialogue, respect, and support at the office. This was a reflection of her approach to the membership and to trade unionism. She provides calm guidance to all who seek her out – often about bargaining advice, or advice about interpreting

a collective agreement. In this way, through her actions and the ease by which she shares her years of experience and knowledge, she has been a mentor for many.

We want to thank her for her years of service and thank her family, John, Ian & Thomas, for supporting her through them. Her NSGEU family wishes her and her family well. We will miss you! •



# Scholarships & Bursaries

## Member's Dependent Scholarships

- \$1,500 Joan Jessome Scholarship: Laura Hickman (Kathleen Lewis, Local 6)
- \$1,000: Lawrence Rhodenizer (Bruce Rhodenizer, Local 5)
- \$1,000: Abigail Cameron (Beth Cameron, Local 6)
- \$1,000: Reece Ronan (Amanda Ronan, Local 195)
- \$1,000: Daniel McVicar (Maureen McVicar, Local 100)

## Member Bursaries

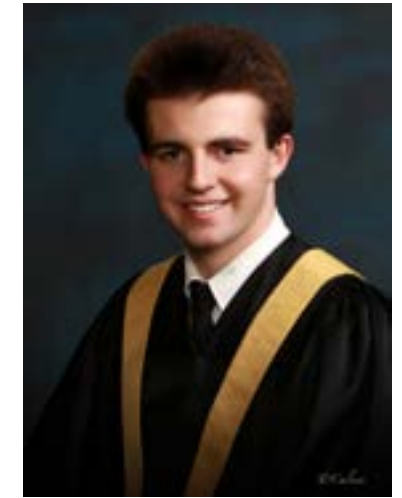
- \$1,000 Award: Sawsan Hasan, Local 423
- \$1,000 Award: Kadeshia Colley, Local 119
- \$1,000 Award: Kelly Luedee, Local 119
- \$1,000 Award: Andrea Shannon, Local 7
- \$1,000 Award: Maira Lourdes MacKinnon, Local 66
- \$1,000 Award: Maria Leonardo, Local 101
- \$1,000 Award: Tracy Anderson, Local 470A
- \$1,000 Linda Sirota Memorial Award: Bib Anthony Mahilum, Local 101
- \$1,000 Cheryl Morton Memorial Award: Jonathan Mansvelt, Local 423
- \$1,000 John Mortimer Memorial Award: Joshua Chapman, Local 3
- \$1,000 Award: Kristie Greeno, Local 423/122
- \$1,000 Award: Sueann Syms, Local 103
- \$1,000 Award: Rachel Feltmate, Local 101
- \$1,000 Award: Claire Lederman, Local 122



Abigail Cameron



Josh Chapman



Daniel McVicar



Rachel Feltmate



Jonathan Mansvelt



Kristie Greeno



Claire Lederman



Maira MacKinnon



Ronan Reece



# WELCOME!

## New Locals

### Local 78A – Student Transportation Canada

We are very pleased to announce and welcome our new members who are joining us from Student Transportation Canada. Many of these new members were members of ours before when they worked for Stock Transportation. We are seeking bargaining dates to begin negotiations for their first contract. Local Officer training is being organized through NSGEU Education. Welcome!

### Local 131 - High-Crest Sherbrooke Home for Special Care

We would like to welcome our new members at High-Crest Sherbrooke. It is a 39-bed facility designed for residents who require around-the-clock nursing care. Their first Local meeting they elected their first full executive.

### Local 107 - Supervisors at Halifax Transit

The 60 Supervisory employees of Halifax Transit voted overwhelmingly to join NSGEU.

The new classifications are Fleet Supervisors, Dispatch Supervisors, Mobile Supervisors, Supervisor Transit Network, Supervisor Customer Support and Engagement, Supervisor of Design, Supervisor of Technical Services and Supervisor of Scheduling and Service Planning.

### Local 161 - The Municipality of the County of Richmond

The 25 employees of The Municipality of the County of Richmond voted unanimously to join the NSGEU.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond provides citizens with libraries, parks, water systems, local policing, fire departments and roadways and is responsible for levying property taxes and enacting land-use bylaws.

These new members perform duties related to the operation of the Municipality of the County of Richmond in administration, public works, recreation (including the operation of the Arena) and finance.

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



# NSGEUwear

Our online order form is live:

<https://bit.ly/2Rf5Di5>

We now have two payment options available:

1. By cheque: make out a cheque to NSGEU and mail it to:  
NSGEUwear  
255 John Savage Avenue  
Dartmouth, NS B3B 0J3
2. By e-transfer: send an e-transfer to [orders@nsgeu.ca](mailto:orders@nsgeu.ca)

Be sure to put your name and the date in the e-transfer notes section. Your order will be mailed as soon as the payment is received.

Please Note: After you fill in the shipping information, click on the Next button to review your order. Then click on the Pay by Cheque button, even if you are paying by e-transfer, in order to complete the order process.



Hoodie - \$20.00  
Ladies & Unisex sizes  
Royal Blue, Black, Navy, Red,  
White, Yellow, Grey



### In memory of Megan Milner, Local 3

Members of Local 3 Executive, Civil Service – Cumberland/Colchester Region, placed a bench at the “Off Leash East Hants Society” dog park in Elmsdale in memory of Megan Milner who was their Secretary-Treasurer at the time of her passing on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.



Local 3 Executive Committee: Michelle Stonehouse, President; Michele Davidson, Vice-President; Nicole Turple, Secretary; Cheryl McPhee, Treasurer







Halifax Pride believes that one of the best ways we can support our 2SLGBTQ+ community at this time of uncertainty is to deliver a safe and accessible festival. After hosting the 2020 festival with both in-person and online events, we are confident in our ability to adapt and adhere to current public health guidelines while still bringing you unforgettable events and experiences.

Go to <https://www.halifaxpride.com/info-2021> for more info.



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