

2019 NSGEU CONVENTION



MEET YOUR NEWLY ELECTED NSGEU PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL!

THE NO-ON STAND

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

SUMMER 2019



President MacLean speaks to members at NSGEU Convention in May.

Dear members,

We have emerged from Convention 2019 United and Strong, with renewed inspiration to protect and strengthen public services and the valuable work our members do from one end of the province to the other. Convention delegates set the direction for the union and debated important issues for all Nova Scotians including: protecting public health care, the need for increased mental health services, strengthening domestic violence leave provisions, health care staffing shortages, and banning for-profit-plasma.

I was honoured and proud to be elected by delegates to lead this incredible union of working people for the next three years. I am thrilled to be joined by 1st VP, Sandra Mullen, 2nd VP, Kim Jenkins, 3rd VP, Tammy Gillis, and Secretary-Treasurer, Darren McPhee. I want to thank all those who ran in these elections and all those who supported them. This is what democracy looks like, and we are all better for it.

Convention 2019 was difficult, with the sudden death of a staff member and friend, Dave Lawrence. But it also was a productive and a powerful example of what is possible when people come together with a focused determination to create an action plan for the next three years.

The months following Convention are a really exciting time for the NSGEU. Every Local must hold a meeting and conduct elections for their leadership. Members who attend this important meeting will elect Stewards, Health & Safety Representatives (where required), Local Executives, and Regional & Occupational

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:

 [facebook.com/NSGEU](https://www.facebook.com/NSGEU)

 [@NSGEU](https://twitter.com/NSGEU) [@JMACL3AN](https://twitter.com/JMACL3AN)

Representatives. If you haven't done so, please consider putting yourself forward for election. Don't worry if you haven't held a position before: we have Local Officer training and we have staff who are ready to help. If you do make it to our training courses, I will most likely will see you there.

It all starts with your Local meetings. If you have any questions about how to find them or who your local president is, please contact us – our staff can help—many of them were once members just like you.

Spring/summer is a busy time as many of our members are in negotiations for new contracts. We are also watching the changes announced to school transportation services by government closely to ensure our members are treated fairly in the event of a transition to another provider. They do an incredible job transporting students to and from school safely and their successor rights must be respected.

I look forward to the Pride celebrations happening in different communities through the months of July and August. Thank you to the members of our NSGEU Human Rights Committee who help to organize our presence in Pride Parades in Truro, Yarmouth, Cape Breton, and the HRM. I hope you see you at some of these events over the summer.

Wishing you and your families a happy summer.

In solidarity,

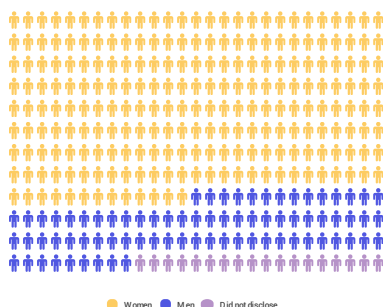
Jason MacLean, President NSGEU

NSGEU's 1st VP Sandra Mullen accepted the Community Spirit Award from the United Way on behalf of the NSGEU Women's Committee. The committee organized a successful first-ever in Nova Scotia, Tampon Tuesday campaign to make tampons available in washrooms throughout HRM.

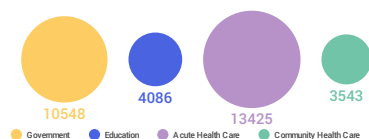


NSGEU

The largest public sector union in Nova Scotia, we represent 31,602 working women and men:



They work in four main sectors: Government, Education, Acute Health Care & Community Health Care



81
The # of collective agreements NSGEU services on behalf of its membership

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



● Metro (A, B & C): 20753 ● Cumberland Colchester: 2372 ● Cape Breton: 2342
● P.A.G.: 1616 ● Valley: 2362 ● South Shore: 2158

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NSGEU TWEETS

Paul Finch @paulgfinch

Congrats to @NSGEU President @JMACL3AN on a well deserved re-election win this morning! Looking forward to continuing our work together with @bcgeu President @steph_smith303 on the @2019NUPGE National Executive Board #canlab #nsgeu2019

Mayworks Halifax @MayworksHalifax

Sébastien Labelle, Festival Director of the Mayworks Halifax Festival of Working People & the Arts, joins Mary Otto on @NSGEU's "Union Matters" podcast to talk about the 10th Annual @MayworksHalifax Festival

NSGEU @NSGEU

Happy Nurses week! National Nursing week is from May 6th to 12th. We appreciate your dedication to the people of Nova Scotia.

NSGEU @NSGEU

A Much Deserved Thank-you to Educational Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Aide-enseignant(e)s (Teacher Aids.) For more info: <https://bit.ly/2UQE5eY>

NSGEU @NSGEU

On April 19th the NSGEU turns 61! This year our birthday falls on the Good Friday holiday, so today we had an early celebration. Big thanks to Tammy Young and Jason MacLean for organizing the festivities! #NSGEUday

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



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

NSGEU



Convention 2019 Highlights

Convention 2019 was an exciting place to be from May 9th to 11th. Half of the voting delegates (approximately 170 members) were at Convention for the very first time and brought an incredible amount of energy with them! Our first session was for these new delegates and President Jason MacLean and Education Officer Lori Smith explained the rules of order and answered questions.

Convention was opened with a song and dance from Brittany & Courtney Pennell, members of the Mi'kmaq First Nation from Acadia Band. The 33-year-old twin sisters have been singing and dancing for 28 years. On Wednesday evening, Convention delegates debated Constitutional resolutions. These are resolutions that would affect the terms that govern our organization as a whole and require a vote of 66.6% of delegates to pass.



A total of 16 amendments were presented and debated, with six carried. There was healthy debate surrounding a proposed amendment to simplify the process of placing a Local under supervision, if members of the Local Executive have engaged in financial irregularities or adopt measures which undermine policies of the Union. It was ultimately defeated. Another contentious amendment dealt with updating and simplifying provisions dealing with offenses against the union. After spirited debate, this amendment was carried.

On Thursday, Convention delegates began the day with a performance and talk about tolerance and acceptance by the Bhangra Dancers of Halifax. This was followed by President Jason MacLean's Report video which covered the highlights of the union's activities over the last three years. You can watch it here:

<https://bit.ly/2MT5JJx>. Robin MacLean, NSGEU's Executive Director, presented her report and explained that since the Civil Service interest arbitration award of 2017, the NSGEU has managed to break the logjam

that existed in Nova Scotia's public sector negotiations. She stressed that we were only successful due to the tenacity of our bargaining committees and encouraged delegates to try to sit on a bargaining committee in their locals at least once.

During the afternoon, a wide range of Committee reports and resolutions put forward by the Resolutions Committee were debated. There was much discussion in support of a resolution to implement the recommendations of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Working Group on domestic violence and

provide ten days paid domestic violence leave as a basic minimum labour standard. Another related resolution was debated to continue to develop education on domestic violence, develop a resource list of domestic violence supports to provide to members, staff and publicly, on our website. Both of these resolutions

were carried. That evening, members of the Choirs for Change Association performed "Songs of Resilience: Bringing Voice to Protest" for delegates and members of the public. The performance was part of the 10th Anniversary of Mayworks Halifax.

After the sudden passing of NSGEU Employee Relations Officer Dave Lawrence on Thursday evening, the Executive made the difficult but necessary decision to resume Convention on Saturday morning in order to give staff and others close to Dave time to collect themselves. On Saturday, we began the day with elections. Only two positions were uncontested, Darren McPhee returned as Secretary-Treasurer, and Tammy Gillis returned to her position as 3rd VP. Jason MacLean was elected President, with Sandra Mullen as 1st VP and Kim Jenkins as 2nd VP. Thanks to all those who ran in the elections as well.

After elections were conducted, delegates resumed debate on resolutions. For a full listing of key resolutions passed at the 2019 Convention, please see page 6 & 7.

NSGEU Committees

The NSGEU has Provincial Committees of the Board, which each include representatives from the eight regions, a Board of Directors' member, and a Provincial Executive Committee liaison. These committees all fall under the direction and mandate of the Board of Directors and follow approved terms of reference.

These committees are the:

- Constitution & By-Laws Committee
- Resolutions Committee
- Finance Committee
- Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Committee
- Human Rights Committee
- Political Action Committee
- Education Committee
- Women's Issues Committee
- Social/Recreation Committee
- Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee*
- Ad Hoc Disabilities Committee*

If you are interested in joining one of these committees, you must first be elected by your local to the NSGEU Committee Pool. Each local elects committee pool members who have an opportunity to apply for provincial committees, which are established by the incoming Board of Directors in September 2019. To be elected, you must be a member in good standing and have attended at least 40 per cent of your local meetings in the 12 months preceding the election.

* Ad Hoc Committees of the Board have a slightly different election process: an expression of interest is sent out to members, so keep an eye on your email if you are interested in applying.

Please note: We rely on an accurate email address to be able to reach you. Please contact the NSGEU if you do not receive emails from us or if you think we may not have an up-to-date contact. Thank you!



The NSGEU Women's Issues Committee volunteers with Feed NS (above)
The NSGEU Human Rights Committee volunteers for Halifax pride (below)



2019 Convention



NSGEU delegates pose for a photo at Convention.

Delegates to 2019 Convention passed a number of important resolutions at the Triennial Convention in May. A number of resolutions were also referred to the incoming Board. Here are a few highlights:

NSGEU Continues to Give Back!

The NSGEU will donate \$42,500 each year to organizations that support Nova Scotians. In the past, these organizations and amounts were designated at Convention by delegates. However, over the last term, we had an instance where an organization that was designated to receive funds closed its doors, and because it was a Convention resolution, there was no way to redirect those funds, which resulted in the funds not being distributed. As a result, delegates to this convention voted to allow the new Board of Directors to make the decision where the donations will go. In the past, donations have gone to Feed Nova Scotia, Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, KidsHelpPhone, just to name a few.

Domestic Violence Awareness and Action

The NSGEU will develop a resource list of domestic violence supports available in Nova Scotia and that we use this list in our education and as part of our lobbying efforts.

The NSGEU will continue to lobby for the implementation of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour recommendation for 10 days of paid leave as a basic minimum labour standard.

Culture of Consent

The NSGEU will support a culture of consent and integrate a statement into its existing harassment policy.

What is a culture of consent?

In a culture of consent, the fact that consent is mandatory is normalized, respected, and valued in society. It is an expression of values and attitudes that respects bodily autonomy, and understands that each person is always the best judge of their own wants, and needs. It is a culture in which all interactions and relationships are centered on freely given, active, and enthusiastic mutual agreement for participation.

Anti-Sexual Assault and Anti-Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The NSGEU will continue working towards the elimination of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the workplace by working together with employers to educate and communicate about its unacceptability; promoting employers to have stand-alone sexual harassment and assault policies.

on Resolutions

Support for Indigenous Peoples

The NSGEU will request a meeting with representatives of the Assembly of NS Mi'kmaq Chiefs in order to seek advice on support of indigenous groups and that the NSGEU actively support indigenous groups when called on to do so, in keeping with the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation.

Support for Mental Health in the Workplace

The NSGEU will work with employers to create and strengthen supports that are accessible, affordable, and acceptable to foster mental health & wellness in the workplace through education, peer support and contract language.

Healthcare Crisis Campaign

NSGEU's incoming Board of Directors will create a dedicated campaign to address the current crisis in healthcare in Nova Scotia.

Home Care IS Health Care

The NSGEU will request the Province integrate the home care sector as part of the health care system and that the NSHA become the employer for home care workers and extend to the collective agreement to cover them. The NSGEU must also lobby the province to address the recruitment and retention of Continuing Care Assistants.

Fight for our Health Care Maintenance/ Trades/Plant Operations Jobs and other Services

The NSGEU will fight to maintain the jobs of our members who work in hospitals even if the hospitals are built with public-private partnerships (P3s). We will publicly campaign to save Trades/Maintenance and Plant Operations jobs.

Address Health Care Understaffing

The NSGEU will oppose the excessive use of overtime and lobby for the hiring of full-time employees to address understaffing at the IWK, Halifax Infirmary, and other Health Care facilities across the province.

Ban Private-for-profit Plasma

The NSGEU will participate in political action against private plasma clinics and blood donations in Nova Scotia and other provinces across Canada and that we lobby for federal and provincial bans on payment for plasma and blood.

National Pharmacare Program

The NSGEU will continue to lobby together with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and our National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) for a national universal Pharmacare program that will be governed by the principles of the Canada Health Act.

Essential Services

For locals that have been included in the governments essential service legislation, the NSGEU will lobby to limit the number of employees required to work during a legal strike to no more than 50% of normal staffing. If the number is higher than 50% a union may opt for binding arbitration of the collective agreement.

Minimum Wage

NSGEU will lobby the provincial government to increase the minimum wage to be at least \$15/hour which will help families meet the Canada Food Guide requirements and respond to health situations that may arise.

Stand Up for Bus Drivers, Monitors and Mechanics

The NSGEU will request that the Minister of Education stand up for the excellent work of school bus drivers, monitors, and mechanics and other employees of Stock Transportation who provide reliable service for students and families and that they include the NSGEU and its members at Stock in its consultation about the bussing system in the HRM.



Convention Me

I was nervous, but soon felt very comfortable, great experience. I met a lot of people from different locals.

Linda Goris, Local 1246



Hello I am a first time delegate. We at Local 111 are just beginning to join the union, so I was a bit nervous about going. I am very glad I went: it was a wonderful experience! We met so many lovely, helpful delegates. I was also touched by the love and compassion everyone shared at a very sad time. I look very forward to being a part of the NSGEU.

Corinne Garrison, Local 111



The Convention was very interesting and I heard and learned a lot. I enjoyed being there and loved to meet new people. Jason spoke really well and is very personable. I was a first-time delegate from Local 170 and was proud to be there. Sorry for everyone's loss of David Lawrence. It was very kind words spoken and very respectful to that young man. Having said that, hope I get invited again.

Brenda Johnson, Local 170



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on my first experience at Convention. I feel that I learned a lot while there about what the union does for employees all across the province. I had no idea it covered so many different careers!

It was very sad to lose our very own ERO, Dave Lawrence: my condolences to his family, friends and co-workers.

The Convention itself was something I hope to get the opportunity to do again.

Dolores Moses, Local 30

Member Feedback

I would like to say the Convention went off as well as it could, considering the awful tragedy during Convention. The employees of NSGEU are certainly troopers: my hat goes off to them being able to continue their duties.

Each Convention and meeting always gives us the chance to reunite with old friends and to meet new ones and this Convention was no different. It continues to shock me how quickly a connection can be made between people, I believe it's because we are all working towards the same goal: to better the lives of all Nova Scotians.

Some of the Highlights for me were: the Jingle Dance performers and the Bhangra dancers, also the message from speaker Larry Brown of NUPGE. Another highlight was the amount of first-time delegates that attended and that so many of them came to the mic. That was certainly positive.

Some disappointments were: it seemed that all members did not get the same opportunities to speak on resolutions as others and there was a lot of confusion on the rules and regulations on speaking to a resolution. I was very confused and I have attended sessions before, I can only imagine how lost the first-time delegates were. I would suggest that in the future an explanation on how the proceeding of the vote of resolutions work to be included in the Convention package. I also believe that everyone should ask to refrain from clapping and shouting when a candidate goes up to speak. A congratulatory clap after the vote and the winner is announced would be more parliamentary, having a group shouting and clapping for a candidate could sway the votes of the new delegates.

I've seen quite a bit of dishonorable actions and heard some unethical comments at this Convention. We are NSGEU if we are going to Talk the Talk, we have to Walk the Walk. We demand a bully-free workplace and we demand our employers and our government to have respect for who we are and what we do.....we need to follow that same direction within our Union. We are all brothers and sisters working for the better good, let's have respect for one another. That doesn't mean agreeing all the time, there is always room for healthy debate.

I am hopeful that the next three years will show some positive changes for our Union, Leaders and members.

Kim Sheppard, Local 104





I was very impressed with the whole event. The way the sudden death was handled was very classy and supportive. I liked the democratic process and the recap of the year's events and successes.

The speeches were great, and getting to know the candidates was an excellent experience.

Judy Kelley, Local 104

As a first time delegate, I really had no idea what to expect from Convention. I am amazed at all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes and the dedication of all the employees and members. It was really important for me to see everything the union does that isn't always seen by the members.

Scott Thieu, Local 122



I was a new delegate, and was impressed with the overall layout of the Convention. I really enjoyed interacting with other locals and seeing people I attended week long with. It was interesting to see how we came up with the constitutions we govern our union by. It was a total learning experience about how our union is run.

Garnet Estabrooks, Local 480F



This election, we re-elected President Jason Maclean as our NSGEU President. It broke our hearts to see tears streaming from his eyes while trying to maintain his composure. Our President is compassionate, caring, respectful and also passionate about the Union movement. How could we not re-elect him? Next Election: Jason Maclean for Premier!

Kenneth Wood, Local 47

I loved the sense of inclusion! We (as a very small local) felt just as imported as any local with a 1,000 or more people.

Kathy Dewtie, Local 103



I was extremely honoured to be a delegate for NSGEU Convention 2019. This experience was remarkable and powerful. Not to mention the joys of having your local (Local 6) submit two resolutions, that not ONLY were resolutions carried... both reached "concurrence" by the resolution committee. What provided an additional touch was hearing the rationale supporting concurrence. Talk about empowering!!! Those resolutions spoke to two topics I am very passionate about: Diversity and Inclusion.

Also, to witness the executive from last term get re-elected was amazing, and speaks to the awesome work they have been doing and will continue to do!

Lastly, Convention...I hope to see you again in the next three years; along with my many brothers and sisters I've met throughout the last few years. Being an involved member of NSGEU provides certainty that you will see your brothers and sisters monthly, not triennially.

Mekisha Johnston, Local 6



This was my second Convention and I very much enjoyed being part of such an energetic and dynamic group of NSGEU members. The way that everyone came together to support NSGEU staff and members that were directly impacted by the passing of Dave Lawrence confirmed solidarity for our union. Thank you to all those who were involved in the planning of the 2019 Convention.

Pauline Fraser, Local 77





United and Proud as a first time delegate. I very much appreciated the opportunity that my local, (Local 8) provided me in voting for me to attend the 2019 Triennial Convention. Starting with the new delegates' session equipped me with information on process, what to expect and how to participate in the Convention with confidence. Hearing about our Union's challenges and accomplishments over the past three years was motivating. I enjoyed spending time/lunches with delegates from other locals, hearing their challenges. Having the opportunity to hear delegates passionately debate Constitutional Amendments and Resolutions was engaging. Being part of the democratic process in reaffirming out Executive leads us in building our future United & Proud was exhilarating...

Thank you to all that assisted in making sure that this Convention was a success. Your time and dedication showed throughout the Convention especially with the challenges that arose.

My heartfelt sympathies to all of the staff of NSGEU and David Lawrence's family. Your professionalism, compassion and resiliency showed through this tragic and challenging time. You always have our backs so want you to know I/we as a membership have yours.

David Davies, Local 8



Overall a great experience ... I always enjoy Convention ... gets my union spirits working...

The professionalism shown by our extraordinary executive was certainly provided to all throughout the weekend.

A comment said to me that brought it all together and showed our unity was in reference to Jason MacLean when he had to address his membership - compassionate "that's the kind of man he is" ... proud to be a member of NSGEU!

Freda Sears, Local 71



Congrats to all who were re-elected and much respect to all who had the courage to run.

Condolences to those who lost a friend and colleague. The loss was deeply felt, but it was handled so well by the staff and delegates who attended.

Susan Dobbin, Local 101

NSGEU Convention was super awesome. So glad I went. 1st time delegate.

Glad I got to meet so many awesome people that I can now call my brothers and sisters of the union!

Danielle Duffett, Local 100

My name is Danielle Clark. I am with CEH VON. I have been with them for going on five years and have recently started taking an interest in union activities the past year. I have attended the new activist seminar, a few meetings and most recently the NSGEU's Triennial Convention. What an empowering experience. From the moment I arrived in the city until the moment I left, i was surrounded by like-minded people who are also passionate about their rights as a worker.

I was so nervous to go. I barely understood my contract let alone the language I knew would be used at Convention. So it was a no-brainer to go down early and attend the new delegates' seminar led by Jason McLean himself! It was such a privilege for him to take the time out of his busy weekend to make sure we had a basic understanding about how the Convention will go. It was an overflow of information but I sucked up every bit of it.

The weekend was not just about resolutions and voting. The NSGEU employees made it top priority to make sure we felt at home, we were able to connect with other union activists in different regions and all questions were answered without making me feel silly for asking. I highly recommend this for anyone who is interested in making your workplace safe, fair and accountable when it comes to your rights as a worker!

I hope I'm lucky enough to be voted in again the next time around! It'll be an honor to represent CEH VON home care.

Danielle Clark, Local 35





Brothers and Sisters of NSGEU,

I enjoyed my time at this Convention and was very proud and happy to meet some new faces and people!

Wednesday and Thursday was super awesome in the Convention! Sadly, in my hotel on same floor I saw what happened and when I saw the ambulance crew rush in, I knew something was seriously wrong. On Friday morning come to Halifax Convention Centre to go to the Convention and heard what had happened, I was so shocked! It was a very sad day on Friday when President

MacLean announced in what had happened with Brother Lawrence. In all of the years I have gone to Convention, I never saw anything like this happen. My salute goes out to Brother Lawrence's family!

On Saturday I was excited with the election and so proud to have the same Executive team again for next three years. However, after lunch I noticed many delegates started leaving the Convention and I wanted to hear the many resolution we had not been able to discuss on the floor! I was very disappointed that Brothers and Sisters left so soon: that is not supposed to happen like that at all. We are supposed to be one large union: Brothers and Sisters to remain together and work strong, as a team! I felt when people left, we were forced to shut down our Convention sooner and it made me very sad to see this to happen. How will we ever know what was being said in the resolution that is being put through to the Board? I really don't think it was fair for the delegates who were there for it all. We are supposed to be one big union: powerful voices united!

I praise Brother Jason and other top Executive for their hard work!

Robert J. Tupper, Local 7



As a first-time delegate I wasn't sure what to expect at Convention. If I had to sum it up in a few words, I would say it was informative, fast-paced and exciting. I learned a lot about the NSGEU, how resolutions are made and passed, and was able to make connections with so many of my union sisters and brothers. The entertainment was wonderful – unexpected and so enjoyable, especially the Maritime Bhangra dancers. Thank you for the privilege to be a part of it all!

Kate Lacusta, Local 48

I was a first time delegate, and I felt truly welcomed, and included. Everything went smoothly and I felt like I understood the proceedings due to having attended the new delegates seminar.

I am absolutely amazed at how incredibly welcoming everyone was! I am having mobility issues at the moment so I couldn't leave to explore the city with my other local members, but I was welcomed with open arms to sit at random tables with random people! I made a ton of new friends and had some amazing conversations!

Thanks NSGEU, for this incredible opportunity! I feel more educated, and like I actually made a difference in our everyday operations. I hope to see you all again in three years! Thanks so much.

Danielle Gavel, Local 31



As a member of the NSGEU Board of Directors, I went into Convention with a set of goals I wanted to see accomplished by Delegates and the Executive Committee. I was able to watch those goals come to life. From us debating, in a civil manner, important resolutions; to watching as Brother Robert Tupper committed to personally making over \$1,000 donation to the NSGEU Cancer Fund to a potential new Mental Health Fund; to electing a new Executive for the next three years. Our union is on the move forward sisters and brothers, a direction, I believe, President Jason MacLean has been leading us down for the last three years.

Bill Zebedee, Local 1246



Remembering Dave Lawrence

On May 9th, during our Triennial Convention, the members and staff of the NSGEU lost a great advocate and friend with the sudden death of Dave Lawrence. It was a shock to all and President MacLean, the Provincial Executive, and the Board of Directors made the decision to cancel proceedings on the Friday so everyone could take some time to grieve and collect themselves.

Dave began as a member of the NSGEU while working with youth at the IWK. He became a Steward and an activist and was a great leader during our labour dispute in 2007 at the IWK. He was elected President of his Local (now called Local 122), volunteered as one of our first Bully-Free Workplace facilitators, and was elected to the NSGEU Board of Directors before becoming an Employee Relations Officer (ERO) in October 2010.

During his time as an ERO he serviced an amazing amount of our locals and helped many members. Here is a list of the Locals he serviced through his nine years as ERO (not all at the same time):

Local 24, Crothall Laundry; Local 27, Evergreen Home for Special Care; Local 28, Braeside Nursing Home; Local 30, Home Care – Digby/Claire; Local 32, Home Care – Yarmouth/Argyle; Local 41, Northwood Care Bedford; Local 54, Celtic Community Homes; Local 57, Laing House; Local 58, Gateway Homes; Local 59, YACRO; Local 61, Canadian Association of Community

Living; Local 62, Chisholm Youth Services; Local 63, Metro Community Living; Local 63b, Community Health Services; Local 64, Colchester Residential Services Society; Local 65, Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion; Local 66, Regional Residential Services

Society; Local 67, Veith House; Local 68, Elizabeth Fry Society; Local 86, Mountain Lea Lodge; Local 119, NSHA Support Services; Local 124, IWK Support Services; Local 189, NSHA Administrative Professionals (South Shore); Local 190, NSHA Administrative Professionals (Western-Tri-County); Local 191, NSHA Administrative Professionals (Valley).



NSGEU ERO Dave Lawrence.

Our sympathies go out to Dave's family, who have supported him as he worked for the members of the NSGEU: his wife, Lynn, his son Zackery and his daughter, Zoe. Delegates rose on Convention floor to honour Dave and unanimously passed a resolution to name one of our Amateur Sports Awards in his memory.

Dave was a tireless advocate and ally for the members, was loved and respected by his coworkers, and was a devoted husband and father. He will be deeply missed by all, including his NSGEU family.

David's obituary can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/2XgJ1z7>

Nova Scotia Health Care Crisis

NSGEU Nurses Safety Survey

On April 4th we released the results of our NSGEU Nurses Safety Survey. In our media release, we called on the Minister of Health and Wellness, Randy Delorey, to immediately establish a working group that includes all union stakeholders, government officials and NSHA management so we can identify immediate solutions to improve safety at our hospitals for staff and patients.

We also extended an invitation to our Minister Delorey and Premier Stephen McNeil, to shadow one of our nurses to see what it is really like working on the front lines of the health care system today. We have not been taken up on either of these offers by government.

Please note that we sent the survey out to all our health care members but only the Nurses Bargaining Unit had enough respondents to report on with accuracy. The overall Health Care survey did not produce a large enough sample size to report reliable results.

Here are some of our survey findings:

PATIENT SAFETY:

- * 93% of nurses surveyed say they believe patients are being put at risk due to working short;
- * And in the past six months, 69% of respondents say they have witnessed or been involved in a "near miss" or adverse event at work.

WORKLOAD:

- * 92% say in the past five years, their workload has increased;
- * And 80% say their employer's decision to change the way they interpret overtime language in their collective agreement has actually increased their workload further;

- * 85% of respondents say their unit works short at least once per week;
- * And 77% say their employer's decision to change the way they interpret overtime language in their collective agreement has actually increased the amount of time their unit has worked short.



NURSES' SAFETY:

- * Only 12% of respondents say they feel safe at work;
- 84% of respondents say they have experienced physical or verbal threats or acts of abuse/violence by patients/residents/family members while at work over the past five years;
- * And 35% have sustained injuries at work over that same period of time.

The survey comments outlined a number of very disturbing reports, including, but not limited to:

- * Nurses being bitten, kicked and hit by patients and patients' family members;
- * An increased number of patient falls, due to nursing

N.S. nurses don't feel safe and worry about patient safety: survey

NURSING SAFETY
SOURCE: NSGEU SURVEY

12%
feel safe at work

84%
have experienced physical
or verbal threats or acts
of abuse / violence

35%
have sustained injuries at
work



Survey highlights safety concerns of N.S. nurses

A survey shows Nova Scotia nurses are worried about the well-being of their patients, and themselves. Paul Hollingsworth reports.

Graphic from CTV coverage of our Nurses survey results

staff being unavailable to provide one-on-one care and management's refusal to call in patient attendants;

- * Increased number of bedsores, as nurses do not have time to provide full personal care or post-operative baths, or to turn patients as frequently as they should;
- * Missed or late medications and medication errors, as well as missed orders and bloodwork;
- * Inability to properly manage patients' pain and nausea due to time constraints;
- * And patients being placed in TV rooms and communal family waiting areas.

The results of this survey clearly show that nurses are struggling to provide safe patient care, given the consistent staffing shortages they are facing on the

front lines. We need immediate action to address the very serious concerns our members are bringing forward.

Our release generated a good amount of media which included a one-on-one interview by President MacLean with CTV Atlantic News Anchor Steve Murphy. You can watch it here: <https://bit.ly/2KptgOo>

We also had a brave young nurse, Ms. Ashley Local 101, come forward to speak about her personal experience in nursing and how unsafe she feels at work. She was a very powerful voice from the front-lines of patient care. Here is some of the media we did on this issue:

<https://bit.ly/2x2N1o6>

<https://bit.ly/31Fyf4X>



Stock image

Just Another Wednesday



On April 23, we launched another part of our campaign to pressure government to address the crisis – “Just Another Wednesday”. You can watch it here:

<https://bit.ly/2MUX1e8>

As part of this campaign, we asked the public to share their stories with us, the Premier and the Minister of Health at carein crisis.ca.

The message along with this campaign is:

This can't be the new normal, something has to give. The McNeil Liberals are the only ones in Nova Scotia that don't see there's an escalating crisis in Nova Scotia. Instead of fixing frontline care for patients, they just keep making things worse with bad administrative changes that only hurt workers.

And while they're in denial, we're all at risk:

- * Increased ER closures;
- * 100,000 people without a family doctor;
- * a shortage of long term care beds for seniors;
- * lack of mental health services and long waits for help;
- * not enough health care staff so staff are stretched too thin, overworked, not able to take breaks or book time off.

Frontline health care workers are raising the alarm that care is at a breaking point, and patients are being put at risk. They're doing their best to give patients safe care, but short-staffing is starting to make that impossible. Every day brings news of another Nova Scotian who has been hurt by a health care system that's in chaos.

The McNeil government needs to support the people who are holding this broken system together, and get serious about health care.

Here are a sampling of some of the stories government has received from the public as a result of this campaign (we have not attached names to protect people's privacy):

In 2016 my aunt found a lump in her throat, she's a nurse so she knew exactly what it was but no doctors took her seriously. many appointments full of empty promises later, she was diagnosed with cancer in 2018. It was too late. By this time it had spread throughout her body, and treatment was no longer a viable option for her. She is now in palliative care and won't be around for long. The crisis is real and it is KILLING people.



My father is currently in hospital, unfortunately with a diagnosis of dementia. If he did not have a supportive family and someone to advocate for him/tell his story, he would not get physiotherapy, he would not get dietary support. As our family has witnessed, nursing staff do not have the time to feed him, do all of his personal care. They say that they are laden with paperwork or are short staffed. I have heard many sad stories where families have been failed in the healthcare system. It's time to spend our taxes wisely. This is our money you are spending. We are not impressed by this government's inability to see the big picture. Invest in healthcare and education!

Please provide us with better health care in NS. Especially rural. I live in Annapolis Royal. I used to travel to Berwick to see my Family Dr. He took a leave of absence and left without anyone taking on his patients. I just found out I had a tumor in my chest. I had to make so many calls and plead to whoever would listen to help me find a doctor close to my home. All the doctors in Annapolis were full and not taking on new patients. I finally found one who agreed to take me on. Thank goodness.

My tumour was cancerous but encapsulated so no chemo or radiation was needed.

I'm now left with long wait times to see specialists for other health concerns.

My daughter suffers from mental health issues. The wait times to see someone who can diagnose her has been years in the making. Years. This is crazy. I struggle to keep her alive as she's suicidal. I've taken her to the VRH, doctor appointments, mental health appointments - but what she needs is the psychiatrist to prescribe something. She has the diagnosis but now we wait to get that appointment so she can get in the right drugs for her. The wait times for mental health assessments and to see someone who actually can do something is terrible.





My wife was in and out of emergency once a month for eight months with varying issues from extreme pain to heart attack issues to losing her eyesight only to be sent away with nothing but pain medication. When they finally admitted her on the insistence of her doctor turns out she had stage four cancer. She died unexpectedly in their arms getting ready for a biopsy. Our granddaughter was born eight days later.

I have so many concerns and have stayed quiet for far too long. As a survivor of Hodgkins lymphoma, thyroid cancer, amyloidosis of the larynx, a wife and mother of two children, I have seen many times how our health care is failing us. There is not a week that goes by that I don't hear about someone not having a family doctor and or having to wait months to be seen by a specialist or ER waits of over 4 hours. Over the past few months I have learned that my GP is retiring. While he has made an effort to find a replacement, has not been able to do so, and will leave Colchester with many more patients left in the dark feeling lost and alone. This will make ER waits longer and harder to find help. There is a joke that goes around my house that we'd get better care at the vet. It should not be this way. I know with my health history there is always worry, but not having a GP has brought my worry to a whole new level. So not only will I struggle with my previous illness, but I can't help but think mental illness will be in my future. If our people aren't healthy, we will not be able to function 100% which will affect our employment. This will have a huge snowball of negative effects on our community. Please listen and start a positive change to our health care system so our communities do not die. If it was you or your family, I am sure things would change sooner than later.



I have worked as a lab tech for 31 years and I have seen many changes. The last few years the conditions have been the worse and escalating daily. Patient safety is at risk every day. It's just a matter of time before something horrific happens.

Taking a Lead in Her Union

Did you know in the weeks following Convention, all our Locals hold their elections for leadership positions for the next term? Each Local will elect a new Executive along with Stewards and Regional and Occupational Councillors.

The union provides for training in all of these volunteer positions - it is called Local Officer Training.

Mekisha Johnston has stepped up to take a position as Vice-President of Local 6. This was not a simple or easy road for Mekisha, but an empowering and worthwhile one.

She has allowed us to publish her letter in the hopes that it inspires others to get more involved with their union.



Weeklong school Leadership course participants with Mekisha Johnston on far right.

I am forever thankful and blessed to be voted in as the Vice President for Local 6. This position rings dear to my heart, as my parents and grandparents were extremely active in their communities and workplaces. My grandfather, who was very instrumental in my upbringing, held positions within VIA Rail, and within our community and neighbouring communities on an executive level. He taught me that a union can improve working conditions, protect your rights, and ensure that workers are treated with dignity, equality and respect on the job. But most importantly, a union puts you and your co-workers in control of your futures — you set the priorities and work towards them.

The union is definitely embedded within my testament of my lived experiences thus far. Back in 2012, a fellow

coworker and I fought along with NSGEU to ensure we were brought into the civil service as government employees – because originally, we were not going to be included. Being the person that I am, I was NOT going to allow this to happen... and it didn't after all.

Early on, my career goal was to become a lawyer. In my second year of university, I had a “grand mal” seizure from out of nowhere. This seizure was life-changing for me. I spent two years going through almost weekly testing.

During those two years, I lost memory of my one year-old son's first moments of life. Also, as the result of the seizure, I suffered from a speech impediment. This speech impediment prevented me from being the same vocal Mekisha that I always was and kept me away

from speaking to large crowds or attending meetings of any sort etc.

I recall co-workers, Heather Loadman and Nicole Murphy inviting me to a union meeting and I declined. As a young worker (at the time), I was afraid to get involved but my heart battled with the fact that I knew I needed to get involved. After some thought I did say "I'm going to attend a meeting." This was big for me. Although, it was in my heart to be involved more, I stalled from actually entering a union meeting. Ironically, in 2012, my lived experience showed me firsthand the importance of being involved, and how this not only benefits you but others as well.

It was the seizure that prevented me from having the confidence even to attend meetings, or speak to large crowds due to my speech impediment. BUT, the union not knowing my internal battle, steered me to courses like weeklong school and thankfully I was placed in the Communications Course. This course taught me to have courage and confidence to express myself vocally.

Imagine, a room of 40 people and you had to address a topic for 15 minutes. I almost died from stress and fear. I thought, am I going to stumble over my words? or am I going to lose my train of thought mid-sentence? Oh, the fear of a seizure survivor.

But instead I did it! That fifteen minutes went by fast without any mishaps.

My confidence began to blossom. I was starting to tap into my true purpose.

The following year, again I was chosen for weeklong school and this year, the course I got into was Leadership.

I thought... what is really going on here? Why pick me for Leadership? However, in the end, it was this course that gave me the "ah ha" moment I truly needed. I sat in class each day, learning more about the person I am, or the person I am becoming. I raised my hand in a full classroom, to challenge controversial topics. I supported my remarks in a manner that caused the facilitator to praise me for being the one to speak on topics that

others might be afraid to speak on.

During Weeklong School I took a personal pledge to take on a leadership task in any form within my local and to ensure my local, as well our union as a whole, becomes more inclusive.

Oh my heart... As I write this I become aware that my grandfather is smiling down upon me. He too was a man of "Equality for One and All". As I mentioned, he sat in executive seats at his work and also within his community. At his work, he helped to fight for change so that trains were more accessible, and the work place was more diverse and all passengers and employees upon the CN/Via Rail were treated with respect. As the first African N.S. bilingual conductor he used his platform to bring about change.

Well, like my grandfather, I too (with the help of my local) submitted a resolution (remember my leadership pledge at Weeklong School?) that was successful at this year's convention. Both resolutions fell within the Human Rights category.

To celebrate that success, my friend and my grandmother went out for dinner. While at dinner, my grandmother spoke about her involvement in unions. My grandmother started off by saying.... "I was the Vice President of my local," and instantly my friend burst into laughter, followed by saying "Mekisha, now come on. What you waiting for?" Fast forward to today... and I can now see that I have been prepped for this role since 1980.

THIS union has given me my courage and spunk to not only fight for my job security in 2012, but for the security of all. THIS union also helped me sift through my imperfections and find the confidence in me to advocate for others.

I may not be a lawyer, like I wished, but as a Family Support Worker, and now also your local VP, I'm using my gift to advocate for my fellow people... like YOU and YOU and YOU!

UNIONS F#*K YEAH

- Your VP, Mekisha Johnston

Safety Conferences at the NSGEU

Over the month of May we hosted two large safety events in our NSGEU Conference Centre.

The first was the kickoff to North American Occupational Safety and Health Week (NAOSH) where our OHS Officer Paul Cormier always plays a key role as he sits on the NAOSH Week Organizing Committee. We have been hosting this popular educational event annually since 2014. For more information about NAOSH week please visit: <https://bit.ly/1itFdyz>

Later in May, Aware+NS held a Safety Conference and AGM in our Conference Centre as well.

AWARE+NS is a safety association for community health care – Home Care, Long-Term Care, and Group Homes. For more information about Aware+NS please visit: <https://bit.ly/2x14v4a>

Participants included managers, safety representatives, consultants, and Human Resource staff from many organizations large and small whose jobs include improving workplace safety.

Aware+NS really appreciated the support from the NSGEU.

Hosting these events were great opportunities to deepen our relationship with our community and safety partners and continue to strengthen the culture of safety in Nova Scotia.



Fighting for Our Members at Stock Transportation

On June 6, Education Minister Zach Churchill announced that the province was ending its contract with Stock Transportation for bussing service in the Halifax Regional Center for Education (HRCE). See CBC coverage here: <https://bit.ly/2ZWkr4q> This announcement came as a total surprise to the Union as we were not given any advanced notice of this decision.

Since this time, President Jason MacLean has been adamant that the collective agreement follow Local 78B members to whichever company may take over the bussing contract in the future.

“Our main concern has been what will happen to Local 78B’s collective agreement in the event a new operator or operators take over. The most important thing is that frontline workers delivering this important service – do not lose what has been negotiated up until now,” said MacLean

President MacLean immediately requested meetings with Education Minister Churchill and Labour Relations Minister Furey, as well as other stakeholders. He has met with Hon. Mark Furey, as well as the national and local leadership from Stock Transportation and representatives from HRCE.

On June 26, we received some positive news. We were told by Elwin LeRoux, Regional Executive Director of Education for the HRCE, and Jacob Ritchie, the Director of Operations Services that it is the HRCE’s intent to have the NSGEU Collective Agreement in their Request for Proposals (RFP) when it is issued in July. We will closely examine the RFP when it’s issued - but for now,



we feel this is good news.

As part of the announcement about the changes to bus services, beginning in September 2019, HRCE has also said they will begin providing greater oversight in the areas of communication and route planning, with a plan to completely take over these responsibilities for September 2020.

We are continuing to work closely with the local executive and keep everyone up to date on what is happening as this situation unfolds. We are heartened to hear that the collective agreement will be part of the RFP process, but we are looking forward to actually seeing the document and ensuring all our members’ rights and working conditions are being protected in the event of a transfer to another provider.

Education for Local Executive Officers and Councillors

Every three years, following the NSGEU Triennial Convention and Local Triennial meetings, the NSGEU offers education for Local Officers, and Regional & Occupational Councillors. If you hold one of these positions, it is very important that you attend.

Regional and Occupational Councils – Education and Elections

In September, members who were elected to Regional and Occupational Councils at their local meeting, will meet for training and to elect representatives to the NSGEU Board of Directors.

Councillors will receive training on the roles and responsibilities of Council members, chairs, treasurers (Regional Councils only) secretaries and NSGEU Board of Directors representatives. Councils will receive training on running effective meetings, rules of order, and set meeting dates for the coming term, discuss goals and review bylaws. Councillors will get to know each other and share experiences.

Regional and Occupational Councillors will also elect representatives to the NSGEU Board of Directors. It is so important that all locals have occupational and regional representation at these council meetings as these important decisions are made.

The schedule for Regional and Occupational Council training can be found in the chart below or on our on-line calendar at www.nsgeu.ca

For all Regional and Occupational Councillors:

Unfortunately, there is no flexibility on the dates scheduled for Regional and Occupational Council training sessions and you must attend your specific Council. Please look up the date in the education calendar, ask your supervisor/arrange your time-off, and let us know so we can help you confirm it as soon as possible.



Local Officer Education

Local officers are members of your Local or sub-local executive (the president, vice-president(s), secretary, treasurer and chief steward). Local Officers will receive training on rules of order and how to run effective meetings, financial policies and obligations, and tips for making the local more effective.

Each local executive position has a separate training workshop that is a half day. Training will include a more thorough review of the roles and responsibilities of each position

For all newly elected local officers:

Please make every effort to attend the training! While, it is best if you attend with the other Officers from your local, if your employer will not provide the days off on the scheduled day in your region, you can apply to attend another training session in another region. We will do our best to accommodate.

Spring Scholarships, Bursaries & Awards

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. Visit: <https://bit.ly/1PECxPf> for more info.

NSGEU Member Bursary Awards

The following have been selected by the NSGEU Education Committee and ratified by the NSGEU Board of Directors to receive awards.

- Local 423 Matthew Morris \$1,000.00 – Cheryl Morton Memorial
- Local 101 Jessica Gray \$1,000.00 – Linda Sirota Memorial
- Local 119 Alexander Cranston \$1,000.00
- Local 470D Courtney Penney \$1,000.00
- Local 150 Nadine Hutchison \$1,000.00
- Local 73 Taryn Allen \$1,000.00
- Local 16 Bennett Blades \$1,000.00
- Local 81 Allen Rafuse \$1,000.00
- Local 119 Abby MacPherson \$1,000.00
- Local 119 Ryan Marriott \$1,000.00
- Local 99 Oluniji Adebawale-Akinbulu \$1,000.00
- Local 66 Jillian Peters-Rowell \$1,000.00
- Local 8 Gregory Gillis \$1,000.00
- Local 191 Makayla Doyle \$1,000.00

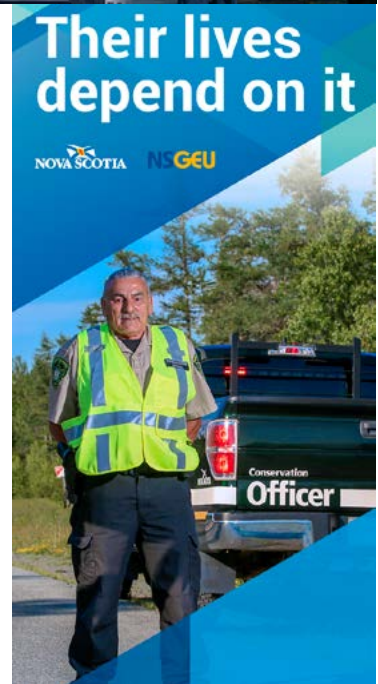
NSGEU Member Dependent Scholarship Awards

The following have been selected by the NSGEU Education Committee and ratified by the NSGEU Board of Directors to receive awards:

- Local 1246 Denise VanWychen: Carmen VanWychen \$1,500 – Joan Jessome Scholarship
- Local 53 Sophie Day: Olivia Day \$1,000
- Local 5 Una Linehan: Kathleen Linehan \$1,000
- Local 6 Kathy Lewis: Ben Hickman \$1,000
- Local 77 Vidhya Ramamoorthy: Vignesh Krishnan \$1,000



We are continuing our joint campaign with the Public Service Commission to bring awareness to the need to slow down and move over for public service vehicles that you may not be aware of. Our members often work on the side of the road - so on this Canada Day weekend and through the summer - let's "Slow Down and Move Over" - their lives depend on it.



9th Annual Free

Family Picnic



Join us Saturday, July 13, 2019

Rain date Sunday, July 14

Oakfield Provincial Park, Grand Lake, N.S.

Happy Pride!

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

NSGEU

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

