

SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET CUTS

NSGEU school workers rallying to make sure that students aren't the ones who pay the price for government's decision to trim its education spending. PAGE 9



SPRING 2011

THE UNION STAND

NSGEU

Introducing
some of the people
who help keep us
feeling our best

Our province, our health care team

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INSIDE

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Proud to deliver public services

I have never felt so concerned about our future with the constant attack on public services in our province and across the country and around the world. We hear of what is happening to workers in the United States. Unless we stand together, what is south will come north.

We are constantly being barraged by criticism and inaccurate information in newspaper editorials and opinion pieces about our pensions. These are deferred wages that we have earned. We need to stand up and defend our pension plans at every opportunity.

In the workplaces, there are troubling signs. During a meeting recently with Community Services workers in Sydney, I met a woman who has spent almost 20 years helping vulnerable Nova Scotians. She told me she's always been proud to be a public service worker. Today, she doesn't have that same sense of pride.

On one hand, she is being assaulted by the constant assertions in the media that public service workers like her are overpaid, unproductive, and selfish. On the other hand, she is being asked to do more with less. Government departments been told to reduce their budgets and reduce their staff.

I took her workload concerns directly to the Minister of Community Services, but was told there is simply no money to help support her and the work she does.

"We have to get back to balance. We are not going to have any money for our children and our grandchildren." Of course our children and grandchildren deserve consideration. But don't Nova Scotians struggling to eat and house themselves also deserve consideration? They are somebody's child and grandchild.

I hear the exact same thing from every government minister and senior official I meet with. This is a "labour-friendly government," but it's as if they all have a replay button that I want to pull the batteries out of. They say: "We want to do this, but you understand the fiscal restraint in the province. You understand we need to get back to balance. You understand we just don't have any money." It's like they're under a spell and, no, I don't understand.



NSGEU President Joan Jessome

Public services are the soul of our communities. We need to protect them. Cutting or privatizing services doesn't create a better province. If you think the cost of oil and water and food have gone up, you've seen nothing yet. If the private sector gets a hold

of our public services, user fees will be unaffordable for the majority of Nova Scotians. Point in case: Nova Scotia Power and P3 schools.

We all have to stand up like the young Dalhousie University worker (Local 77) during a recent meeting: the problem is our tax system. Years of unquestioned corporate tax cuts have robbed government coffers of \$50 billion a year, leaving too little for public services. We must all say this,

publicly and loudly, until politicians start to listen.

The world is run by people who show up. If we're not the ones showing up, at the minimum we need to hold the ones who do accountable. Public services define our communities and our province and we need to be proud of them.

Public service workers do their jobs every day, sometimes under very dangerous and stressful conditions, because they believe in helping Nova Scotians. They make me proud.

In Solidarity,

THE STAND

is a publication of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union. 100 Eileen Stubbs Avenue Dartmouth, NS, B3B 1Y6

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

On the cover

CDHA Sterile Processing Technician Amanda Burgoyne (Local 42) is one of the many NSGEU Health Professionals taking part in a campaign to promote their work and its importance to the province's health care system.

Photo by Morrow Scot-Brown



SCHOOL BOARD WORKERS MOBILIZING

Facing unfilled vacancies and possible layoffs because of the government's education cuts, the NSGEU's school board members have been coming together in shows of solidarity this winter. Union President Joan Jessome attended many of those meetings, including this one for Local 71 (Chignecto-Central Regional School Board) **PAGE 9**



COVER STORY

Every day, hundreds of different kinds of health care professionals are working together to keep Nova Scotians feeling their best. These are some of their stories.

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Supercharge your fundraising

A small NSLC outlet in Lower Sackville raises big bucks for the IWK. Here, the NSGEU members behind the success share some of their secrets. **PAGE 7**



Freedom on the high seas

Aboard a tall ship bound for Wales, an NSGEU member gets a taste of what life should be like. **PAGE 8**



Discount List

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

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Something wrong here

NSGEU Education Officer Margaret Ann McHugh reviews a new book that wonders how rich is too rich. **PAGE 17**



Bargaining

The union's health care locals are facing a hard line at the bargaining table. **PAGE 20**

FEEDBACK

If you have any comments, clarifications, or suggestions, please write to: apedersen@nsgeu.ca

A thank-you card to Sock It To Poverty

To my brothers and sisters in the union:

Just a note to give you a heart-felt Thank You for your kindness to our guests at the outreach program at Saint Mary's Basilica. Please know your Sock It To Poverty donation made a profound difference in the lives of everyone involved. As I remember saying, we take for granted picking up a pair of warm socks when the weather turns cold. But it is not so simple for a lot of people.

The poor are among the vulnerable and invisible of society who are not a powerful political lobby. It was heartening to see you reach out to support them at Christmas, which is a difficult time for the poor.

I encourage you in your struggles for social justice and equality. Even though the fight may seem overwhelming at times, it is worth the effort.

Yours truly,
Sharon Murphy



AROUND THE UNION



Members of Local 42's Bargaining Support Committee work to get in touch with each one of the local's 3,889 members.

GETTING OUT THE VOTE IN LOCAL 42

How do you ensure every one of the 3,800 members in the union's biggest local each have their say on a strike? With a lot of phone calls.

In theory, a strike vote is a straightforward proposition: the bargaining committee asks if the local is willing to withdraw its labour, and everybody in the local gets a chance to say yes or no. But if your local has 3,800 members in dozens of locations around and even out of the province who are filling shifts that cover every hour of every day, a strike vote is anything but straightforward.

**LOCAL
42**

To ensure that every one of these members gets a chance to vote, the union uses mail-in



LPN Debi Platt works her way through her portion of the phone list.

ballots. It works, but because of Nova Scotia's labour laws, it takes a lot of work to make it work.

The challenge is making sure that every member gets their ballot. The mail is the only practical way to do it, but inevitably some of the addresses we have for our members are out of date. For some members, we don't even have addresses. That's because in Nova Scotia, employers are not obligated to share their employees' basic contact information with the union they belong to.

Most employees provide their names and contact information to their union by signing a membership card, but some don't have an opportunity to.

During a strike vote, it is imperative that as many of these members as possible can be contacted. Going on strike is one of the most powerful decisions a local can make, and everybody affected should have a say.

That's just what the members of Local 42's Bargaining Support Committee were working towards in late February and early March. Frustrated by the employer's offer--one per cent increases and nothing else--the Bargaining Committee had called for a strike vote.

With the support of the union, the members who'd volunteered for bargaining support worked the phones, tracking down as many members as possible. It took almost two weeks, but as the March 11 deadline for having ballots in approached, they'd been in touch with almost everybody.

Whatever decision Local 42 members take, they can feel confident they all made it together.

Community Service workers speaking up in Cape Breton

Community Service workers in Cape Breton are overloaded with work and feeling exhausted, but they're doing something about it. They've been meeting in large numbers since the early winter, and have appealed for help from their

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NSGEU'S BULLY-FREE PROGRAM RECEIVING LOTS OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- *"This is like CPR: the more that take this workshop, the more aware everyone will be. It may save lives."*
- *"An eye opener."*
- *"Helpful in recognizing if one's own behaviour may be interpreted as being a bully."*
- *"Wonderful presentation. I was impressed."*
- *"I really dreaded coming for two hours but was pleasantly surprised. The two facilitators were very good."*
- *"It is great that the NSGEU is taking the initiative with this."*
- *"No silent observers – will be part of my work day."*
- *"Please continue this program. Things don't change overnight. It's the first small step towards peace and civility to broader community as well. If this could help even one person then it's worth it."*

BULLYING BY THE NUMBERS

Approximately 1,600 people took part in a Bully-Free workshop in 2010. 913 of them filled out evaluations:

- 98.6% would recommend the program.
- 68% have witnessed bullying
- 49% have been bullied
- 17% of those who were bullied felt they were able to take action
- 65% of those who have participated in the program feel that they will take action against bullying in the future.

UNION TRAINING NEW FACILITATORS TO MEET DEMAND



Bully-Free Workplaces co-ordinator Susan Coldwell.

The Bully-Free Workplaces Program continues to exceed expectations. Workers and managers alike are drawn to its practical philosophy (bullying takes the same toll on our workplaces that it can take in our schools) and its pro-active approach (through open group discussion, a workplace can begin to find ways to address this occupational health and safety concern).

"We projected we'd do between 60 and 80 sessions this year," says Susan Coldwell, a former Local 42 member who has helped build the program from the start. "We're going to hit that in April or May."

To meet the demand, more members are being trained as Bully-Free facilitators, bringing the team to 15.

With experience doing medical research and program co-ordination at the CDHA Environmental Health Centre in Fall River, Coldwell is currently off the job working at NSGEU on program development and training.

"Seeing the recognition on people's faces," says Coldwell. "They're saying: 'This is what's happening to me. There's a name for it, and there's something I can do about it.' It's incredibly gratifying."



KEY DEADLINES COMING UP FOR EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

Anyone wishing to run for an Executive Committee position must first be a delegate to the convention. The deadline for locals to elect their delegates is **March 16**.

A candidate can have their picture and a personal statement of no more than 600 words in *The Union Stand* provided it is received at Head Office no later than **March 25**. In addition, a candidate may distribute a one-page leaflet which will be printed and mailed out from Head Office to delegates



COUNTDOWN TO CONVENTION

prior to convention, provided the leaflet is received at Head Office not later than **April 15**. The staff will not be involved in the preparation of the material.

Also, a candidate will be provided with sufficient copies of a two-sided leaflet for distribution to convention attendees as long as the hard copy is received at Head Office no later than **May 2**. The union will not contribute any other materials or assistance to a campaign, nor will donations, materials or assistance in kind from outside sources be permitted.

Campaigns will be kept internal and candidates will not seek out the media as a means of communicating with the membership.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact either member of the Nominations Receiving Committee: Jim Davison (465-2568, jim.davison@ns.sympatico.ca) or Dena Redden (384-2836, jackredden@ns.sympatico.ca).

Please forward candidate material by email to nominations@nsgeu.ca or by mail to NSGEU, 100 Eileen Stubbs Ave, Dartmouth, NS B3B 1Y6, in care of Diane Briggs, Convention Coordinator.

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fellow workers across Cape Breton and around Nova Scotia.

Information picket at Mountain Lea Lodge

At Mountain Lea Lodge, a nursing home in Bridgetown, Annapolis Co., workers are standing up for consistency of care for the residents.

On a snowy day in January, they staged an information picket to let the public know about the employer's desire to readjust the schedules of our members to accommodate new employees. The employer has presented a draft schedule and is arguing the changes in scheduling are necessary for recruitment and retention.

However, the changes the employer wants to make are not acceptable to the membership. The residents depend on consistency of care: knowing who will be caring for them and when.

The process has been additionally frustrating to the members because they have been meeting as a committee with the employer to address scheduling issues,



Local 86 member Kristalynn Coldwell on the information picket at Mountain Lea Lodge.

and feel the employer is not taking their suggestions seriously.

Currently, the local's contract provides protection from shift changes for the life of the contract, something the information picket successfully highlighted: afterwards, the employer decided to hold off on its changes.

The local is now hoping to deal with the issue during collective bargaining, which will likely get under way later on this spring.

To see a video about the information picket, visit www.nsg.eu.ca and search for 'Mountain Lea Lodge.'

LOCAL 86

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE PROFESSORS TO BECOME THEIR OWN BARGAINING UNIT

On April 1, a big change for the members of Local 3 who are professors and workers at the Agricultural College in Truro: they will be transferred out of the Civil Service and become their own unit.

LOCAL 3



Scholarships & Bursaries

Local 3 President Sean O'Toole presents a Member's Bursary to Natural Resources worker Brad Fraser, and a Dependant's Bursary to Terra MacDonal, the daughter of Health Department Social Worker Douglas MacDonald.

SUPERCHARGE YOUR FUNDRAISING

A little NSLC outlet in Lower Sackville has some big tips for charitable campaigns

Store 178 in Lower Sackville isn't the biggest outlet in the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation (NSLC), not by a longshot. But that hasn't stopped the 11 workers there from raising an oversized portion of the donation NSLC workers make every year to the IWK Telethon.

Last year, for example, the Lower Sackville workers raised almost a quarter of the \$100,000 the NSLC workers donated.

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470
1670

"I'm so proud of this team," says store clerk

Bill Doucette. "Our cheque was for \$20,001.78. We're Store 178, so we always end our donations with \$1.78. That way, they know it's coming from us."

Raising that kind of money is never easy, so what's the secret? It's that if you want to build something big, you first have to start small.

For Doucette and his team, that meant starting with donations from the liquor company reps who happened to be doing product demonstrations in their store, things like t-shirts and beer steins. Using those donations as prizes, they started running 50/50 draws for their customers.

"People get excited when they can win a prize, especially when they know the proceeds are for something like the IWK," says Doucette.

People got so excited that Store 178 employees were soon seeking out bigger prizes to offer. Doucette found a deal on a big-screen TV and, with a letter of introduction from the IWK Foundation, got it at an even better price. He and some of his co-workers pooled \$500 of their own cash to buy it.

"We set it up in a high-profile location in the store, and we asked every clerk to ask every customer if they'd like to buy tickets on it," he says. "By the end of the day, we'd collected \$678. By the end of the week, we'd



NSLC Store 178 worker Bill Doucette (left) poses with some of his co-workers and the prizes they're raffling off to build a donation to the IWK.

raised almost \$3,000 from that one TV."

With the permission of the IWK, the Store 178 workers then took some of that \$3,000 and leveraged it, buying bigger and bigger prizes.

"The women love the washers and dryers; the men love the TVs," says Doucette with a chuckle. After the Olympics, they were even able to hustle up a signed Sidney Crosby jersey. "You've got to do a little bit of wheeling and dealing."

Doucette hopes workers at other NSLC stores, and from across the NSGEU, will take note of the success they've enjoyed at Store 178.

"During the last IWK Telethon, Wal-Mart donated \$2 million," says Doucette. "Our store is very, very small, but we were able to raise \$20,000. If the other stores do what we've been able to, the NSLC will be making \$2 million donations."

Regardless of the final amounts, Doucette says the truly important thing is making the effort.

"Customers come in and see us fundraising for the IWK and some of them say: 'God bless you for what you do,'" he says. "I'm glad to be able to help. It might not be a lot in the scheme of things, but I know that I'm helping."

For more tips on running a successful 50/50 draw, visit www.nsgeu.ca

It takes one tree to print 500 copies of this magazine.



Save a tree: read The Stand online instead

As part of our ongoing commitment to environmentally sustainable practices, we are now offering members an easy way to opt out of having The Union Stand delivered to their door.

A PDF version of each issue is posted on www.nsgeu.ca, so you won't miss anything.

To take your name off The Union Stand's mailing list, simply visit our website and click on the Save A Tree - Read The Stand Online button.

FREEDOM ON THE HIGH SEAS

Local 2 member Jonas Cosh got the taste of a whole new world when he stepped aboard a remarkable tall ship bound for Cardiff, Wales.

Jonas Cosh had always wanted to visit Europe. But the 28-year-old from Pictou County never thought he'd see it like this: from near the top of the mast of a tall ship bobbing up and down in the brisk autumn wind whipping across the Irish Sea.

"I climbed up there myself. Thirty feet up that mast," says Jonas, who has always depended on a wheelchair or forearm crutches to move around. "What a great way to greet a city I've always wanted to visit. Hello Dublin!"

LOCAL
2

Jonas was taking part in one of the unique programs offered by the Jubilee Sailing Trust. The British non-profit gives people with physical disabilities the chance to crew one of two tall ships; Lord Nelson and Tenacious.

So, along with all the ropes and sails a ship needs, the Jubilee Sailing Trust's ships are outfitted with equipment and devices to accommodate a variety of people.

Special rigging, for example, allowed Jonas and even people who must always be in a wheelchair to ascend the masts and work the sails. At the helm, a "talking compass" allows people with limited vision to steer the ship.

"They never talk about our disabilities. They called us a mixed-ability crew," says Jonas, who worked last summer (and hopes to work again this summer) as a bilingual travel counsellor at the Tourist Information Bureau at the Pictou Rotary.

"They just wanted to focus on what you were able to do; not on what you couldn't do, or what was preventing you from doing it."

For Jonas, who jokes that his only sea-faring experience before this trip was taking the ferry to Pictou Island and Prince Edward Island, the experience was life-changing, but not necessarily in the way he'd expected.

"At first I thought it was going to be a lot of fun, like a relaxing trip," he says. "But then I saw how hard they wanted us to work. They kept us busy."

"After the first day, I thought: 'Can I really do this?'"

Of course, he could. For the first time, Jonas found himself in an environment where he didn't have to quell those occasional but inevitable feelings of guilt or imposition.

"It was totally freeing to be in a situation where I absolutely



Jonas Cosh climbs the mast of The Lord Nelson.

did not have to worry about that," he says. "They wanted us to work. And we all knew that on that ship, everybody was there to give you whatever help you needed to do that."

The trip wasn't inexpensive. Jonas held fund-raisers around Pictou County. "Desserts for Dreams," a fund-raiser at Atlantic Superstore, and many generous donations from local clubs and individuals helped make it possible for him.

Now, he's hoping to make it possible for other Canadians by helping the Jubilee Sailing Trust look into the possibility of bringing one of their tall ships to Canada. And he says that the voyages aren't just for people considered disabled. Recently, an employer from Germany invited its managers on a voyage with a "mixed-ability" crew as a sort of sensitivity program.

"It lets everyone see how society should be," he says.



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2



3

1. NSGEU President Joan Jessome talks with a group of Chignecto-Central Regional School Board members (Local 71) about the value and importance of their work. 2. School secretary Donna MacGregor (left) and educational assistant Jan James. 3. Jean Ann Blakney (LSI)

SCHOOL WORKERS SPEAKING UP: ANY CUTS COULD HURT STUDENTS

School boards will have to get by with less money next year. NSGEU members from across the province are rallying to ensure the children they help don't suffer

It has been a trying winter for the hundreds of NSGEU members who work in public schools across Nova Scotia.

First, the shock and fear whipped up when some school boards went public with a worst-case scenario gleaned from Education Department planning documents: their budgets for next year could be cut by up to 22 per cent.

A brief sigh of relief when the government's actual cuts turned out to be closer to two per cent, but then the cold of

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uncertainty set back in.

Nobody will know until April how exactly the school boards will try to make their cuts: what savings they will be able to find, what programs they will curtail, what positions they'll eliminate.

"I've instructed school boards to protect students and special education," said Education Minister Ramona Jennex, but the people who work in the school system know that's a lot easier said than done.

At emergency meetings with members
CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

What can I do to help?

We all benefit from a strong school system, and there is still time for us to influence how the cuts are made and how quickly appropriate funding is restored. Visit www.nsg.eu.ca/educationcuts for a list of upcoming school board meetings, contact info for your local politicians, and tips on writing letters to the editor.





North Nova Education Centre Librarian Deborah Carhart (left), and Information Specialist II Marion Cyr (Local 71C - CCRSB) put on a “Love Your Library Month” campaign in February. They encouraged kids to write a poem or song, draw a picture, make a collage, video, podcast, create a “wordle,” or fill out a special valentine expressing why they appreciate their school library.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS ...

NSGEU members talk about what they do and why it matters

LIBRARIAN

School libraries are advocates for cultural diversity. Where else can students walk into a room and see images of themselves, whether they're Mi'kmaq, African-Canadian, Acadian, German, or Irish?

Library staff not only build their collections to represent all peoples living in Canada, we also put on displays, invite guest speakers to address students, and promote the history and culture of Nova Scotia and of Canada.

Imagine the loss to students if libraries were closed. Imagine students not reading about:

- The heroism of Nova Scotia born Mona Parsons, who survived a German prisoner of war camp;

- The expertise of Canadian engineer Walter Floody, who designed the tunnels for the Great Escape during the Second World War;
- The tragedy of the felling of the Golden Spruce sacred to the Haida and its triumphal rebirth as one of 64 pieces in the Voyageur Six String Nation guitar made by Nova Scotia luthier George Rizsanyi.

Imagine if there were no books on Maude Lewis or the Group of Seven; Portia White, Viola Desmond; Donald Marshall Jr., or Anna Mae Pictou-Aquash?

I can't imagine a school without a library. Please take the time to see for yourselves and let libraries continue to provide this valuable service to students and to teachers.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

Five students depend on me each day for academic, emotional, physical, and behavioural help.

I recently helped one student with Cerebral Palsy complete a video tutorial about bike safety, complete with demonstration, using his own specialized bicycle.

With a smile on his face and full of pride and excitement, he waved

goodbye and now waits patiently to share this accomplishment, via video, with his fellow classmates. While often limited to the use of his wheelchair for mobility, EA assistance allows him so many educational options that would be difficult to provide otherwise.

Students with disabilities deserve options. They deserve a path lit with options that allows them to create, express, learn, and grow.

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of the union's six school board and two school bus locals, President Joan Jessome heard the same message over and over again. "We all know the saying that it takes an entire village to raise a child. In the same way, it takes an entire team to educate a student," Jessome later wrote in a Chronicle Herald op-ed.

"From Primary to Grade 12, many people work in our education system in a variety of jobs. They all have a direct impact on the quality of the education experience of our children."

Whether they were librarians or administrative assistants or bus drivers or IT specialists, the members all feel they contribute to the education our students receive.

They bristle at the suggestion the system is bloated, that because the number of students is falling, the cost of teaching them should simply be falling in lockstep. But that logic doesn't take into account the fact that the number of students with special needs is growing, or that fixed costs like oil have been on a steady rise.

It certainly doesn't seem to take into account the fact that, despite being one of the lowest-funded education systems in Canada, it has nevertheless been achieving real success over the past decade:

- All children — regardless of their ability, their ethnicity, or where they live — now have meaningful access to education.
- Our drop-out rates have been slashed, and are now less than half of what they were a decade ago.
- According to a variety of different studies and measures, our students' achievements have been steadily rising compared to students in other jurisdictions.

"If we properly support our students, they'll go on to become productive members of society," says James Schofield, an Educational Assistant who works in the Annapolis Valley (Local 73).

"But we're not properly supporting them now, and next year, we'll be supporting them even less. We'll be creating real hardship."

Members like Schofield have decided they're not going to simply wait to find out what's going to happen. Instead, they've been attending school board meetings whenever they can to speak out about the importance of what they do.

It's a message they're taking public in the hopes of two things:

- encouraging school boards to find the least damaging ways to cut their spending for the 2011-12 school year,
- encouraging government to restore proper funding for the following school year.

"We didn't choose this profession because we wanted to get rich," said Schofield.

"We chose it because we care about other people, and we want to help."

HAVE YOUR OWN STORY TO TELL ABOUT HOW YOUR WORK TOUCHES THE LIVES OF STUDENTS? WRITE TO APEDERSEN@NSGEU.CA



Inpatient clinical dietitian Jennifer Bowser works at the Victoria General, helping cancer and surgery patients improve their nutrition which in turn helps with their recovery.

'THIS IS CHALLENGING WORK'

Thousands of the NSGEU's members are part of the vast team that helps keep Nova Scotians feeling their best. These members have dozens and dozens of different job titles — 172 to be exact — but they all share something in common.

By Stephen Kimber

Photographs by Morrow Scot-Brown

At first blush, it may seem difficult to discover and connect the disparate dots that link them. Jennifer Bowser is a young dietitian who has known since an eye-opening job-shadowing day back in high school what she wanted to do with the rest of her professional life. Sylvia Eddy drifted through 14 years in retailing before finding her calling supporting complicated computer systems work in efficient and user-friendly ways for the people who need to use them. Kelly Moore is a

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laid-back, licensed practical nurse who takes gentle care of his Alzheimer's patients and who—for reasons you probably wouldn't guess—wears his nursing pins like medals on the chest of his uniform. And Amanda Burgoyne? Well, she is, in her own self-deprecating description, a "glorified dishwasher" who followed her mother into the business she proudly calls the "heart" of the institution she works for.

There are, in fact, a number of common threads that link each of them to the others. For starters, they are all members of the

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More from the NSGEU's Health Professionals campaign is at www.nsg.eu.ca/healthprofessionals

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health care team at Capital Health, the regional district authority that delivers every variety of health care imaginable—from hospital care to immunization clinics, from school health programs to addiction services—to the 400,000 residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality, not to forget critical and trauma care to people all over Atlantic Canada.

Like more than three-quarters of Capital Health's 12,000 employees, Bowser, Eddy, Moore and Burgoyne are all also members of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union. And, perhaps most importantly, they all care passionately and personally about the jobs they do—and the people they do them for.

'Since the first day," Jennifer Bowser explains, "I've absolutely enjoyed what I do." What she does as a clinical dietitian at the Victoria General Hospital in Halifax is to help her patients learn to eat better in order to prepare for or speed their recovery from surgery, or cope with the effects of cancer and the side-effects of its treatment.

"There's a direct link," she explains, "between what you eat and your health status."

Bowser began exploring that link after she spent a day following her aunt—a clinical dietitian in Antigonish—as part of a high school career day program. "I found it very interesting, and I decided right away that I wanted to try out the field myself.

"You need to know a lot about disease processes," explains Bowser, whose Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and post-graduate Dietetic Internship included intensive studies in chemistry, anatomy and physiology, as well as in "the etiology of disease and the role of various nutrients."

Now she works in the VG's cancer and general surgery units where her day begins at 7 each morning with a meeting with the surgery unit's charge nurse. They discuss the results of the surgeons' morning rounds. "After that, I prioritize my day."

She usually spends her days meeting with many of the two dozen patients whose progress she follows.

Some of them have difficulties swallowing or are too sick to eat, so Bowser makes recommendations for specialized feeding formulas. For patients who can eat, she sends special diet requests to the hospital's kitchen, which serves 1,100 patients three meals a day every day.

All the while, she's sharing her nutritional



Computer Services Officer Sylvia Eddy helps maintain the massive database of information about the thousands of patients that CDHA treats every day.

expertise with students and other health care professionals. "We work in a teaching hospital," she explains.

Bowser also offers patients specific tips and diet suggestions, of course, as well as pamphlets like "What To Eat After Bowel Surgery." Every one of the hospital's patient nutritional education information—70 pamphlets in all—has been researched, written and produced by the hospital's dietitians.

"We take the latest scientific research and we translate it into practical tips that may sound like common sense until you realize all of the research that's gone into each suggestion."

Bowser knows all about research. She's currently working part-time on her

master's degree; her thesis is on weight-loss surgical intervention for the very obese. Last summer, she researched and prepared material for her fellow dietitians on the role of nutrition in the healing of wounds.

"This is challenging work," she says. "We deal with really sick patients. We take what's in the research and we put it to practical use to help our patients. We watch them get better." She pauses, smiles. "You can see the rewards."

'Nobody sees what I do," Sylvia Eddy acknowledges, "but I know it's important."

Eddy, a Computer Services Officer, works in a converted nursing-dormitory office in the Bethune Building at the Victoria General



Sterile Processing Technician Amanda Burgoyne ensures that surgical instruments are absolutely clean and in good working order.

hospital complex, a few hundred metres and—seemingly—a world away from the patient-focused world dietitian Jennifer Bowser inhabits. But Eddy says her job allows her to see the hospital “as a whole. It’s all connected.”

It is. Consider the specific nutritional information that Bowser wants to send to the kitchen staff on each patient. It gets to them via computer, just one small part of a Capital Health patient processing system that tracks every patient—in- and out—from registration to discharge, and through all the various lab tests, clinical appointments, and referrals they encounter along the way.

Part of Eddy’s job is to train everyone who uses Capital Health’s patient information system, and then update them when programmers upgrade its capabilities. “And everyone who leaves and comes back or goes on leave for a year must be retrained,” she explains.

As with any complex computer program, there are inevitable glitches, and it’s Eddy’s job to solve them. By the time she arrives at her office at 7:30 a.m., there are usually at least a few emails and phone messages. “Most of the day is filled with support; answering questions about registrations, and assisting staff who are entering things like diet orders or workload measurement stats, and supporting the hospital scheduling system” she says. “There are endless types of support calls, but at the end of the day it is very satisfying.”

Ironically, Eddy says she quit a job in the retail sector because she found it “too stressful.” She decided to go back to school to study business and lucked into a health care career when she landed her first job as an admissions clerk in the VG’s Emergency Department. That was almost 18 years ago.

Her current job is “stressful too,” she allows with a laugh, “but it’s a whole other kind of stress than retail.” Sitting in her office, personalized with her collection of frog figurines—“I just like having them around”—and photos of her grandchildren, Eddy answers another phone call.

“I know I’m doing good here,” she says. “I really enjoy this.”

When she was a teenager, Amanda Burgoyne’s mother worked in the Sterile Processing Unit at the Victoria General Hospital. “I remember she’d come home exhausted and tell us how physically demanding the work was. And I was thinking, ‘What could be so hard about washing dishes?’” She stops, laughs. “Now I know.”

Burgoyne’s job as a Sterile Processing Technician involves far more than washing dishes. Her unit, on the 12th floor of the Victoria Building, is responsible for decontaminating, cleaning, disassembling, flushing, washing, re-assembling, sterilizing (or “baking” as they say in the unit), inspecting, packaging and then

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NSGEU HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

These are just some of the many stories we’re gathering from NSGEU Health Professionals across the union. To share your own story, visit www.nsgeu.ca/healthprofessionals. Here are just some of the people we’ll be featuring:



Anil Snook
ER Paramedic



Debbie Simmonds
Clinical
Dietetic
Technician



Darren Skinner
Occupational
Therapy
Assistant



Erik Hahn
Orthoptist



Cathy Ross
Laboratory
Technologist



Licensed Practical Nurse Kelly Moore helps veterans living at Veteran's Memorial, many of them suffering some form of dementia.

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re-inspecting at least a couple more times every tool and instrument that will be used in every one of the 70 or so surgeries to be performed that day in the hospital.

Every surgical procedure—from ophthalmology to gynecology, from thoracic to kidney and liver transplant surgery—not only requires its own specialized “instrumentation” kit, but all those instruments must be packaged in precisely the same way every time so the surgeons and nurses can find what they need the moment they need it during an operation.

“It is very stressful,” Burgoyne admits. “Everything we do affects the end result for the patients.”

Today, as she shows me around, she notices a barely-visible pinprick hole in a packaged tool tray. She takes it off the rack and puts it in the reject bin.

Although the unit’s sophisticated machinery provides its own checks and balances and there are sterile “integrators” to indicate whether a package has been properly sterilized, “we challenge our machines every third load,” Burgoyne explains. “You can’t be too careful.”

Although she spends most of her shifts in the unit far from the actual operating rooms, Burgoyne says she does sometimes watch a surgery. “We can’t see the patients

but we do get to see the instrumentation in use. That helps us to put it all together. You get to see the importance of what you do.”

Which is, as she now knows, about far more than washing dishes.

Like Amanda Burgoyne, Kelly Moore—a Licensed Practical Nurse in the Cedar Crest Unit at the Veterans Memorial Building on Robie Street—found his way into his particular corner of the health care world largely because of a parent. In Moore’s case, it was his father.

“My father was a veteran. He’d been a sniper and a prisoner of war, and he would tell me about his experiences,” Moore recalls. Although his father took up steel-working after World War II, he also volunteered at Camp Hill Veterans’ Hospital, helping care for the patients there.

When Moore graduated from the Nova Scotia Community College as what was then called a Certified Nursing Assistant, “I knew I wanted to work with veterans too.” That was 24 years ago, and Moore has spent virtually his entire career helping veterans suffering from Alzheimers or dementia.

Because Cedar Crest is a secure unit, Moore and his colleagues deal with the most difficult dementia cases. And those cases have gotten even more difficult of late.

Ten years ago, Moore explains, many of

their patients would have been living on the same hospital ward for 10 years or more. Today, dementia patients tend to remain in their own homes longer, which has its benefits but it also means their disease is farther advanced by the time they arrive at the hospital. “We’re increasingly dealing with behaviours,” Moore says, “people are striking out. They’re often afraid and some are living with post-traumatic stress.”

The unit’s guiding philosophy, he says, is to employ behaviour modification with as little medication or physical intervention as possible. “You’d be surprised what a cup of warm milk and a back rub can do for some patients,” he says. “It’s basic intervention.”

Moore also uses the many pins he’s earned as an LPN and union member to good advantage when dealing with his ex-military patients. “Our veterans are used to seeing ‘medals’ as symbols of authority,” he explains, so he wears his on the front of his uniform, and finds that they can help calm otherwise difficult patients. “You learn a few things as you go along,” he jokes.

Moore’s own guiding philosophy is that “these patients were once you and me. How would we want to be treated? That’s how I approach my job.”

That’s something else he and Amanda Burgoyne and Sylvia Eddy and Jennifer Bowser have in common too.

NSGEU MEMBERS' DISCOUNT LIST

With your membership card you can save lots of money on a variety of items and services across the province

ACCOMMODATIONS

Holiday Inn Harbourview

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

Citadel Halifax

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

Bridgewater Bogan Villa Inn

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

Cape Cod Colony Motel

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

Delta Sydney

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

Le Manoir Samson Inn

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

ACCOUNTING/INCOME TAX

Wagner Accounting Limited, CMA

1658 Bedford Highway, Bedford
(902) 832-3633, (902) 456-9301
ewagner@ns.aliantzinc.ca
15% off all accounting, income tax preparation with electronic file and all types of bookkeeping services, week-ends, evenings & house calls at no extra fee. NSGEU membership card required.

ADVERTISING

Kaso Graphics

Kentville (902) 681-1114
www.kasographics.com
15% discount

CouponNetwork.ca

(902) 468-1818
sales@couponnetwork.ca
One month free advertising with signing of a six-month contract.

DON'T HAVE AN NSGEU MEMBERSHIP CARD?

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

CAR RENTALS

Avis Rent-A-Car

121 Illsley Ave, Unit N, Dartmouth and
1717 Grafton St., Halifax
1-800-879-2847
Please quote discount # C283900.

Discount Car & Truck

Halifax, Dartmouth, Truro, New Glasgow
1-888-636-9333
Corporate rate or whichever rate is lowest at time of booking.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Please visit our website or call for details.
www.enterprise.com
1-800-736-8222.
Please quote discount # T401246

Hertz Canada Ltd.

Dartmouth, Halifax, Bridgewater, Digby, Yarmouth, & Truro; 1-800-263-0600
Gov't rates or whichever is lowest at time of booking, refer to CDP # 297165

CAR SERVICE

M & B Transmission

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

Midas Muffler Shop

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

Mighty Muffler & Brakes

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

Scotia Tire Service Limited

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

Target Detailing Systems

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

CLOTHING

Mark's Work Wearhouse

10% discount on regular retail price on such items as: footwear, coveralls or overalls, Industrial outerwear, rain wear, casual wear, health-wear clothing, work accessories. You must have an NSGEU membership card and Mark's Work Wearhouse discount card.

Boutillier's Costume Rentals

211 Windmill Road, Dartmouth, NS
(902) 464-3636 www.costumesrus.net
10% discount on all costume rental

Tandy Leather Factory

75 Akerley Blvd., Dartmouth
(902) 468-3071, www.tandy-leather.com
10% discount on regular retail prices, not including clearance items, leather, or items in the monthly flyer.

DECORATING

Acadia Painting & Decorating

6243 Quinpool Rd., Halifax (902) 423-4915
10% on paint & accessories

Jennifer Allan Interiors

121 Illsley Ave., Dartmouth (902) 832-2572
10% on all product lines by Jennifer Allan & Acme Exclusive (except wall coverings).

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Province House Credit Union

1724 Granville St., Halifax (902) 424-5712
Preferred rates on mortgages, loans, RRSPs.

FLORISTS

Gerry's Nursery

Centreville, Kings County
(902) 678-1255
10% discount

Pretty Posies

8877 Commercial St., New Minas
(902) 681-1166
10% discount

FRAMING/PRINTING

Ivan Fraser Studio Custom Framing

Tantallon
(902) 823-2083
40% off custom framing. Pickup and delivery in metro.

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DISCOUNT LIST

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Atlantic Photo Supply

5505 Spring Garden Rd., Halifax
423-6724 www.atlanticphotosupply.com
10% discount on photo supplies (not including cameras or other equipment). 25 free 4x6 photos when you sign up for online printing.

Frame Plus Art

2705 Agricola St., Halifax, 455-9762;
www.frameplusart.ca
20% off framing and plaque mounting

FURNITURE AND APPLIANCES

A.M. Jazey's Furniture & Appliances

267 Granville St., Bridgetown
(902) 665-4326
20% on all furniture (discounts do not apply to sale items or appliances).

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Aromatherapy

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

MacDonnell Pharmacy Ltd

10024 Grenville St., St Peters, NS B0E3B0
(902) 535-3196
Additional supplementary coverage of up to \$4 per prescription. You must present your NSGEU card and if applicable your employer drug card(s). In addition, a 10 per cent discount on certain non-sale items will be offered on front-store purchases.

Natural Path Wellness Ltd.

75 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth
(902) 463-9351
www.mynaturalpath.ca
\$20 off 1st massage and a free infrared sauna treatment. Please identify yourself as an NSGEU member at time of booking.

Hair Artistic & Laser Clinic

112-287 Lacewood Drive, Halifax
(902) 457-2266 www.haalc.ca
15% off the price of our microderm-abrasion, laser hair removal, laser vein treatment, laser facial and pigmented lesions services. This discount cannot be combined with any other promotions.

Spring Garden Cosmetic

5880 Spring Garden Road, Halifax
(902) 429-8784 www.sgcosmetic.com
15% off Laser hair removal, microdermabrasion, chemical peels and 10% off botox & filler treatments

SG MEDI SPA

463 Main Street, Wolfville. (902) 542-4225
www.sgmedispa.com
15% off Laser hair removal, microdermabrasion, chemical peels and 10% off botox & filler treatments

U Weight Loss Clinic of Halifax

278 Lacewood Drive
Clayton Park Shopping Centre, Halifax
(902) 431-8746, uhalifax@uweightloss.com

U Weight Loss Clinic of Dartmouth

250 Baker Drive
Russell Lake, Dartmouth
(902) 406-8746
Email: udartmouth@uweightloss.com
50% off weight loss services, including maintenance.

HOME HEATING

Superline Fuels

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

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Glidden Paints / Colour Your World

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

www.epaintstore.com

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

LumberMart

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

Roofmasters

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

INSURANCE

Johnson Insurance

(902) 453-9521, 1-800-561-0561
Preferred Service Plan Home-Auto Insurance

SNC Insurance

181 Herring Cove Rd., Halifax
(902) 477-2511, 1-800-838-2511
sncinsurance.ca
Discount for 2 more policies; life insurance coverage at reduced rates.

JEWELRY

Sutherland's Jewellery Limited

3650 Hammonds Plains Rd, Upper Tantallon
(902) 826-7034, (902) 826-9253
20% off original ticketed price, excluding all Kameleon line. NSGEU card required.

LEGAL SERVICES

Joel E. Pink Inc.

1-888-492-0550
Legal advice via telephone and, if necessary, a 1/2-hour office follow-up.

LOCKSMITHS

Atlantic Locksmiths Ltd.

114 Woodlawn Rd., Dartmouth
(902) 435-4722
10% on regular priced items (excluding labour)

PEST CONTROL

Ace Pest Control Ltd

2257 Lawrencetown Road
(902) 435-8118
15% off pest control services

SPORT AND FITNESS

Dalplex

Halifax (902) 494-6973
\$367 plus tax per person per year and \$567 per family per year. Includes all services, excluding the climbing wall and cardio plus room and towel service.

Dartmouth Sportsplex

110 Wyse Road, Dartmouth Call (902) 464-2600 ext. 340 for a free pass and tour. 15% discount off yearly rate on various membership options

The Tower

St. Mary's University Health & Fitness Club, Tower Rd., Halifax
(902) 420-5555
15% discount on memberships

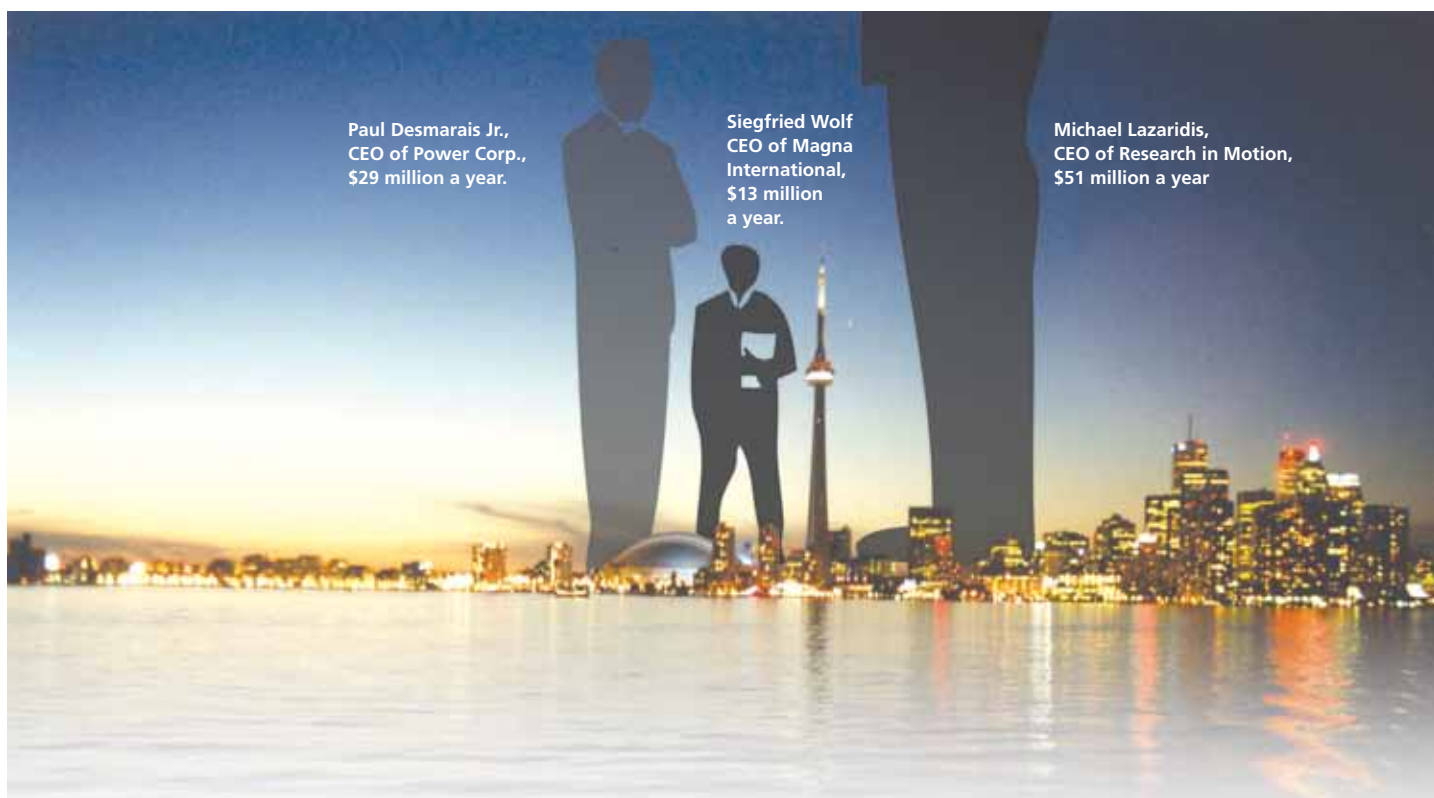
TRAVEL

VIA Rail Canada

A 5% discount for all Via train tickets purchased by NSGEU members (+ 3 member-accompanied passengers). The discount is applied to "best available regular public fare" prices and excludes certain promotional pricing packages. The tickets must be purchased from VIA (excludes tickets purchased through tour operators). The NSGEU discount code is 810721.

Park'N Fly, Halifax Airport

All NSGEU Members are entitled to a 20% discount simply by visiting www.parknfly.ca/content/en/partner-promotions.aspx?referralID=0&coupon=27900. Free shuttle to and from the terminal 24/7. Well lit secure compound; Quick check in and out. All major credit cards and debit cards accepted. No reservations required.



Paul Desmarais Jr.,
CEO of Power Corp.,
\$29 million a year.

Siegfried Wolf
CEO of Magna
International,
\$13 million
a year.

Michael Lazaridis,
CEO of Research in Motion,
\$51 million a year

"GRUFF" - CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION+SHARE ALIKE 2.5 GENERIC LICENSE.

SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE

According to authors Linda McQuaig and Neil Brooks, if people were as tall as their salaries, the very rich would tower far above us. Why do they have so much more than the rest of us?

The Trouble with Billionaires, by Linda McQuaig and Neil Brooks (Viking Canada, 2010)

Book Review By Margaret Anne McHugh

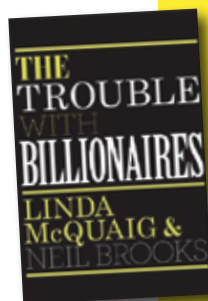
The opening of this book grabbed hold of me, right away.

The authors waste no time hooking you by first making sure that you are clear on just how big a billion is.

Right on the first page: given one dollar every second, in 12 days you would be a millionaire. It would take almost 32 years of counting before you would be a billionaire. If Bill Gates started counting his \$53 billion at that same rate, it would take 1,680 years. In other words, if he'd started counting in the year 330, he would just be wrapping up now.

Most of us don't really think much about how big these staggering sums are, and just what it means to have

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EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK:

In *The Trouble With Billionaires*, authors Linda McQuaig and Neil Brooks paint a striking picture to illustrate the vast gulf between rich and poor in this country. They ask us to imagine a parade in which we were all as tall as the amount of money we make. Most of us would be around the same height.

The rich would truly tower above us: "Way up there, for instance, is Siegfried Wolf, CEO of Magna International, with an income of \$13 million, standing 2,054 feet tall. Indeed, Wolf is so immense, he is actually taller than the CN Tower. Then there's Paul Desmarais Jr., CEO of Power Corporation, with a \$29 million income, standing more than twice as high at 4,582 feet, and Jim Balsillie, CEO of Research in Motion, at \$32 million and 4,980 feet tall. Robert Milton, the former CEO of Air Canada, who took home pay of \$42 million even as the company suffered terrible losses and thousands of Air Canada workers lost their jobs, is there too, standing 6,636 feet tall, well over a mile high. Then finally, the tallest man in Canada. Michael Lazaridis, another CEO of Research in Motion, with a take-home pay of \$51 million, standing 8,058 feet tall—more than a mile and a half high. From the viewing deck at the top of the CN Tower, we don't even come up to his knees."

And those are just the Canadian rich. "We need a set of binoculars to see the faces now appearing: Tiger Woods, with an income of \$100 million, measuring 2.9 miles high; Jerry Bruckheimer, creator of the hit TV series *Without A Trace* and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, \$145 million, 4.3 miles high. We get a glimpse of the hedge fund crowd — or at least of their feet. Their knees are utterly beyond view, even with high-powered binoculars. Then, finally, we are directly facing the soles of the shoes of the highest man in the parade: John Paulson. With a 2007 income of \$3.7 billion, Paulson stands 110 miles high. A high flying airplane is about chest level. His head juts well into outer space."

COURSES AND WORKSHOPS THAT HELP YOU SHAPE YOUR WORKPLACE FOR THE BETTER

The NSGEU offers its members a regular schedule of workshops and courses that are informative, thought-provoking and entertaining.

If you are interested in participating in any of these workshops, the union can help make it happen.

We will cover your transportation and child-care costs (as defined by the NSGEU Board policies) and will also help arrange for your time off work.

The first step is to make sure you're eligible for the workshop you're interested in (see the prerequisite column in the schedule below).

Next, make sure you can get the time away from work; ask your supervisor if you're able to take the time off, and let him or her know that the union will reimburse them for the wages you're paid while off on union business.

Some, but not all, of the collective agreements negotiated by the NSGEU allow employees to spend a certain amount of their work time on union business.

If you're eligible, and you can get the time off, fill out an application form. To get a form, contact the Labour Resource Centre at 902-424-4063 or 1-877-556-7438. Please note that space is limited in each workshop.

UPCOMING NSGEU WORKSHOPS & COURSES

Course	Dates	Location	Class size	Prerequisite	Description
New Activist	Mar 18, 19	NSGEU Boardroom (Metro A, B, C)	20	Members with no prior training.	Intro to the NSGEU, your rights and how the union can help you exercise them. Review of union processes, grievances, mobilization, and the importance of strong locals.
	Mar 28, 29	Holiday Inn Truro (PAG, CC)			
	April 4, 5	Best Western Liverpool (SS/Val)			
	April 29, 30	Sydney NSGEU Office (Cape Breton)			
	May 9, 10	NSGEU Boardroom (Metro A, B, C)			
Steward I	Mar 25, 26	NSGEU Boardroom (Metro A, B, C)	20	Stewards.	Introduction to the roles, responsibilities, and rewards of being a local steward. Introduction to grievance procedures and investigations.
	April 6, 7	Best Western Liverpool (SS/Val)			
	April 15, 16	Holiday Inn Truro (PAG, CC)			
	May 13, 14	Sydney NSGEU Office (Cape Breton)			
Steward II	April 1, 2	Port Hawkesbury (CB, PAG)	20	Stewards with six months experience at Level I.	In-depth grievance investigation. Strategies for dealing with management.
	May 6, 7	Sydney NSGEU office (Cape Breton/PAG)			
Week-long school	June 5-10	St. FX University, Antigonish	TBA	Members who are very active in the union.	

Metro = Metro A,B,C | CC = Cumberland, Colchester | CB = Cape Breton
PAG = Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough | SS = South Shore | Val = Valley

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those massive sums concentrated in a few hands.

Before I read the book, I was having a conversation with someone who doubted the damage from wealth concentration. He suggests there is something "natural" about it, and that in the middle ages, the difference between prince and pauper was greater than the difference today between rich and poor.

Not so say McQuaig and Brooks. According to them, the gap in 1688 between nobles and peasants was in fact much smaller.

So what is wrong with having few very rich people? That's really what the book is about – income inequality and why it is a problem.

It also helps explain in simple terms why the markets that are supposedly so "free" and "open" actually favour some groups, classes, and individuals (and I don't mean the public sector workers so often maligned these days).

Markets are not some naturally occurring feature of nature, but are purposefully designed to benefit particular people. Lots of people work hard all their lives; why do some deserve to be so insanely wealthy that they cannot even begin to use up the interest on their fortunes?

The authors point out that they are not opposed to some inequality. "On the contrary, we believe that some reasonable degree of inequality is not only acceptable, but even desirable, reflecting different levels of individual effort and contribution."

What about people who invent something really new like Bill Gates? Why does he deserve to make so much more than the rest of us? Or why do Broadway musical writers and movie producers make so much more than porn stars.

Everyone builds on those who came before, and as a result, most inventions are about to be produced by more people than the one that gets out the gate first.

On enormous CEO salaries, they address who gets to set them and point out that if janitors and secretaries salaries were set by janitors and secretaries. they would likely be higher paid.

The book is filled with interesting details – history, legislation, taxation, politics. Did you know, for example, that Canadian income tax came about during the First World War? The poor were "contributing to the nation's security on the battlefield" and so the demand was that the rich had to contribute through their wealth. "No conscription of men without conscription of wealth!" was the cry.

So taxation was originally a democratic duty and an essential part of democracy – likened to putting on a uniform for your country. Today, people seem to think that if there was true democracy, we wouldn't pay any tax.

Of course that is partly because of the shift of the burden of taxation in Canada over the last 50 years from the rich and corporations to the poor and average income earners.

Given that the National Union of Public and Government Employees (NUPGE) is running a campaign called All Together Now about who can work together to achieve a fair tax system, now is a great time to read this book.

Margaret Anne McHugh is the NSGEU's Education Officer.



The 2009-2011 Women's Issues Committee (left to right): Dawn Ferris, Elizabeth Murrant, Nancy Boudreau, Catherine Hiltz, Kelly Abi-Daoud, Hilary Lewis, Lisa Herrett, Kim Manthorne, Audrey Oliver, and Sandra Mullen.

WOMEN'S ISSUES COMMITTEE CELEBRATES ITS SUCCESSES

By Dawn Ferris

While getting to know each other at the start of our term together two years ago, the women of the 2009-2011 Women's Issues Committee (WIC) realized we have something in common: we all knew NSGEU sisters who are involved in their communities, volunteering their time and making a difference in the lives of others.

A plan was hatched: celebrate these sisters for the incredible things they do. A tagline evolved: NSGEU Women Do Great Things.

We set ourselves the goal of featuring one great NSGEU woman in each issue of *The Union Stand*. This burst of inspiration led us to incorporate the tagline into our logo and we even featured it on our t-shirts and hoodies and we proudly wear them to events we attend.

Since this is one of the last issues of *The Stand* for our term, I wanted to highlight the work done by the WIC members themselves. They are all great women of the NSGEU.

One of our most exciting successes has been working on the annual Women's Issues Conference, which takes place every spring. The theme for this year's conference is "Counting Women In." We felt it was important to show women that their voice matters.

While we can proudly say that, for the first time ever, the current NSGEU Board of Directors has 51 per cent women, it's still the case that women remain under-represented in politics, community leadership, and the workplace.

Why is this? Why do women not stand up

and demand a voice?

We know it does not always come easy; traditionally women aren't taught or encouraged to do so. The WIC wanted to help give women the tools to help find their voice and begin to "count themselves in."

The Conference includes guest speakers and interactive sessions that will encourage women to become more engaged in their union, their communities and even politics.

The WIC members have worked hard securing speakers, planning sessions and attending events. We've had some very long working meetings.

"I've only got two hours left in my 18 hour bra so you'd better hurry up and get the meeting finished," was my favorite comment of the term. I'll not name the author of this great quote, but after nearly eight hours of discussion and planning it made a very good point!

The conference is not all we do. On March 8, we'll be hosting our first ever International Women's Day event, a World Cafe style breakfast on March 8 that will bring together women of first-voice experience dealing with poverty together with women in Nova Scotia of prominence and influence.

We hope that some of the women of influence will have heard something that might inspire them to get engaged in this issue.

This has been a very busy term and the women themselves had created their own busy and ambitious goals and I am pleased to say your efforts for the WIC put you in the category of NSGEU Women Do Great things!

Unions Make A *Difference* In Our Lives

Do you know
of a group of
non-unionized
employees
who might be
interested
in joining
the NSGEU?

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1. Local 97 member Rita Morrison. **2.** Local 42 members Frances MacDonald (left) and Roberta Banfield. **3.** NSGEU Health Care Co-ordinator (and chief negotiator for Locals 42 and 97) Neil McNeil. **4.** Local 97 president Paolo Amati and Nancy Worobec.



BARGAINING UPDATES: Health care negotiations hit stumbling blocks

Offered 1% and nothing more, Locals 42 and 97 contemplate action

CDHA – Healthcare Bargaining Unit Local 42
Number of members: 3,889
Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009
Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean and Neil McNeil
 Proposals were exchanged on June 10, 2010 and negotiations have been proceeding slowly since. The employer has been standing firm on its demand that members accept one per

cent raised in each of two years with no other contract improvements. In January, the Bargaining Committee filed for conciliation which, at press time, was scheduled to begin on March 14. To go into conciliation with a clear mandate, the Bargaining Committee has also called a strike vote. Mail-in ballots were sent out to members in mid-February, and must be returned to the union's head office by March 11.

CDHA – Nurses Bargaining Unit Local 97
Number of members: 2,568
Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009
Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean and Neil McNeil
 Proposals were exchanged on June 30, 2010. Negotiations continued throughout the fall, and an information meeting was held on Nov. 29. Some non-monetary items have been agreed to.

Major outstanding items for the union include: increases to shift and weekend premiums, the long service increment, the late career nurse retention bonus, job security, and vacation. We also have outstanding issues concerning nurses specifically, such as charge nurse hiring, in-charge pay, and preceptor/mentoring. Talks broke down on Jan. 20, 2011 and the union has filed for conciliation.

CDHA – Office & Clerical Bargaining Unit Local 246

Number of members: 1557

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiators: Ann Barrett

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

CDHA – Support Services Bargaining Unit Local 19

Number of members: 1,221

Contract expiry date: October 31, 2009

Staff Negotiators: Robin MacLean & Neil McNeil

Bargaining committee have completed their review of input surveys and developed proposals. At press time, proposals were scheduled to be exchanged on the morning of March 28.

Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority Local 47

Number of members: 35

Contract expiry date: First Contract

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

Status of Negotiations: Proposals were exchanged December 2009. The employer has clearly communicated that its current mandate will not allow it to go beyond economic increases of one per cent. Negotiations broke down and NSGEU filed for conciliation in April 2010. The parties met again in November, but little progress was made. Conciliation was held Feb. 1, 2011. On Feb. 13, members voted 85 per cent in favour of strike to back their demands at the bargaining table. At press time, the parties were waiting for the conciliator to file the report. The major issue is parity with other unionized housing authorities.

Canadian Association for Community Living, Antigonish Branch Local 61

Number of members: 22

Contract expiry date: First Contract (Certified on July 14, 2009)

Staff Negotiator: Jo-Ann Bailey

The parties exchanged proposals on Jan. 26, 2010. Negotiations have taken place over the past year, but the union has applied for conciliation. A new administrator has recently been appointed. Conciliation took place on March 8 and 9. Major issues include scheduling, assignment of extra shifts and grandfathering of part time employees at pro-rated full-time benefits.

Eastern Mainland Housing Authority Local 2A

Number of members: 9

Contract expiry date: March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan

At press time, the parties were scheduled to exchange proposals on Feb. 28.

SEE BARGAINING ON THE NEXT PAGE



Regional Residential Services Society counsellor Melody Patey casts her ballot during Local 66's ratification vote just before Christmas. The local's new collective agreement was ratified by 93 per cent.

REACHING AGREEMENTS: Over the past half year, a dozen locals have bargained improved contracts

Regional Residential Services Society Local 66

Number of members: 303

Contract expiry date: March 31, 2012

Staff Negotiator: Ann Barrett

Proposals were exchanged on Sept. 16, 2010 and negotiations were held throughout the fall and early winter. A tentative agreement was reached on Dec. 3, and members voted 93 per cent in favour of ratification on Dec. 16 and 17. Highlights of the agreement include economic increases of 2.9 per cent on April 1, 2009 and one per cent on each of April 1, 2010 and 2011, as well as improvement in leaves of absence and shift differential.

Cape Breton

University Teachers Local 18

Number of members: 22

Contract expiry date: Oct. 31, 2012

Staff Negotiator: Tina Webber

The parties exchanged proposals on Jan. 24, 2011 and a tentative agreement was reached after three days of negotiation. The 22 members voted unanimously to ratify the agreement on Jan. 28. The two-year agreement includes a lump-sum payment of \$350 included in the employees' wages, in addition to a 1.5 per cent increase in the first year and a 1 per cent increase in the second. There were also improvements in professional development, pensions, and severance.

L'Universite Sainte-Anne Local 45

Number of members: 60

Contract expiry date: June 30, 2012

Staff Negotiator: Tina Webber

The bargaining committee presented proposals to the employer on Sept. 14, 2010, but negotiations soon stalled. On Dec. 9, during the first of two days scheduled for conciliation, a tentative agreement was reached. On Dec. 15, members voted 100 per cent in favour. Improvements included overtime, leaves, layoff provisions and classification appeal process.

South Shore

Regional School Board Local 70

Number of members: 72

Contract expiry date: March 31, 2012

Staff Negotiator: Lorna Blair

Proposals were exchanged April 2009. A tentative agreement was reached Nov. 5, 2010. The tentative agreement is for a three-year period and provides for economic increases of 2.9 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent. The Employer's share of the benefit plans will increase to 65 per cent, from the previous 55, retroactive to April 1, 2009. Also, members with 30 years of service will receive additional vacation entitlement. Members voted 100 per cent in favour of acceptance at the ratification vote held on Dec. 1.

SEE AGREEMENTS ON THE NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED FROM AGREEMENTS ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE**Tri-County Regional School Board Local 74****Number of members:** 51**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2012**Staff Negotiator:** Lorna Blair

Negotiations took place over the past year and the parties were able to achieve a tentative agreement providing for a three-year contract with economic increases of 2.9 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent. The cost sharing of benefits will be 65/35 employer/employee. As well, an additional week of vacation time after 28 years and an increase in the protective-clothing allowance have been achieved. The agreement was ratified by members during a vote on Dec. 8.

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board Local 73**Number of Members:** 410**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2012**Staff Negotiator:** Lorna Blair

Proposals were exchanged in April 2009 and a tentative agreement was reached Nov. 10, 2010. Highlights included an economic increase of 2.9 per cent on April 1, 2009 and increases of 1 per cent on April 1 in each of 2010 and 2011. Other improvements include an increase in the cost sharing of benefits by the employer from 50 per cent to 65 per cent, vacation pay of 8 per cent after 20 years of service, and a new classification of Student Support Worker I. Members voted 94 per cent in favour on Dec. 11, 2010.

Chignecto Central Regional School Board Local 71**Number of members:** 674**Contract expiry date:** June 30, 2012**Staff Negotiators:** Lorna Blair

The parties exchanged proposals on Jan. 13 and a tentative agreement was reached on Feb. 4. Highlights included 1% annual economic increases for all employees as well as an increase in the employer's portion of the cost-share of benefits from the current 55% to 65%. As well, the agreement includes a provision which ensures members receive the applicable bargaining unit rate of pay for all casual hours worked in their classification.

Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial Local 72**Number of members:** 121**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2012**Staff Negotiator:** Lorna Blair

Negotiations commenced on Nov. 29, 2010 and a tentative agreement was reached the next day. Members voted 81 per cent in favour of acceptance of the tentative agreement on Dec. 17. The agreement provides for economic increases of one per cent in each year of a two-year agreement as well as improvements in maternity leave top-up. The employer committed to paying retroactive monies by February.

Chisholm Youth Services Local 62**Number of members:** 16**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2012**Staff Negotiator:** Ann Barrett

Proposals were exchanged in June 2009. A new union negotiator resulted in some delays and then an impasse was reached and a conciliator was called in. On the eve of conciliation, the members voted 100 per cent in favour of strike. During conciliation, a tentative agreement was reached and then ratified by the members.

CONTINUED FROM BARGAINING ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE**Cobequid Housing Authority Local 26****Number of members:** 37**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2010**Staff Negotiator:** Grant Vaughan

The parties exchanged proposals on Dec. 13, 2010 and at press time, negotiations were scheduled to continue March 1 to 4.

Correctional Officers Local 480**Number of members:** 440**Contract expiry date:** October 31, 2009

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

Workers Compensation Board Local 55**Number of members:** 343**Contract expiry date:** December 31, 2009

Staff Negotiator: Lorna Blair
Proposals were exchanged on Jan. 12, 2011. The parties continued negotiations on through January and February and, at press time, were scheduled to continue with dates in March and April.

Nova Scotia Community College – Support Staff Local 267**Number of members:** 596**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan
The parties met and exchanged proposals on Oct. 14, 2010 and several days of negotiations have taken place since.

EDC (Agricultural College) Local 3**Number of members:** 68**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2008

Staff Negotiator: Grant Vaughan
Proposals were exchanged in June 2008, and negotiations were held throughout 2008, 2009 and 2010 (including a hearing before the Civil Service Employee Relations Board) but have now been referred to interest

arbitration. The major issue is parity with universities. At press time, the parties were working with the Civil Service Employee Relations Board to set up the Interest Arbitration Board.

Dalhousie University Local 77**Number of members:** 838**Contract expiry date:** June 30, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Tina Webber
The parties exchanged proposals on Nov. 24, 2010. Several days of negotiations took place in December and January. On Jan. 31, the union filed for conciliation. In addition to wage increases, other key proposals for the local include improvements to the job evaluation process, salary ranges and classification point ranges, vacation, bereavement leave and layoff provisions.

Home Support Negotiations, Locals 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 76, 83, 84 and VON Locals 31, 35, 40 & 85**Number of members:** 1,324**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: John Cook
A bargaining convention for all NSGEU Home Support Bargaining Committee members was held on Sept. 27, 2010. Committee members reviewed the results of the bargaining input surveys and identified and itemized bargaining priorities, and meetings continued across the province. Bargaining dates have now been scheduled in March and April for Locals 30, 36, 37, 39 and 76. The other locals will begin bargaining in the spring.

First Student Canada Local 98**Number of members:** 108**Contract expiry date:** First contract for group-

certified on March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Neil McNeil

Proposals were exchanged and three days of negotiations were held in November 2010. At press time, the parties were scheduled to continue negotiations on February 7, 8 and 9. Talks are scheduled to continue on March 28, 29 and 30.

Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation – Clerical Local 470E**Number of members:** 35**Contract expiry date:** March 31, 2010

Staff Negotiator: Neil McNeil
The parties met and exchanged proposals on Jan. 10. Negotiations took place throughout January and February. Talks have broken down and the union has filed for conciliation.

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



**Remember:
We need your information, not your name.**

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

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

We know the services you provide are important to you and the public you support.

We know these reductions in staff will just make it worse. We need to fight these reductions. To do that, we need to know where they are happening.

DON'T BE LEFT BEHIND

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

We want your information not your name.

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

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

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

www.nsg.eu.ca/cutstoppers

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Natural Resources
Forestry Tech

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Holly
Community
Services Counsellor

Your Services



Rachel
Community Services
Caseworker

Worth Protecting



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Publication Mail Number 40010698

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