Season’s Greetings to you all!

Well, the Christmas season is upon us. I guess most of you are ready for the big guy in the Red Suit by now! Christmas is the time of year we try to put our differences aside and wish good will and cheer to all those around us. With all of the preparations and festivities at this time of the year, most of us seem to be in a much better frame of mind. The parties are beginning and the decorations are going up. This is a reminder to all of you to try and get to our annual Christmas Party being held at the Breezeway on December 19. This is always a great time. There will be lots of great food and prizes to given away. Come and join us if you can and socialize with your fellow 1615 members.

For me Christmas is a time especially for family and friends. I enjoy spending all the time I can with my family and those nearest and dearest to my heart. I come from a large family (5 brothers and 5 sisters) so a party is always being held somewhere. Of course there is always lots of good food, great music and even a beverage or two for those who are so inclined. I hope you enjoy your time off this Christmas Season and try to relax and have some fun with your own families and friends.

Even with the Christmas Season upon us we still have to take care of business. Our negotiations are continuing and so far things are going relatively well. For those of you who completed our survey this fall, I thank you again. All comments and suggestions were taken very seriously and many of your concerns are being brought to the table.

Grievances are still being discussed with HR. We currently have a couple of pressing grievances that may have to go to arbitration. This will be discussed with the grievance committee very soon and a recommendation will be made to apply for arbitration or not. We hope to meet with the relevant members before long – if not before the holidays, then early in the New Year. I will be in touch with those involved. It seems there are a few departmental reviews occurring here on campus. I am not sure what the real intentions are for these reviews. Would this be to streamline and make the department more efficient, is it to see if staff complements are what they should be? Would more staff be needed or would some positions be deemed unnecessary? I have been assured by HR that it is not the intention of HR or the departments to remove any positions. I am currently involved with one department that is having such interviews with many of its staff to get a clear picture of the actual daily routine, job description and overall roles of the employees. If your department is involved in any kind of review and you have any questions or concerns please contact me and together we will get some
answers.

With the expansion of the Faculty of Engineering planned over the next number of years and the new core sciences infrastructure in the works I am hoping to see the creation of more permanent positions. There are still far too many contractual positions on our campuses. Our province is in a good, sound place financially. Let’s hope some of this finds its way to Memorial. I would like to see all contractual positions made permanent so members in these positions can have the same sense of security and stability, both financial and personally, that permanent employees enjoy.

Remember – I am here for any of you anytime that you need me. Your executive is always available too. Whether you need representation at a meeting or have a question or comment concerning your contract. Don’t hesitate to contact any of us.

Let’s hope the New Year brings a great contract to all of us. Let’s hope for a peaceful, harmonious working environment where we are glad to come to work every day. With these things in place we can all benefit. Memorial wants to be the employer of choice and we want to be thriving employees with a fair, equitable and decent contract. I wish all of you the best this holiday season and hope you have a happy and prosperous New Year.

Be safe and remember: Don’t Drink and Drive.

Merry Christmas!
Theresa Antle,
President
Health & Safety Conference

I recently attended the 11th CUPE Occupational Health and Safety Conference in Ottawa. It was a great opportunity for me because I am new to the OH&S world. The conference was comprised of presentations by various CUPE National employees, a panel discussion on “Facing new challenges and seeking opportunities,” as well as various workshops. I attended the Environmental Health/Environmental Workplace Action and Psychosocial and Mental Health and Work Organization workshops. They were both excellent. The Psychosocial workshop focused a fair bit on workplace stress. It is currently a very big issue in today’s workplaces.

The other part of this workshop was mental issues in the workplace. It is a common occurrence to work with a co-worker who is suffering from mental health issues. It can be challenging for the person with the illness as well as co-workers and employers who do not understand these illnesses. A big part of this problem is a lack of education.

The highlight of the conference for me was the keynote speaker, Dr. Linda Rae Murray. She has been an activist for OH&S for many years. She used personal experience and stories to relay some important issues. She also explained why workplace health and safety should be considered a basic human right. As Dr. Murray said in her closing, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

by Chad Carroll

Week-Long

I had the pleasure of attending the CUPE Atlantic Region Weeklong School from May 28th- June 1st, 2012 at The Inverary Resort in Baddeck, Nova Scotia.

Brothers and Sisters from many CUPE locals in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland gathered together to attend various courses.
I attended The Steward Learning Series and found it both enlightening and interesting.

Some of the Modules focused on were Note-taking; What Stewards Need to know about Health and Safety; What Stewards need to know about Arbitration and Challenging Homophobia in the Workplace.
Role playing and class discussion played an integral part of this learning experience.

Many friends were made and a lot was learned.
I encourage our Members to become active participants in your union. There is so much to learn about making our workplace a better one.

by Catherine Ducey
Early in November I attended an NDP sponsored Town Hall Meeting regarding the proposed Muskrat Falls Hydro Electric development. Like many unionists, my politics is left of centre and needless to say I support the NDP both provincially and federally; naturally I had to personally take in the forum. It was well attended. People expressed their concerns about doing the project as well as concerns about not doing the project. Thought provoking comments and opinions came from young and old alike, intellectuals, political war horses, a Labrador resident, and there was even someone from Nalcor.

The facts, associated risks, and purported benefits are many and a little too onerous to enumerate here. But it will suffice to say here that this project poses such a financial burden on our province that it harkens back to the eventual financial and political destruction that the construction of The Newfoundland Railway heaped on this once independent Dominion of Newfoundland. The stakes involved here and now pose no less risk with building an environmentally unfriendly damn on the lower Churchill River with subsea and overland transmission lines across the province. As well, the costing is already ballooning and the actual expense of the financing during construction has been erroneously omitted from the publicized estimates.

The provincial government has presented their side of the argument supporting construction by using their own consultants for endorsement while ignoring our own Public Utilities Board. This raises suspicion. They also have the provincial treasury at their disposal to sell us the deal, over which at this late stage they may very well be helplessly delusional, through expensive mass media advertising campaigns. Selling the deal to us may prove to be a hell of a lot easier than selling the exportable power to eastern North American jurisdictions awash in natural gas and much bigger and more easily available Quebec hydro electric power.

Opinions are difficult to refute because they are expressions of one’s feelings toward the subject at hand. Some are more informed than others; some may be supported by fact, while others may be borne out of emotion. The side of an issue one chooses to support is obviously a function of what their opinion is. That is why it would be appropriate for not only our brothers and sisters but for every Newfoundlander and Labradorian to formulate their opinions and take a stand on whether or not we should be going ahead with the Muskrat Falls development. If you happen to like the opinion of someone whom you trust and you feel like endorsing, then that’s okay too.

The question of whether or not this project is brought to fruition could very well be decided by referendum. But judging by the way this
government is behaving itself I do not expect that to happen. So if we support this project or we feel that there is a need to stop it before it gets us in over our heads, we all need to be informed. For your convenience I have included a couple of sites both for and against for your further consideration.

FOR:  www.powerinourhands.ca ...you paid for this one and it is chock-a-block full

AGAINST:  www.pa-nl.ca  and  www.vision2041.com/

By Mike Fitzpatrick

---

YOU ARE THE UNION

A few "DO's" and "DON'T's" calculated to test the sincerity of WE who are the UNION:

Do Study the Constitution/By-Laws

Do Study your contract

Do Attend as many meetings as possible.

Do Learn the difference between a legitimate grievance and complaint whether such be frivolous or well founded.

Do Memorize the Order of Business and follow it when attending meetings (when in doubt ask guidance of the Chair).

Do Think before WE vote!

Don't Say "Why doesn't the Union" instead of "Why don't WE ...?"

Don't Stay away from meetings and gripe about "Unwise" decisions afterwards.

Don't Go "over the Head" of YOUR Steward.

Don't Think that if things are not to OUR liking there just isn't anything WE as individuals can do about it.

Don't Believe the Union is not vitally important to US. Next to OUR home and family, the Union is OUR most important interest.
CUPE 1615 CHRISTMAS PARTY
ST. JOHN’S CAMPUS
THE BREEZEWAY

Wednesday December 19, 2012 at 5:00pm - 11:00pm

Come join us for the merriment!
Two free drink tickets
Food
Door Prizes (Santa will be there)
Dancing
And of course, good company!

Admission: a nonperishable food item or a cash donation for the Campus Food Bank
CUPE 1615 Christmas Party
GRENFELL CAMPUS

Monday, December 17
7 pm for 7:30 Sit-down Supper
Elks Club, 9 Carmen Avenue
Please RSVP by December 13

To Linda: lholwell@grenfell.mun.ca with your meal choice:
Chinese or Bring Your Own
(re-imbursement available with receipt)

If you play a musical instrument please bring it along.
Meeting Schedule

**Tuesday, January 8th, 5:00 PM**  
Room ED2018B(St. John’s)

**Tuesday, February 12th, 5:00 PM**  
Room ED2018B(St. John’s)

**Tuesday, March 12th, 5:00 PM**  
Room ED2018B(St. John’s)

**Tuesday, April 9th, 5:00 PM**  
Room ED2018B(St. John’s)

**Tuesday, May 14th, 5:00 PM**  
Room ED2018B(St. John’s)

---

**Agenda**

- Roll call of officers
- Reading of the Equality Statement
- Reading of minutes from last meeting
- Business arising
- Treasurer’s report
- Communications
- Executive board report
- Reports of committees
- Unfinished business
- New business

---

Any views or opinions presented in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of CUPE local 1615.