Hello Brothers and Sisters!

Christmas seems like such a long time ago but I hope all of you enjoyed your holiday and got a well-deserved rest. If we are lucky, spring is just around the corner and we can put all of this snow and cold weather behind us. Meanwhile, we are working full force on your behalf.

Negotiations

Negotiations are still underway. So far we have been working on improving language in many areas. Overall, things have been going pretty well. The big thing left now is the financial discussion. Until the budget comes down from government at the end of March we don't know what the university administration will bring to the table. Government of course is stating how financially unstable the province is and how the "deficit" is going to affect all areas of the public sector. The message seems to be that we have to "tighten our belts" and not expect too much on the financial front. As your union president I don't accept that the province is in the dire situation being projected, but right now we are at the mercy of the provincial government and just have to wait and see how things will play out. I do want to assure all of you that your negotiating committee will be working very hard to get the best and most solid deal we can possibly get for all of us.

PD Fund

I would like to remind you about the CUPE Professional Development fund. In 2008 we negotiated a fund of $50,000 to assist in any kind of professional development. Conferences and educational opportunities are the main areas that receive funding. Details can be found in this newsletter on page 7. As of January of this year there was still approximately $20,000 remaining in the fund pool and if all of this is not utilized we cannot carry it over. I urge any of you interested in any developmental opportunities to take advantage and apply. I am currently investigating the possibility of setting up group sessions for courses on Excel, Pensions, Benefits, or anything that you, the members, would like to have. If any of you have suggestions please let me know.
Know Your Contract
I would like to stress the importance of knowing your contract. This can only benefit you. If you have concerns in your workplace and have a question please contact me. Most often your concerns are just that, and a phone call or discussion with HR often answers our questions or corrects the problems we are facing. I want you to know you have rights as a member of this union and our job is to protect you and your jobs here at Memorial.

Contractual vs Permanent
I am very concerned about the large number of contractual positions currently here at Memorial. I have been in contact with HR to verify the number of contractual positions verses permanent positions. It is our goal to convert as many contractual positions into permanent as we can. In today's economic times permanent positions are the most secure and knowing you have a secure, permanent position removes a lot of stress from our already stressful lives. We should not have to worry if our positions will be extended or not, we should feel secure and confident that our positions here at MUN are safe.

Happy Birthday CUPE 1615!
On a lighter note, this July will mark the 40th anniversary of 1615 and we are in the process of planning some special events to commemorate this milestone. If any of you have any memorabilia you would like to share with us please contact me or one of the executive and we can arrange to have your material scanned or copied. If you do submit anything, we will make sure all material is protected and will be returned to you as soon as we are finished compiling our data and pictures. I know we have many former activists who could be great sources of information.

We’re Here
If you have any questions or concerns in relation to anything in your workplace or your positions don’t hesitate to contact me or one of the other executive. We are all here for you, whether it is just a question, clarification on an issue or anything else. Your concerns are very important and it is our job to try and get the answers you need.

In Solidarity,
Theresa Antle ☺

Happy International Women’s Day to all the Women of Local 1615.

Created by Puzzlemaker at DiscoveryEducation.com
I recently attended CUPE's first ever National Bargaining Conference, held in Ottawa, February 5-8, 2013. In attendance were 1000 CUPE representatives from coast to coast, with one common goal: to examine the bargaining challenges each of us face today. More and more our employers and governments try to undermine our power, insisting on drastic concessions and rollbacks, while our right to collective bargaining is under attack. Some of the main pieces of these agreements: pensions, benefits, job security, wages, etc, are also threatened.

Day One...
was met with the challenge of travel, as 1000s of our fellow members arrived from coast to coast to begin the process of registration and hotel check-ins. At the evening meet and greet, Paul Moist, National President of CUPE, gave the opening address. He spoke of the economic and political hurdles we face and the accomplishments we celebrate as we enter our 50th anniversary as a union. A great evening of entertainment was provided by The Debaters and comedian Christopher Hall.

Day Two...
opened with a strong panel discussion on "Building an Economy That Works". Guest panelist Armine Yalnizyan (CCPA), made this powerful statement on the subject, " Unions are being targeted, not because they are middle class. You smash unions, you are clearing the terrain for corporations to do whatever they want." Yalnizyan added, "While public policy is trying to push down the floor, unions must fight to push up the floor. When you do that, you raise your credibility with people in the community. If you want to raise the floor, you have to raise the roof. We need to hear your voice everywhere." The afternoon session covered an equally important topic: "Learning From Others and Making Allies." We heard from Paul Booth who was a leader in the 60's at the beginning of the student movement and today is Organizing Director of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Booth emphasized it is his belief that the key to fighting back against the attack on the public sector is by working with non-union groups. He says it is worth the risk in admitting we can't do this ourselves. He went on to speak of the support he received "north of the border" (CUPE/Canada) and said, "You stood with us when our backs were against the wall, and I swear we'll stand with you". He also offered us this parting advice, "Don't wait for it all to come down on you. Start organizing now." I believe this statement had the biggest impact on me during the week. We also have to begin planning now. The evening hours provided the opportunity to meet and mingle with Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition and Canada's New Democratic Party and 28 NDP MPs, including Newfoundland's own Jack Harris.

Day Three...
took on the topic of "Standing Up For Workers." Much debate took place as panelists and delegates approached the subject of temporary foreign workers, and the need to remove the discriminatory policies facing these

"If you want to raise the floor, you have to raise the roof. We need to hear your voice everywhere."
workers so that we can help those workers who came here to work to also gain citizenship. The day continued with sessions on "Negotiating Power: Pushing Back Against Austerity." Regional directors from across the country joined this panel discussion. It seems country wide, everyone agrees, the key to successful bargaining is communication! "The membership always has to be the focus of our communications," said Gordon Black, Regional Director for the Maritimes. "If the membership is informed, aware of the issues, and firmly behind the committee, the bargaining committee has a much better chance to achieve a good deal for the members."

The afternoon session brought back National President Paul Moist and National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury front and centre for a much needed session: Your Leaders, Your Voice: Asking and Answering the Tough Questions. They took several questions from delegates on the floor as well as questions submitted via Twitter, a first for a CUPE National Conference. It seemed as if the main topics on the floor involved national resources, staff and financial support and how locals can avail of these services. National political action was discussed and that is a priority today. Another common concern was how to mobilize members. Moist and Fleury listened and agreed that these concerns were valid and they answered each question put to them. "The only way forward is organizing to win the hearts and minds of our members. This is going to mean wearing out some shoes," said Moist, pointing out a conference like this one is a step in that direction. "This is the first time the leaders of this union have sat in a room and talked about nothing but bargaining, and it shouldn't be the last."

Day Four...

wrapped up with young workers taking the stage to present their views and discuss their opinions on the topic, "We're All in This Together." They spoke of the challenges that face them in today's work force and the need for CUPE to continue to provide them with education and opportunities such as this one. Charles Fleury, National Secretary-Treasurer of CUPE, had the closing remarks for the conference, "Your ideas, your energy, your commitment, and the fantastic turnout of delegates to this conference show that bargaining remains at the core of our work as union," said Fleury. "And your discussions here show that any speculation that the labour movement is losing steam is false, absolutely false." I feel very fortunate to have attended this conference. It was a new experience for me and I look forward to any future opportunities.

Attending from CUPE 1615: Theresa Antle, Chad Carroll, Peggy Chafe, Bev Greene, Keir Hiscock and Mike Murphy.

Scenes from Christmas Past

Spirits were high as CUPE members gathered for their 2012 Christmas party. The 2012 party saw more than 150 members in attendance—one of the highest turnouts ever—and included that jolly old elf from the North Pole (or perhaps Conception Bay North). CUPE collected a number of boxes of non-perishable food items, and more than $390 for the Campus Food Bank. Thanks to everyone who participated. Until next year!
The Presidents of the four Federations of Labour in Atlantic Canada are condemning changes by the Harper government to the country's Employment Insurance program, saying the changes are about creating a pool of cheap labour and suppressing the wages of all Canadians.

They are calling on the government to "scrap the changes" and halt its campaign to "demonize and vilify" the unemployed.

The government's demonizing of the unemployed, blaming them for being tossed on the unemployment line, is merely an attempt to divert attention from what's really driving the EI reforms introduced in Budget 2012 and implemented January 2013, said the Presidents of the four labour federations.

"The Harper changes are about catering to a low-wage dependency. Like the changes to the temporary foreign worker program that allow employers to pay migrant workers 15% less than prevailing wage rates, the EI rules force unemployed workers to take jobs outside their skill range and for 30% less than their regular pay. This does not make for good labour market policy and it's not good economic policy either," said Lana Payne, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour.

"These rules will have a chilling impact on the wages for all Canadians," she noted.

The labour leaders say the rules will not just hurt workers, but will also have an impact on many businesses throughout the Atlantic region who are seasonal in nature or who experience peaks and lulls in production and who are dependent on available local workers. This is not just true of the Atlantic region. These are realities confronting workers and businesses right across Canada from assembly plant workers and educational assistants to hotel workers and store clerks.

"We need all Canadians to be working in jobs they have been trained to do, not being forced to take low-paid jobs as the new EI rules dictate. This will adversely impact Canada's labour productivity. The purpose of Employment Insurance - in addition to serving as a safety net for Canadian workers and their families - is to allow for better job market matches, not faster job market matches," said Rick Clarke, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour.

Michel Boudreau, President of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, said workers will continue to demand better from the Harper government. "We will continue to fight these changes. We have only begun our campaign to get these changes scrapped. Employment Insurance is our program. It is paid for by workers and employers. These changes ignore the reality of the job market in New Brunswick. We have 10 unemployed workers for every job vacancy. Not everyone can move or commute to Alberta to work. We have families, we have communities. This is a not a solution, it is a penalty," said Mr. Boudreau.

Workers from Prince Edward Island, said Federation President Carl Pursey, are worried about what these changes will mean for them. "They are worried they are going to be left out in the cold. Businesses are worried also. Worried the EI changes will hurt their ability to recruit workers."

The labour leaders agree that the changes do little to support the labour market realities of the country and Canada's diverse economy.

They say the federal government must scrap the changes and instead consult with labour and workers about real reforms to Employment Insurance that reflect the realities of Canada's job market and economy and Canada's unemployed.
APPLICATION FORM FOR SCHOLARSHIPS
ADMINISTERED BY THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE of CUPE1615
(All information supplied on this form is confidential.)

Have you previously been awarded a CUPE Scholarship? Yes _____ No _____
Are you currently a full time student? Yes _____ No _______

I affirm the information in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date: _______________ 2013   Signature ___________________________________________

Qualifications for receiving CUPE 1615 scholarships
Only sons, daughters or spouses of current, honorary, retired or deceased members of CUPE Local 1615 are eligible to receive scholarships. Scholarships will be open to students currently in full-time attendance at any University or a program (of at least 2 years duration) at any other recognized post-secondary institution. Scholarships will be based on an average of at least 65% in their previous full-time semester. (Please include official transcript with this application. If the transcript lists letter grades only (eg. A+, A, B, etc.) the student must also include an official notice from their institution, explaining the numerical value of the grade (eg. A+ = 90-100, A = 80-89, etc.).) Scholarships will be based on academic achievement only. No person shall receive more than one (1) CUPE Local 1615 scholarship.

7 x $500 scholarships available, 5 of these will be reserved for Memorial University students assuming there are five applicants who meet the minimum requirements.

Deadline Date for Application: Friday, April 26, 2013.
Scholarships will be awarded at the May Meeting.

Return to: Scholarships | c/o CUPE Local 1615 | Box 110 | Arts & Admin. Bldg. | Memorial University of Newfoundland | St. John's, NL | A1C 5S7

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Tel.: (W) ____________________ (C) ____________________ (H) ____________________

Name of parent/spouse who is a CUPE member

Parent/spouse’s union status Current ___ Honorary ___ Retired ___ Deceased ___ (check one)

Address of parent/spouse who is a CUPE member

University department of parent/spouse who is a CUPE member

I affirm the information in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date: _______________ 2013   Signature ___________________________________________
A short story by Kevin Layman

The Gold Diggers Nightclub on East Freemont Street was the last nightclub to update its décor from the Elvis inspired kitsch of the early 1970's into a more pleasing, and less comical, scheme. Considering the drawing power of Elvis and friends in Vegas during the 70's, one can understand the need for homage. The velvet wallpaper, ornate but garish ceiling lamps and odd, bluish tinted lighting gave one the impression of living inside a jewelry box, sans muzak. Back in the day, it was customary for nightclubs to add the "Elvis touch" in an attempt to lure the singer to their place, if only for a pit stop. Then, pictures would be taken and voila, your nightclub became a 'hip spot'. Unfortunately, even then, Elvis impersonators abounded and many an establishment had to do a double take to make sure the real Elvis was making a visit.

I was there a week before the facelift and picked the Gold Diggers club for that evening because they promised a night of blues. Vegas, rain and blues seemed cliché and appropriate.

I arrived early, in time to catch the intermission. An old magician named Henrik. No adjectives, like Henrik the Magnificent or even Henrik the Capable. His assistant, no name supplied, her hair done in a wonderful plume of red beehive, was chewing gum and rolling her eyes at the conclusion of each trick. It was a remarkable show of boredom or nonchalance. I reckoned her to be a relative; I couldn't imagine the pay to be enticing enough to keep her going in this career. The few people in attendance yawned and occasionally...very occasionally, applauded. I felt bad for the old man, and applauded at every trick. Mercifully, the show was soon over. He made a grand gesture of bowing; Ms. Assistant grumpily picked up the props and threw them in the box just offstage.

As I was leaving to get a sandwich, I met up with him in the narrow hallway leading to the dressing rooms. He recognized me from the small crowd, probably from my clapping. He came over to me and shook my hand.

"Thank you for your patronage." He smiled and winked, meaning he was either mocking the crowd or genuinely appreciative.

"You're welcome. I love magic." He folded his cape into a small bundle.

"I've been doing magic for forty years. At times, I was good. But not many people like the old acts anymore. They need spectacle and loud noises."

"It's true. But I still like the magic act. I want to be fooled. And I think you're still good."

He tapped his cape and thanked me, and started to head down the aisle, but turned and smiled again.

"You know, I can still pull a rabbit out of my hat...but I can't put it back."

Then he laughed and went to his room.

For a second I felt sorry for him, and then I thought of what he said. In the grand scheme of things, he was absolutely right.
2013 Meetings Schedule

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month:

- March 12
- April 9
- May 14

5 - 7:30 p.m.  
Adjournment time is approximate.

Yes the union meeting is right after work, but we'll feed you before the meeting starts. Come on along!

Rooms
St. John's: ED2018B  
Corner Brook: AS275

Rooms are subject to change. Please consult the union’s website.

Proceedings
- Roll call of officers;
- Reading of the equality statement;
- Reading of the minutes from the last meeting;
- Business arising;
- Treasurer’s report;
- Communications;
- Executive board report;
- Committee reports;
- Unfinished business;
- New Business;
- For the good of the union.

Child care costs/commitments keeping you from attending?

Your union will reimburse you for your child care so you can attend our monthly meetings.

Contact Theresa Antle:  
Tel.: 864-2393  
Email: tantle@cupe1615.ca

Note! New email contact information for your executive.
Your executive recently purchased the rights to the cupe1615 domain name for email service.

Your executive can now be reached at the following:

President
Theresa Antle  
tantle@cupe1615.ca

1st Vice-president
Susan Kearsey  
skearsey@cupe1615.ca

2nd Vice-president
Keir Hiscock  
khiscock@cupe1615.ca

3rd Vice-president
Diane Johnson  
djohnson@cupe1615.ca

Treasurer
Ed Whelan  
ewhelan@cupe1615.ca

Communications Secretary
Carol Kennedy  
ckennedy@cupe1615.ca

Recording Secretary
Patrick Tyler  
ptyler@cupe1615.ca

Seargent-at-Arms
Jerry Smith  
jsmith@cupe1615.ca

Label here