Hello brothers and sisters,

I’m writing this report while on vacation and enjoying all that comes with the sunny south, so right now it’s hard to imagine going back to cold weather. Here’s hoping spring will really arrive!

On April 1st we all received our 3% increase and with that also came an increase in some of our benefits. I know that’s a hard pill to swallow but because of a larger than average (almost 50%) increase in LTD claims last year, this increase was seen to be necessary. These benefits are there for our use and protection and your benefits committee worked very hard to keep the increase to the lowest possible rate.

Increased attacks on working people by government supported by profit-hungry corporations leave all of us vulnerable. As there will be both federal and provincial elections this year we need to strengthen our union within the context of our political environment. Educating ourselves is the key in fighting back and preparing ourselves for what may lie ahead.

We have a few interesting things coming up that you should know about.

During the last weekend of April we have a “Getting to Know Your Contract” session. This entails reviewing our contract so we all know how it should be applied in our workplaces. Through this review we also get great feedback from members on any articles that are not clearly defined and may need improvement. With bargaining coming up in less than a year this discussion will really help point out areas we need to improve.

CUPE NL convention is happening in the first week of May. This focuses mainly on areas of concern provincially and nationally. With our current government in its current state, it is very important that we all make our voices heard and get our concerns addressed. Most locals from the province will be represented at this convention and we collectively discuss and address issues that CUPE NL needs to address on our behalf.

We also have our annual weeklong school coming up during the last weekend in May. This is a fabulous forum where attendees have the opportunity to study in depth many critical areas of interest. This year courses being offered are: Occupational Health and Safety, Introduction to Stewarding, modules from the advanced Steward Learning Series, Conflict Resolution, and Building Strong Local Unions. These courses are facilitated by CUPE National’s team of fully trained and experienced facilitators. Those who have attended in the past always come away with a feeling of better understanding and empowerment and really put their activism into gear on a new level.

continued on next page
FROM YOUR PRESIDENT continued

Last, but certainly not least we are continually offering CUPE education weekend courses. The full list of courses offered each winter and spring is always posted on our website, our newsletters and discussed at your regular monthly meetings. From first-hand experience, I know that the more we educate ourselves the greater chance we have at defending our rights and concerns. Your union knowledge and involvement can only benefit us all collectively.

I keep reminding members that we need your constant input. You are the ones who need to be vigilant in your workplaces and report any concerns to your stewards or to one of the executive. We must all take an active role and make sure we are treated with fairness, dignity and respect, and that our contract is being followed.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns my door is always open. You can call, drop in or e-mail me anytime.

In Solidarity

Theresa

TWO EVENTS AT THE BOTANICAL GARDEN FOR CUPE 1615

GARDEN WALK
Come join your fellow members for a stroll at the Botanical Garden!

WHO: 1615 Members only
WHAT: 1 hour garden tour, lead by Head Gardener, Carl White (a 1615 member for 27 years!)
WHERE: MUN Botanical Garden, 306 Mt. Scio Road (free parking available, but spots are limited so we encourage carpooling if possible).
WHEN: Saturday, June 27, 2015; from 2-3pm
HOW: Registration Required, as there is limited space available. Visit our 1615 webpage to save your spot! www.mun.ca/cupe1615/

Registered members will be welcome to arrive early/stay late to walk in the gardens or on the trails on their own while the Garden is open (10am-5pm). The Garden Cafe will be open for refreshments, but reservations are recommended by calling 753-0173.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact Christine at cbyers@cupe1615.ca

CUPE 1615 Family Nature Fun Day
Come join your fellow members and their families for a hike, duck feeding, crafts, story time and more!

WHO: 1615 Member Families (Program is recommended for toddlers to 10 year olds). Registration covers the 1615 member, their partner (or a second guardian i.e. a grandparent), and up to 5 of their own children
WHAT: 1.5 hour program with a start time of 10:30am OR 2:00pm. The program will consist of a 45 minute nature hike to Oxen Pond to feed the ducks, followed by a 45 minute session at the field centre for snack, storytime, and crafts.
WHERE: MUN Botanical Garden, 306 Mt. Scio Road (free parking available, but spots are limited so we encourage carpooling if possible).
WHEN: Sunday, June 21, 2015, EITHER 10:30am-12noon or 2-3:30pm
HOW: Registration Required, as there is limited space available. Visit our 1615 webpage to save your spot! www.mun.ca/cupe1615/

Registered members will be welcome to arrive early/stay late to walk in the gardens, or on the trails on their own while the Garden is open (10am-5pm). The Garden Cafe will be open for refreshments, but reservations are recommended by calling 753-0173.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact Christine at cbyers@cupe1615.ca
A PARTING WORD
from Patrick Tyler (ret’d)

In approaching my retirement, I asked myself: “If I were called upon to share a few parting words with my fellow union members, what would I say?”

First and foremost, I would say “THE UNION IS AN NECESSARY AND VALUABLE INSTITUTION”.

Having been on the executive and having had a behind-the-scenes perspective on the union’s business, I’m comfortable in saying “without the union, arbitrary and disrespectful behaviour on the part of the employer would be the commonplace rather than the exception”. Which is why it irks me no end when I hear people complain that “the union hasn’t done anything for me! I don’t see where I’m getting anything for my money (dues)”. WRONG!

Every day your president, other union executive and shop stewards make representation to the employer and call them out on unfair practices and arbitrary decisions. Each one of them is a watchdog, and if the people in charge know they are being watched and that someone is going to challenge their decisions and presumptions, they’ll think twice before acting.

That’s not to say the employer is necessarily going to back down or hesitate from acting, but the fact that the union is there and is watching, does have a constraining effect. Without the union, (forget the employer’s benign view of itself) there would be a lot more instances of the employer acting in questionable faith.

Think of the union as a vaccination against future woes. You may not perceive any changes to yourself following immunization, but the antibodies (collectively bargained rights) are there, ready to offer resistance.

The second thing I would say is: “GET INVOLVED”. One voice can never shout “STOP!” or “HANG ON” or “THAT’S NOT FAIR” louder than 800 voices in union.

I regret that I came to my union activism late in my career. Like many of you, I took the attitude “let someone else look after things”. It’s a self-harming attitude because the union is only as strong as the people who are prepared to give their time and labour to the association. Your employer is counting on you to be complacent because it means dealing with an association less able to defend its members, which, in turn, makes it easier for the employer to advance his or her agenda.

There’s another reason for getting involved. The union oversees assets in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. (There’s currently in excess of a million dollars in the strike fund.) And yet, 97 per cent of the membership typically lets 3 per cent of the membership make decisions about the fate of those monies. To me, that’s like giving your neighbours—however trustworthy and benign—power of attorney over your bank account(s).

The final thing I’ll say about getting involved is ATTENDING A STRIKE VOTE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE INVOLVEMENT! If the only union meeting you’ve ever attended is a ratification vote, you’re not doing the membership any favours. If you haven’t been attending membership meetings or otherwise following union news, your input to the ratification process is narrowly focussed on the “percentages”. You don’t have any context into which to put those numbers. And I daresay, your vote is narrowly focussed on “what’s in it for me” rather than “what’s in it for all of us”.

The third and final thing I’d say is DON’T BE AFRAID.

How many times have I heard members—especially recent-hires—express the fear that by being actively “union” they’re going to be targeted by the administration and that their union affiliation is going to damage their careers. It’s precisely that kind of thinking that has university administrator’s sniggering in their hats.

Going along to get along won’t buy you any goodwill when push comes to shove. Come a time when it’s in the university’s interest to hang you out to dry, your having been a “good guy” won’t buy you any favours.

Just between you and me, I’d rather go into a fight with a scrapper (the union) at my back. Indeed, being openly associated with a scrapper may keep you out of a fight in the first place.

This last invocation – don’t be afraid – is especially important for the young members of the union, the ones who are in the early stages of their career.

You are the future of the union. It’s to you the torch will be handed. It’s your time to fight for the benefits and privileges that are relevant to your cohort. The union needs fearless, principled young people to step up and be the union leaders of tomorrow. If you don’t, the union will cease to be relevant and the employer will be empowered to act in as arbitrary and self-serving a manner as they please.

“In solidarity” is more than a platitude, brothers and sisters.

Goodbye and best wishes.
John Butters
Fellow CUPE members helped John Butters kick off his retirement at a party in his honour. John served the local in several ways for many years, including as our President. L-R Theresa Antle, John, Rick Cooper, Keir Hiscock.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY - MARCH 8

(This is the text of an address given at the 2015 Bread & Roses Luncheon by Mary Shortall, President - NL Federation of Labour)

International Women’s Day represents more than a century of struggle by women for economic and social equality, justice and peace.

Today women throughout the world celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8.

The idea of an International Women’s Day first arose at the turn of the last century when the industrialized world was going through a period of expansion and turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies. But 50 years earlier women were already making their mark by fighting for better working conditions and pay.

On March 8, 1857 women working in clothing and textile factories in New York City walked off the job to protest against inhumane working conditions and low wages. Two years later, again in March, these women formed their first labour union in an effort to gain basic rights and protections in the workplace.

On March 8, 1908, 15,000 women marched through the streets of New York City demanding better working conditions, shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labour. They adopted the slogan “Bread and Roses” - with bread symbolizing economic security and roses symbolizing a better quality of life. In May of that year, the Socialist Party of America designated the last Sunday in February for the observance of a National Woman’s Day. As a result, in 1909, the first National Woman’s Day was observed on Feb. 28th across the United States. Women continued to celebrate it on the last Sunday of February until 1913.

In 1910, at a Socialist International meeting in Copenhagen, German socialist Clara Zetlin suggested an International Women’s Day to mark the earlier strike by garment workers in the United States. The proposal was greeted with unanimous support by the conference of more than 100 women from 17 countries which included the first three women elected to the Finnish parliament. No fixed date was selected for the observance.

The declaration by the Socialist International had an impact. A year later in 1911, as a result of the decision taken in Copenhagen, International Women’s Day was marked for the first time (March 19) in Austria, Denmark and Switzerland where more than one million women and men attended rallies.
In addition to the right to vote and hold public office, they demanded the right to work, to vocational training and to an end to discrimination on the job.

Less than a week later on March 25th, the tragic Triangle Fire in New York City - a result of poor safety conditions at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company - took the lives of more than 140 working girls, most of them Italian and Jewish immigrants. The Women’s Trade Union League and the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union had led many of the protests against this avoidable tragedy, including the silent funeral march which brought together more than 100,000 people. The Triangle Fire had a significant impact on labour legislation in the United States.

Russian Women, as part of the peace movement brewing on the Eve of World War I, observed their first International Women’s Day on the last Sunday of February in 1913. Elsewhere in Europe on and around the 8th of March of the following year, women held rallies to protest the war.

In our own province, women like Julie Salter Earle were raising the issues facing the working classes. During the Depression, she led a march of 500 unemployed men through the streets of St. John’s to the Colonial Building. She also provided much of the impetus for the founding of the Ladies Branch of the Newfoundland Industrial Workers Association of which she became President. She saw the Union as a tool to advocate for better wages and working conditions for women workers.

Since those early years, International Women’s Day has grown into a global celebration marked by women in developing and developed countries.

In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women’s rights and International Peace. Four global UN women’s conferences have helped make the demand for women’s rights and participation in the political and economic process a growing reality.

Women throughout the world continue to celebrate March 8th and to reflect on the victories women have had as well as the continued struggle for equality and peace. On March 8th, we celebrate all those women who came before us and made our path a little easier and we continue to fight, not just for ourselves, but for our daughters and all the women who will come after us. We hope we can make their lives better through our activism and commitment to social and economic justice and to peace.

Some useful links:

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/history.html

http://www.internationalwomensday.com/about.asp#.VSvaG1zSIyE
Members of Memorial's group insurance plans are advised that the plans have been renewed effective April 1, 2015. Key changes include rate increases for the travel health insurance plan and the long term disability (LTD) plan. More information on the renewal and the LTD rate increase in particular can be found by going to: http://www.mun.ca/humanres/foremployees/Renewal_Template_2015_MUN_A.pdf

While the new rate schedule will be effective April 1, 2015, a blended rate will apply for the April 3, 2015 pay-period to account for the rates in effect up to March 31, 2015. Group insurance premiums will be deducted in accordance with the new rate schedule from the April 17, 2015 pay-period onwards.

Here's HR’s explanation for the rate increases:

**BENEFITS NEWS**

- **Members of Memorial’s group insurance plans are advised that the plans have been renewed effective April 1, 2015.**
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**Are you interested in a healthier lifestyle?**

- **Want to lose a few pounds?**
- **Need some motivation?**

**Come and join C.U.P.E. every Wednesday at 12:00 or 1:00 in ER-4054**

Each meeting consists of:
- Weigh-in (optional)
- Round-table discussion
- Lesson about healthy lifestyles, weight loss, etc.

**AND – it’s FREE!**

Contact Ingrid@mun.ca for more information
I would like to thank the idea generators and the doers who put together the CUPE weight loss and healthy eating support group. This is an excellent idea that has so far been very well organized. It is shaping up to be an excellent educational tool for many of us who struggle with health and weight. I really appreciate CUPE stepping up to support this excellent program. Good luck participants. I really hope this continues as an ongoing initiative.

Liza-Ann Tucker
Education Library

THANK YOU FOR C.U.P.E.
[Cut Unwanted Pounds Easily – ed.]

I recently heard a news clip of Stephen Harper arguing his reasoning for Canada’s need to be at war in the Middle East against ISIL. “Canada doesn’t have the luxury of remaining silent at home when the threat of terror is global and now threatens our own borders”. I’m not in the habit of quoting Stephen Harper and I’m not fully convinced that his approach to dealing with “terror” is the best approach. I’m not an expert on terror so we won’t go there; however, we do need to go global … but for a completely different and necessary purpose. And I’ll not labour my argument.

CUSTFA, EFTA, NAFTA, CETA, etc., etc. may just be acronyms to many of us but they affect our lives and the lives of our loved ones each and every day. From USA to South East Asia, Canada has a dozen or more of these so called international free trade agreements. We are discovering that these trade agreements are not about job security nor are they about employee and community benefits, as so often marketed to us. These nefarious international agreements are the lobby of both big business and governments who think their sole purpose of being in power is to protect the interests of business and the economy. Be not mistaken, the true objective of these borderless agreements is to provide corporations with unbridled access to cheap labour, less regulated market places, and maximum control over the inputs of their enterprises. We are seeing the tragic consequences of this.

Here in Canada, as a result of NAFTA, we must provide the same access to our natural resources for American companies as we do our own. Section 4 of CETA (Comprehensive European Trade Agreement) provides Investment Protection to foreign investors, and guarantees a “fair and equitable treatment and full protection and security”. This protection clause allows for foreign corporations to sue Canada/provinces before arbitral tribunals if they claim to have suffered losses. We have essentially surrendered the control of some of our key resources. Federal government website (Foreign Affairs, Development and Trade) states “Canada depends heavily on trade to sustain incomes and living standards of Canadians and the prosperity of the nation”. The sad truth is that right across our country employees are losing benefits and job security at record levels. CBC recently reported on the nightly national news program that the quality of jobs here in Canada is the lowest they’ve ever been in our history. Furthermore, the gap between the wealthy and the rest us is the widest it has ever been and continues to widen! Why? Free trade is not fair trade and removing trade barriers without proper regulatory oversight has very negative consequences.

However, this not about us specifically; a very significant other side of the coin is our international and sisters and brothers who work in public sectors and how they’re affected by these same agreements. For an example, according to the Centre for Global Development, since NAFTA took effect in 1994, Mexico has seen an increase of 500,000 manufacturing jobs but a loss of 1.3 million agricultural jobs. I might add that many of these manufacturing jobs have been described as nothing more than sweatshops. Indeed, we are seeing the face of modern Mexico. These trade agreements are causing havoc in many of these countries, mostly in the undeveloped world. Both labour and the environment are being exploited for the sake of shareholder profit. We’re all too familiar with what happened at RANA Plaza in Dhaka in April, 2013.

For now, in closing, the point I want to make is that at no other time in our history are we so affected on a daily basis by international and global forces. We need and must stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries. The good news is that we’re doing just that: and I want to talk to you more about it in the very near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Keir Hiscock

LET’S GO GLOBAL

I would like to thank the idea generators and the doers who put together the CUPE weight loss and healthy eating support group. This is an excellent idea that has so far been very well organized. It is shaping up to be an excellent educational tool for many of us who struggle with health and weight. I really appreciate CUPE stepping up to support this excellent program. Good luck participants. I really hope this continues as an ongoing initiative.

Liza-Ann Tucker
Education Library

TREAT EMPLOYEES LIKE THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND THEY WILL.
MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULE

Food served at 5 p.m., meetings start at 5:30.

ST. JOHN’S
September 9 - ED 3034A
October 14 - ED 2018A
November 4 - ED 3034A
December 9 - ED 2018A

CORNER BROOK
Members meet in AS275

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
• Committee reports
• Unfinished business
• New business
• For the good of the union

UNION MEETING TONIGHT AND YOU DON’T HAVE TIME TO GET HOME AND HAVE SUPPER?

Come and eat with us before the start of the proceedings. WE lay on the spread, so let’s enjoy a meal together.

CHILD CARE COSTS/COMMITSMENTS KEEPING YOU FROM ATTENDING MEETINGS?

Your union will pay for your childcare so you can attend the monthly meetings. Just contact Theresa Antle at 864-2393, or email tantle@mun.ca

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