Hello brothers and sisters,

Well I think summer has finally arrived. We all deserve and need this change in the weather for our own well being. Here’s hoping for a nice long and hot summer that we can all enjoy.

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador held its annual provincial convention May 2-6, with a pre-convention conference on the subject of P3’s, (Public Private Partnerships). Both the conference and the convention were very well attended and we came away equipped to move forward with plans of action. The convention itself was of course a forum for discussion on current public issues and resolutions to strengthen our unions and protect our members and their rights.

Five members of our local attended the annual weeklong school which took place at Terra Nova Resort May 24-29. One did the first course of the Steward Learning Series and will officially become one of our stewards upon completion of the series. One member took the course in Conflict Resolution which taught the skills needed to deal with a variety of issues that may arise in the workplace in a fair and respectful way. The remaining three studied Accident Investigation and Reporting, a newly developed OH&S course that will be very useful to us.

The issue of our pensions has been front and center in our workplace and in the media recently. Our pension committee held an emergency meeting on May 5 to discuss the $20 million shortfall (actually turns out to be closer to $50 million) in Memorial’s budget this year and recommendations that Memorial brought forward to alleviate this shortfall. Two main things came out of this meeting: first that Memorial would like to defer its legislated payment to the pension fund, and the second is that Memorial would like to do a study of our pension plan. Doing a study suggests that changes may be needed but we see no reason for this plan as our pension is currently funded 92%.

We met again on June 18. There were two motions brought to the floor by the committee: 1: Deferral of the special pension payment to the plan for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. This was voted on with 100% support. 2: Study of our pension plan is unnecessary. This was also voted with 100% support.

These recommendations now have to be brought to the Board of Regents where they make the final decision based on our discussions and recommendations. Overall the committee feels very positive about the results of this meeting. We feel that deferring this special payment is unfortunate but at this time necessary. We definitely don’t want a study of our pension plan as we feel our plan is very solid. Our concern is that if a study is conducted it could have negative impact on our plan.

Your committee is cautiously optimistic that the Board of Regents will come back to us with acceptance of our recommendations.

I will have more information for you after the meeting on July 9 of the Board of Regents when we find out whether our recommendations are accepted.

Arising from these discussions are some very important questions that we want and need answered:

continued on next page
1. How is Memorial actually spending the money that is entrusted to them on our behalf? We want more transparency!!!

2. Why is there such a bloat at the senior administration level? According to the university’s financial statements there are 121 senior administrators with salaries between $100,000-$200,000. The president currently makes a base annual salary of $430,000 plus a $1000 monthly car allowance and a $1500 monthly housing allowance.

3. We want (and deserve) more open and clear communication from Memorial; we have the right to know what is going on. We want the Administration to explain how this dire situation has been allowed to escalate.

4. Why is the new “core” science building still a number one priority? With a looming $400 million price tag and President Kachanoski’s comments that some core infrastructure will be put on hold, why is this still allowed proceeding?

These are just some of the questions we need answered and hopefully before the Board of Regents passes its 2015-2016 budget on July 9 we will have some of these answers. You can be assured you will all be kept updated on anything that will impact our workplace and our pensions, whether through written communication or by way of a special meeting, should the need arise. One thing I can tell you is it seems that both the provincial government and Memorial seem to want to model our pension plan after the public service pension plan but we do not want this to happen. We are trying to get all the answers we need and will continue to fight for what is rightfully ours.

It seems that Memorial wants to pit the students, faculty and staff against one another. The students were told that if we don’t accept this deferral payment for the pension plan then there is no choice but to raise tuition fees for international students and graduate fees. This is totally unacceptable and all parties involved have met and agree we will work together for the best solution for all. The student unions and MUNFA have agreed to support us and we have agreed to support them in any way we can. That old divide and conquer trick is not going to work!

In closing I will say what I have been saying repeatedly for many months now. We need to be vigilant in our workplace. You are the ones who know if your duties are changing, if workloads are increasing and how your departments are being reviewed. If you do feel there is something that needs to be addressed please let me know. With everything that’s been happening and all discussions around finances we don’t want our jobs affected in any way. We are the support that is needed to make this university what it is and our roles are vitally important in the overall functioning of Memorial. Even though job cuts haven’t been discussed we are already seeing cuts through other avenues: through retirements and many contractual positions not being filled. I cannot stress enough how important it is to pay attention to what is going on around you and keep me apprised of any changes or issues you encounter in your workplace.

I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable summer.

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

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT continued

Congratulations to Wayne Holly of Technical Services who has retired after nearly 31 years.

L-R: Mike Sheehan, Wayne Baker, Geoff Dawson, Wayne, Roger Guest (retired).
So NL Premier Davis wants to privatize or partner with private enterprise in the running of some or all of our public service institutions here in NL. He had stated that anything and everything is on the table at this point under the guise of providing savings to our public purse. Even the NL Employers’ Council spokesman Richard Alexander has come out and said – let us not miss an economic crisis such as this (the unforeseen drop in oil prices and its resultant diminished government revenues) to ameliorate our economic circumstance by seizing the moment and privatizing public services wherever we can. No surprise there but oh the irony. Remember the fanfare with the introduction of Bill 29 and then the flip flop with arguably even greater fanfare.

“In her annual report in December, Ontario’s Auditor General (AGO) Bonnie Lysyk exposed the extraordinary waste and financial sham pervasive in public-private partnerships (P3s) – projects her office estimates to have cost the province $8 billion more than if they had been publically financed and operated. That is the equivalent of $1,600 per Ontario household. Or close to what the provincial deficit will be this year.” The AGO is no spin doctor.

Prime Minister Harper is purporting this kind of strategy to be an economic panacea and is over the top by coercing municipalities and First Nations to embrace P3s and their agencies or else federal infrastructure funding will not be approved. Will Premier Davis be as autocratic in his misled and somewhat delusional attempt to duplicate Ontario’s catastrophic example? It remains to be seen. However as you can imagine there are some powerful forces exerting pressure on these Conservative right wing pro big business governments.

The inherent problems with P3s that have been echoed and exposed by the AGO have been touted for decades by “CUPE and other unions, independent economists, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)”. Furthermore, “the claims that P3s were less expensive than the public alternatives were based on assumptions that they transferred large amounts of risk to the private sector, but there was absolutely no evidence or factual information to support those claims. THEY WERE SIMPLY FABRICATED OUT OF THIN AIR. Worse, a number of these major assumptions clearly involved double-counting, a basic accounting error that misrepresents costs.” A sham indeed – that is being concerted by some very powerful politicians and industrial elite lobbyists.

While governments and big business seek to diminish union wages and benefits, and promote the prospect of P3s these actions fly in the face of providing good and fair governance and the advancement of all its citizens. We therefore need to demand an end to the existing model of funding and otherwise supporting proponents in the P3s mix until all facets of the program are transparent and meet with the approval of tax payers. Simply put we would otherwise pay more for less and “the private pilfering of public accounts will continue. And until we can see for ourselves whether there is any value for money in this system, any and all P3s, and the politicians that introduce them, will – and should – be under a cloud of suspicion.”
This year there were 23 applications submitted to CUPE 1615 for consideration; seventeen from Memorial, three from the College of the North Atlantic, two from Dalhousie, and one from OCAD University. Of these requests, one was from a current member of the local. As our constitution currently only covers “Only sons, daughters or spouses of current, honorary, retired or deceased members of CUPE Local 1615 are eligible to receive scholarships” the application from the current member was reviewed but not considered. Therefore, 22 applicants were reviewed for an award.

Seven scholarships have been granted as outlined in the CUPE 1615 constitution. We are pleased to announce the following as the 2015 recipients:

Once again, we will be forwarding some ideas for changes to our scholarship program to the constitutional amendments committee for consideration.

Respectfully, Carol Kennedy, Diane Johnson, Nathalie Vanasse, Ingrid Verbree-Barnes
I am writing this for a number of reasons. First is to say a very big thank you to Ingrid Verbree-Barnes for her initiative and dedication to Cut Unwanted Pounds Easily. Without her, the two lunch hour groups would not be where we are now. She has made the whole experience of losing weight and changing to a healthier lifestyle so easy. She has been imaginative and supportive to everyone present since the first day. I am sure everyone in the two groups will join me in a big round of applause for Ingrid.

Over the years I have tried many ways to lose weight and have failed. I am probably not alone in saying that the weight I did lose I gained back very quickly and more besides. When Ingrid brought a motion to the floor at a general monthly meeting asking for money to start C U P E I have to be honest and say I was very skeptical about the whole thing. I can say now that I was wrong. Over the past number of weeks I have lost 6 pounds and have started to think of my eating habits in a much healthier way. Cut Unwanted Pounds Easily has become much more than a weight loss group. It is a time when you can learn about healthy eating habits, exercise, nutrition, positive thinking about the little setbacks and so much more. Every week I learn something. I never leave the room thinking that I wasted my time. One really nice thing about all of this is that it is free. The only thing you are asked to bring to the meeting is a piece of fruit. I will not say why because if you are really curious you will just have to come to a meeting.

So why don’t you think about dropping in at a meeting. I know it’s summer time, but don’t you fret. Meetings will continue throughout the summer and Ingrid is making plans for fall sessions as well. Maybe after all those barbeques you might want to think about a healthier lifestyle. Hope you see you at a meeting.

Susan Kearsey,
2nd Vice President
I would like to share with you my perspectives on the labour movement as a young worker. It is my hope that this blog column, titled Youth Corner: Embracing Change, will serve as a forum for discussing labour issues and the opinions of young workers as they transition from “young” to “not-so-young.” Individuals wishing to share their perspectives, stories, and opinions are highly encouraged to do so! If you just wish to suggest some topics for discussion, that’s ok too! You can reach me at steven.smith@mun.ca

**TCC Course Complete!**

This past semester, I completed an online course called Taking Charge of Change (TCC). This course was offered by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and was designed to educate young workers on the labour movement. Before we go any further, I have to state that this course was not restricted to just unions and union issues. In fact, we had a participant who was not unionized and was between jobs. The CLC is an organization that advocates for policies and programs that benefit ALL Canadians whether unionized or not.

I took this course with the intent of learning about unions and the labour movement. After working at my current workplace for almost 4 years, I decided a little over a year ago that if I am part of a union, I should try to understand it. I wasn’t too thrilled that this course was delivered through an 8 week series of webinars on Wednesday nights from 9:30-11:30 pm. However, I realized after the first session why this was the case: there were many participants from all over the country, from St. John’s to Victoria, British Columbia! The diverse nature of the participants did lead to some interesting discussions. One thing I realized very quickly was that many of the problems faced by youth, and labour in general, were common throughout the country.

This course certainly did help shape my understanding of unions and the labour movement. It covered topics including labour history, leadership and member engagement, intergenerational activism, social movement building, social media, and other interesting topics such as social inequality, collective agreements, and labour structure. My personal favourite was labour history. I am a firm believer that in order to understand who we are and where we are plan on going, we must first have an understanding of who we were and where we’ve been. Here’s an interesting tidbit of information I learned from the labour history section of the course: did you know that in 1869, the Knights of Labour became the first national labour organization? It was a secret society, of course. I wonder if Dan Brown is looking for ideas for his next book? The most practical session, in my opinion, focussed on collective agreements and the structure of unions. It was useful to see an outline of the structure of unions in this country and the legalities of collective agreements. Collective agreements are undoubtedly a union’s best defensive tool. Typically, a stronger collective agreement correlates to makes a stronger union.

Nowadays, unions seem to have a negative public image. This is unfortunate and unfounded when you consider the history of labour. After all, who are the main organizations who continually stand up for the social programs and services that benefit all of society? Some of the social programs and services historically spearheaded by unions include the eight hour work day, the five day work week, universal health care, and the entire field of health and safety! It has been my observation that unions truly believe that it is their duty to champion, support, and defend social equality and social justice for all people, not just their members. They see their collective agreement as a tool for showing the public that what was thought to be non-negotiable or unattainable is possible and attainable through collective action. They believe that their bargained collective agreements serve as the standard for all workplaces, irrespective of union membership. This makes sense from a labour market perspective: for non-unionized workplaces to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining labour, they must remain aligned with the benefits offered by other employers. It is for this reason that employers typically have a dislike for unions.

As a young worker new to a union, I did originally have a negative opinion of unions. I did believe that the time of the union had passed. After all, as a young worker, seniority does play against me. I would advise those who truly believe this to try to understand unions before passing any judgement, as I have come to understand that seniority exists for a good reason. The best way to do this is to get involved in your union as much as possible. Be assured, this will change you. After all, our ability to adapt to change in a continually evolving society will ultimately depend on our ability to embrace it.
CRAZY ADDRESSES

As you know, HR supplies the local executive with the names & campus mailing addresses of all our members. This is the list we use to send you all mailouts, including your newsletter. The addresses have gotten strange looking recently. For instance, everyone in the QEII Library (where I work) had the address “Finance and Administrative Svcs, Queen Elizabeth II Library”. In other departments, it looks as if everyone works in the Dean’s or Director’s office, which is not the case; then there’s “Office of the Registrar, Registrar’s office”. As time permits, I’m going to tidy up the oddities that I can and hopefully improve the delivery of your union mail. Look at your address label on this newsletter - if it needs to be updated or changed, please send an email to lorraine@mun.ca and we’ll get it fixed!

In Sol.
Lorraine Jackson (your humble editor)

CEOs ARE PAID TOO MUCH!

Source: www.calm.ca

According to data compiled by the American Federation of Labour (AFO-CIO), Canadian CEOs make 206 times more than the average Canadian worker.

That number is actually the second biggest CEO-to-worker pay gap among the 19 countries AFL-CIO looked at and laid out on its interactive world map.

American CEOs top the list with a staggering 354:1 CEO-to-worker ratio. On average, American CEOs earn just over $12 million per year while the average worker takes home $34,645.

But just behind the U.S. is Canada. The AFL’s data, sourced from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, says the average Canadian CEO receives a compensation of $8,704,118 each year while the average Canadian worker makes $42,253.

So one Canadian CEO earns the equivalent of 206 average Canadian workers.

This staggering pay inequality is highlighted in a recent Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives report (CCPA) on CEO pay. CCPA calculates that in 2014, just as most Canadians are wrapping up their lunch break on the first official day of the year - 1:11pm on January 2 - the average of the highest CEOs will have already pocketed what it takes the average Canadian an entire year to earn.

SOLIDARITY
MEMBERSHIP MEETINGSCHEDULE

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

ST. JOHN’S
September 8, 2015 – ED2018B
October 13, 2015 – ED 2018A
November 10, 2015 – ED 3034B
December 8, 2015 – 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

CHILD CARE COSTS/COMMITMENTS 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

If you no longer want a paper copy of CUPE on Campus, please email tantle@cupe1615.ca today to have your name removed from the distribution list.

YOUR EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT
Theresa Antle, tantle@cupe1615.ca
864-2393

1ST VP
Keir Hiscock
khiscock@cupe1615.ca
864-8144

2ND VP
Susan Kearsey
skearsey@cupe1615.ca
864-2529

3RD VP
Diane Johnson
djohnson@cupe1615.ca
(709) 637-6249

TREASURER
Rhonda White
rwhite@cupe1615.ca
864-4553

CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY
Carol Kennedy, c kennedy@cupe1615.ca
864-3175

SGT. AT ARMS
Shawn Organ
sorgan@cupe1615.ca
864-8906

RECORDING SECRETARY
Christine Byers, cbyers@cupe1615.ca
864-4418

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Theresa Antle, tantle@cupe1615.ca
864-2393

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khiscock@cupe1615.ca
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