

# THE COMMUNICATOR

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY'S EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

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**April 1997**

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[pmorris@morgan.uccs.mun.ca](mailto:pmorris@morgan.uccs.mun.ca)

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[pmorris@morgan.ucs.mun.ca](mailto:pmorris@morgan.ucs.mun.ca)

# Full slate of collective bargaining for 1997

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

This year promises to be a busy one for labor negotiations at Memorial. Six staff collective agreements are currently expired - involving five bargaining units represented by the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees (NAPE) as well as the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 1615. Notices to negotiate renewal of these agreements have been received from all bargaining units.

## **NAPE**

Negotiations involving Marine Institute instructors (NAPE Local 7405) have moved to conciliation. According to the university's chief negotiator in these talks, Raelene Thomas, some 14 issues remain unresolved and the aid of a conciliator was sought by the union in early January. When these negotiations conclude, she said negotiations for the Marine Institute support staff (NAPE Local 7850) will commence.

The NAPE custodial collective agreement has expired. Bargaining teams for the union and the university are in place and proposals will be exchanged in the near future.

Maintenance employees (NAPE Local 7801) and Campus Enforcement and Patrol employees (NAPE Local 7803) collective agreements have also expired. Talks will commence later with both these bargaining units.

## **CUPE**

The contract with CUPE Local 1615, representing the university's administrative, instructional, technical and technical support employees, expired on March 31. Bargaining teams for the university and the union have held initial meetings. Claude Horlick, the university's chief negotiator in the CUPE talks, said the process will likely be demanding for a number of reasons, including the university's continued difficult financial position, the issue of compensation, and implementation of the new job evaluation system.

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# Benefits levels retained, employee costs decreased

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

Employees will have a little more in their take-home pay, and benefits will stay at the same level as last year thanks to a number of measures taken by the university. "The university will actually be contributing an additional \$70,697 more to the health and dental plans to make this possible," said Dr. George Hickman, director of Human Resources.

According to Dr. Hickman, the Board of Regents approved a recommendation from the senior executive that the health and dental plans be renewed, with no change in benefits coverage. And while the renewals will involve a number of decreases and increases to particular benefits premiums, the net effect is that individual employees will be paying slightly less for the same level of total coverage.

The resulting group insurance rate changes apply for the policy year that began on March 1:

- Health plan, 3.3 per cent premium increase;
- Dental plan, 1.5 per cent premium increase;
- Long-term disability plan, 11 per cent premium reduction;
- Basic life, optional life and dependent group life plans are all renewed at the existing premium rate.

## **How it works**

The increased health and dental premium costs to employees are more than offset by a significant reduction in the long-term disability premium, which was made possible because of a favorable claims experience under the plan.

The net effect when the decreases are balanced against the increases is that employee groups will have to contribute a total of \$136,672 less for the same coverage.

If you have any questions or require further information, contact the Benefits and Pensions Office, 737-7406. (See Benefits, this page, for further details on the financial status of the university's group insurance plans).

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# Learneds coming

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

The 1997 Congress of Learned Societies is being held on Memorial's St. John's campus from May 31-June 14.

An arrangement has been made to pay block registration fees for eligible delegates from the faculties of Arts, Education, and Business Administration; the schools of Music, and Social Work; and the library system. The grant applies only to the Congress registration fee (normally \$85, or \$35 for students) and not society registration fees. The grant is available to all persons holding a teaching appointment during this semester (including contractual and per-course appointees, and professional librarians), academic administrators, staff members, graduate students, and undergraduates who are presenting papers to one or more societies (duly authenticated by written evidence).

Volunteers are needed to help with registration, information dissemination, receptions and a host of other duties.

For addition information about the Learneds, phone 737-4360.

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# Building Memorial University's future together

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(*The Communicator*, April 1997)

March and April are times of year when you're not quite sure whether winter has a while to go, or spring is just around the corner. The same uncertainty applies to the fiscal climate. While the economic indicators in Canada are strong, while governments are getting deficits under control, while some governments are even contemplating surpluses, we still have a persistent high rate of unemployment and a government sector that is getting smaller. In this province the "getting smaller" has meant reduced funding to the university; a condition that will continue for the next two fiscal years.

In fact, we have been on this slippery slope for the past six years and have taken a variety of unpleasant, unpalatable and regrettably unavoidable measures to cope. I won't try to recall the exhaustive list but the major ones have included the closure of an operating division of the university, the freezing of salaries temporarily, early retirement programs, very significant fee increases, withholding of university contributions to the pension fund, and a general tightening up to save costs and increase revenues wherever we can. We have avoided large scale layoffs and we have avoided general salary reductions. We have done so by design, and no matter how difficult the other measures, I do feel that a majority would agree that they were preferable to the alternatives of job loss or wage rollbacks. The decline in student numbers from about 18,600 in 1992 to 16,100 in 1996 adds a major dimension to the problem from two perspectives: (a) we lose the tuition income and, (b) it is more difficult to maintain our overall size and shape.

There undoubtedly is light at the end of the tunnel, but it is a couple of years away yet. Meanwhile, we have been doing something to make our own light, and that is the planning of the most ambitious fund-raising effort that Memorial has ever undertaken. By the time this issue of *The Communicator* appears we will have formally launched The Opportunity Fund and undertaken to raise \$25 million for facilities, scholarships and general academic improvement. If we are successful, the \$25 million will be matched by government.

Our chancellor, John C. Crosbie, is leading the fund-raising campaign. Vic Young, chairman of Fishery Products International and a graduate and honorary graduate of Memorial, is devoting substantial effort as vice-chair. Over the past year I've devoted more and more of my own time, and we have a committed group of volunteers operating on our behalf in St. John's, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. This is hard work. The great satisfaction of meeting with a corporate officer or private individual who appreciates what we are trying to do and makes a commitment on the spot is sometimes clouded by disappointment when our approach is rejected by businesses and individuals; not because they can't afford to contribute but because they simply don't want to do so for reasons ranging from

cynicism about universities to axes to grind about Memorial. Fortunately the latter are very much in the minority.

I am very happy to say that the great majority of respondents are favorable. We have over \$14 million committed to the campaign and over \$6 million actually "in the bank." Getting the balance of the \$25 million to be raised in the private sector will be especially hard work because we have already signed up most of the corporations and individuals from whom we can expect large contributions. What we now need is participation, no matter how modest. We have over 40,000 alumni. If each of them was to commit \$1 a week or \$50 a year, the arithmetic works out to \$2 million. Over five years, that alone would complete the job.

Over 30 per cent of our faculty and staff have made commitments to the campaign. This is very encouraging and I hope we can increase it significantly, even to a doubling. Some units of the University have already reached 100 per cent participation. The amount committed is less important than the commitment itself. The numbers add up very quickly. This is not money that we can use to improve salaries; it is not money that we can use to pay for heat and light or any of the ongoing operating costs of the university. If we did we would simply be removing from government the responsibility that it has to fund its university, and the money would run out in a very short time in any case. We will use the money to improve Memorial in ways that wouldn't be possible if we didn't have this campaign. The focus is primarily on students via improved facilities and a doubling over five years of the amount we can commit to scholarships (from \$1.5 million to \$3 million), via a \$15 million endowment.

It is indeed a bit schizophrenic that we should be coping with operating grant reductions on the one hand while raising money to do completely different things on the other. In fact you can only reconcile it if you accept that we must deal with operating fund problems without weakening the institution now, and at the same time ensure its future strength by providing through our fund-raising efforts those attributes and amenities that otherwise wouldn't be there. Many of us are graduates as well as employees, but in any case we owe something to Memorial and to future generations it will serve.

We could wish it were easier, but I firmly believe that we are coping with today's difficulties as well as any of our sister institutions, and better than many. I would like to extend my personal appreciation to everybody who is helping to get us through these challenging years and especially to those who are demonstrating their faith in the future by contributing to The Opportunity Fund. If you haven't already done so, please consider coming on board.

A. W. May, O.C.  
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

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# Financial status of group insurance plans, 1997-98 renewal

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

The following is a report on the financial status of the university's life and long-term disability plans (insured by Maritime Life) for the period Oct. 1, 1995, to Sept. 30, 1996, and the health and dental plans (underwritten by Blue Cross of Atlantic Canada) for the period Oct. 1, 1995, to July 31, 1996, as well as the premium rate action for the policy year beginning March 1, 1997.

## **LIFE AND LONG-TERM DISABILITY**

The university's basic life insurance plan is underwritten on an experience-rated basis, subject to refund accounting. The premium rate is based on claims experience of the Memorial University plan only. Any deficit arising at the end of a policy year is carried forward to future years. Any surplus funds are deposited first to a Claims Stabilization Reserve, until 25 per cent of the total annual premium has been accumulated, with any balance available for refund to the university. For the reporting period the operation of this plan yielded a surplus of \$3,381.

The optional life and dependent life plans are underwritten on a fully-pooled basis with other policies of the insurer so there is no surplus/deficit accounting under either of these plans.

The long-term disability plan is underwritten on a partially experience-rated basis, whereby the first five years of benefit payments for each claim are charged directly to the university's policy, and the balance of each claim is paid from the insurer's pool of non-experience-rated long term disability business. Surplus funds arising in the operation of this plan are allocated on the same basis as the basic life arrangement. The financial statement of this plan for the reporting period shows a current year surplus position of \$305,802.

Of the combined current year surplus of \$309,183 (\$3,381 under basic life and \$305,802 under long-term disability), \$213,963 was used to bring the Claims Stabilization Reserve account to a fully funded position, and the balance of \$95,220 was transferred to an unallocated reserve account available for refund to the university.

## **Renewal rates**

Based on the favorable claims experience (eight paid claims) and the financial results for the past policy year, the current premium rate will be maintained for the basic life insurance plan for the 1997-98 policy

year.

As a result of favorable claims experience under the optional life (three claims) and dependent life (two claims), the current premium rates will be maintained for the upcoming policy year.

For the long-term disability plan, based on favorable claims experience (20 claims under the policy), the premium rate has been reduced by 11 per cent, effective March 1, 1997. This is the second consecutive year for a reduction in the long-term disability rate (following a 10 per cent reduction last year).

## **HEALTH AND DENTAL**

For the health and dental plans, which are underwritten on an Administrative Services Only (ASO) basis, the required deposit level to Blue Cross is determined based on the claims paid, a margin for anticipated increases in costs and benefits utilization, and the administration/claims adjudication expenses. If a surplus arises, it is available for refund to the university. Deficits are required to be paid or amortized over the next policy year by including a deficit-recovery factor in the deposit rate.

As a result of favorable claims experience over the past year, the health and dental plans generated a combined surplus of \$79,762. However, there was an existing deficit brought forward from the previous year, and this surplus was used to reduce the deficit. The total remaining deficit balance at the end of the reporting period was \$129,135.

The most recent quarter's claims experience shows that the favorable trend is continuing; the deficit balance has been further reduced to approximately \$90,000 at Oct. 31, 1996.

### **Renewal rates**

Based on the health claims experience and projected increases in prescription drug claims (3.1 per cent to the end of the 1997 policy year), increased utilization of extended health benefits (0.3 per cent increase), and an increase in hospital room expenses (17.2 per cent), the renewal calculation requires a 3.3 per cent increase in the health premium rate, plus a two per cent increase to amortize the accumulated deficit over a one-year period (total increase of 5.3 per cent). No premium increase is required for the group travel insurance benefit.

For the dental plan, the projection of cost increases is based on a utilization increase in dental claims of 6.4 per cent to the end of the 1997-98 policy year. As eligible dental expenses under the university's plan are limited to the 1995 Newfoundland Dental Fee Guide, no inflationary increase was included in the renewal calculation. Thus the dental plan required a 1.5 per cent increase in the premium plus a two per cent increase for deficit recovery (total increase of 3.5 per cent).

### **Deficit charges waived**

Because of the declining deficit in the plans, Blue Cross has agreed to forego its requirement for a two per cent deficit recovery premium for this policy year. The health plan has thus been renewed at a 3.3

per cent premium increase and the dental plan, at a 1.5 per cent premium increase.

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# Funding for student summer jobs available

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

Human Resources Development Canada recently announced the 1997 Summer Career Placement Program (SCP) for secondary and post-secondary students.

Last year Memorial University received \$175,000 which funded 114 student jobs under the program. The university has not yet been advised of its actual funding allocation but according to Dr. George Hickman, director of Human Resources, there may be an increase this year.

The program offers an incentive, in the form of a wage subsidy, to employers, like the university, to create student summer employment opportunities. The jobs created provide career-related and practical work experience for students. The 1997 program provides a wage subsidy of \$4.25 per hour to a maximum of 32.5 hours per week and coverage of employee benefits (EI, CPP, vacation pay) based on the subsidized rate.

## **Memorial's plan**

The eligible employment period under the Memorial's 1997 Summer Career Placement Program (SCP) is between six and 10 consecutive weeks from May 5 to Sept. 5. Remuneration for these jobs at the university will be \$5.50 per hour for all students. The hours of work will be 32.5 hours per week for a maximum of 10 weeks. "This rate of pay, hours and duration of employment have been established to create the maximum number of student employment opportunities," said Dr. Hickman.

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# CPP changes

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

On Feb. 14, the federal government tabled draft legislation to the Canada Pension Plan. The intent of the legislation is to make changes that will help the Canada Pension Plan continue into the future. The proposed changes are significant and include increasing contributions, developing a new investment policy for the plan and changing the benefits people receive. Once approved the highlights will be included in a future issue of *The Communicator*.

A key change however is a proposed increase in contributions from the current 5.85 per cent to 9.9 per cent over the next six years.

Based on the current maximum contributory earnings for CPP, this means an increase in premiums for employees from \$944.78 in 1997 to \$1598.85 by 2003. If approved the CPP rate for 1997 will increase to six per cent. It is proposed that this .15 per cent increase (a maximum of \$24.23 for the year) will not be deducted through payroll deductions in 1997 but will be paid on your 1997 tax return when filed. Check the CPP homepage, [www.cpp-rpc.gc.ca](http://www.cpp-rpc.gc.ca), for complete draft legislation.

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# CEP assistance available to access offices

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

Campus Enforcement and Patrol (CEP) offers a courtesy service the university community to access to locked university facilities. CEP officers ensure doors are opened on pre-scheduled classrooms and facilities for pre-scheduled bookings. Requests for personal assistance with forgotten or locked-in keys during office hours (weekdays, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) should be directed to departmental offices. CEP responds to individual requests during off hours as staff resources permit.

For more information, call CEP, 737-8561.

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# Minimum wage increase

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

Effective April 1, the provincial minimum wage in Newfoundland and Labrador has increased to \$5.25 per hour.

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# Per course appointments changes

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

The university has reached a memorandum of understanding on the number of hours to be used for Employment Insurance purposes for per course appointments. Employees hired for a per course appointment will be paid over a 16-week period and credited with 15 hours per week for a total of 240 hours per course. Full-time and term appointments will continue to be paid on the basis of 35 hours per week.

In the past, per course appointments were paid over a 14 week period. The change to 16 weeks reflects the fact that usually preparation work is performed before classes start and work is also done after classes end for marking.

The change will not affect the total payment for a per course appointment but will result in the biweekly payment changing to \$439.88 for eight pay periods as opposed to the old system.

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# Board reviews changes to pensioners' group insurance premiums

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

The Board of Regents has approved an additional \$70,000 contribution a year for the next five years towards group insurance premiums of pre-1993 retirees. The issue will be reviewed again after five years.

This effectively delays the impact of a decision made previously to phase in premium payments for this group of pensioners (see article in *The Communicator*, December 1996, page 3).

The Memorial University Pensioners' Association (MUNPA) executive requested that the \$70,000 be shared equally to pay premiums for all pre-1993 retirees.

## **How it works**

In November 1996 the Group Insurance Trust Fund, which had been used until then to pay 50 per cent of the premium costs for this group of retirees, was depleted. Without the fund, it was decided to require that retirees start to pay a portion of premium costs themselves at a rate of 25 per cent in year one (the university's share would be 75 per cent). The plan called for the rate to increase by five per cent each year until the cost-sharing arrangement equalled 50:50 (year 6).

The approval of this additional annual contribution will either eliminate or significantly reduce the amount of premium cost to be paid by pre-1993 retirees/survivors for the next five years, depending on their group insurance coverage.

With a current pre-1993 retiree/survivor group of 314 people, an equal allocation of an additional \$70,000 shared equally among the group would provide a maximum additional amount of \$222 per year for everyone regardless of their coverage status (single or family). If a retiree's annual premium cost is less than this amount, the balance will be accumulated in a surplus account. If a retiree's annual premium cost is greater than \$222, the remainder is to be paid by the retiree.

## **For example**

In year one, for those with single coverage for both the health and dental plans, the additional contribution will be sufficient to fully cover the retiree's portion of premiums. In fact, at current premium levels, the additional \$222 each year is sufficient to cover all premium costs into year five (2001-02) for single coverage. Excess amounts that accrue will be set aside as surplus. At the end of the

five-year period, any accumulated surplus will be used to extend this arrangement into a part of year six (2002-03).

With family coverage for health and dental, a retiree's portion of premium cost in year one is \$245. The additional contribution from the university, reduces this to \$23 (\$245 minus \$222). Projecting into year five, the portion of premium cost would be \$441, so the retiree would be required to pay \$219 for the year (\$441 minus \$222). [Note: The situation in the examples is subject to change depending on the renewal rates charged by the insurers over the period.]

Several other combinations of coverage are possible (for example: family health, single dental; single health, no dental) and will affect the amount to be paid by the retiree.

For further information, please call Michelle Cleary, benefits officer, Department of Human Resources, 737-7407.

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# Renting a car? Check the collision damage waiver

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

University employees who travel on business and use an American Express Corporate Credit Card should note that some countries will not accept the collision damage waiver (CDW) that comes with the card for automobile rentals. These include Italy, Australia and New Zealand. All other countries will accept the card's CDW.

Please note, however, that even in countries where the CDW is accepted, some rental agencies will strongly object to the use of the card for this purpose, as this would reduce any revenue they would expect to earn on the rental. If you have any trouble with CDW acceptance, you should try another automobile rental agency or ask the agent to confirm your CDW coverage by calling American Express at 1-800-243-0190 (Canada and the United States), or 214-680-6220 (elsewhere).

Consult your card-holder agreement for details of the coverage.

Travellers should note also that prior approval from the Office of the Comptroller is necessary when planning to rent a vehicle outside of Canada.

For further information, please contact the Office of the Comptroller.

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# Physiotherapy services available

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

Physiotherapy services are available through Campus Physiotherapy in the Physical Education Building, Room G-2003. The office is open Monday to Friday. For an appointment, please call 737-2545.

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# Update on job evaluation

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

**by Colleen Walsh, Human Resources**

Personnel from the Department of Human Resources have met with each dean and director about the job evaluation results for non-bargaining unit positions during February. The Rating Committee finished rating the remainder of the Marine Institute positions in February, and the results are currently being analyzed.

Job Fact Sheets have been rated for CUPE employees and letters have been issued indicating band levels assigned to their positions. If employees did not complete a Job Fact Sheet, the bench band level for individual classifications was assigned.

The results from Phase I and II of Job Evaluation are not open to appeal.

However, employees have the right to request a classification review of their position at any time.

The Job Evaluation Committee continues to meet on a regular basis to rate Job Fact Sheets received since Phase II. As well, reviews are ongoing for regular classification requests of non-bargaining unit positions and Job Fact Sheets which indicate disagreement between the supervisor and employee.

The Job Evaluation Project is now in its final stage and will be completed within the short term.

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# MUNbles

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

"I tried pulling myself up by my bootstraps, but all I did was give myself a wedgie!"

- Su Cleyle, QE II Library

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# Career Scene

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

The following career changes have received approval since the last issue of *The Communicator*. They are provided by Human Resources and are up to date at the time of publication.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

### **Promotions and transfers**

Claude Horlick, Human Resources, associate director (staff relations) and alternate dispute resolution coordinator

Karen O'Leary, Women's Studies, administrative secretary

## **ACADEMIC**

### **Appointments**

Dr. Young Chen, Marine Institute, assistant professor and junior chair in fisheries conservation

Dr. Ted Callanan, Medicine, associate professor

Dr. Sharon Roseman, Anthropology, assistant professor

Ravi Sharma, Engineering and Applied Science, associate professor

### **Term appointments**

Catherine Innes-Parker, English/Women's Studies, lecturer

### **Cross appointments**

Dr. Richard Rivkin, Ocean Sciences Centre to Biology

Dr. Michael Rochester, Earth Sciences to Physics and Physical Oceanography

## **Appointments - other**

Dr. Gale Burford, Social Work, associate director

Dr. Rod Donnelly, Engineering and Applied Science, adjunct professor

Dr. Christopher Loomis, Pharmacy, acting director

Patrick Ryan, Biology, adjunct professor

## **Promotions**

Dr. Alistair Bath, Geography, associate professor

Lorna Bennett, Nursing, associate professor

Rex Clark, Anthropology, associate professor

Dr. Suad Ghazala, Biochemistry, associate professor

Dr. Ray Gosine, Engineering and Applied Science, associate professor

Dr. Graham, Chemistry, associate professor

Fred Hawksley, Education, associate professor

Dr. William Kennedy, Education, professor

Dr. Bruce Mann, Education, associate professor

Dr. Richard Niefer, Engineering and Applied Science, associate professor

Dr. Tim Seifert, Education, associate professor

Dr. Dennis Sharpe, Education, professor

Dr. Bruce Sheppard, Education, associate professor

Dr. Michael Shute, Religious Studies, associate professor

Dr. Elizabeth Lambert Simms, Geography, associate professor

Kati Szego, Music, assistant professor

Dr. Maureen Volk, Music, professor

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## Retiring?

Is someone in your office or department retiring? For information on certificates and other forms of service recognition for retirees, please contact Brenda Mullett, Human Resources, 737-4616. As well, *The Communicator* will run a photo feature of any university retirement event. To arrange coverage, please alert the editor in advance (737-8665) of any retirement activities planned for staff or faculty.

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# From the Garden

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

by Carl P. White, Botanical Garden

## Caring for your houseplants: disease and treatments

Houseplant diseases are caused by the plant cells being infected by micro-organisms such as bacteria and fungi. Besides keeping your plants in good health with proper care (watering, feeding, proper light and temperature) the best way to avoid these diseases is to prevent water from sitting on the leaves and flowers and to space plants apart so there is good ventilation around them. Good spacing will also make it harder for any problems to spread to other plants. Overwatering is a major factor in the development of these diseases, especially during the cooler months.

### **Botrytis blight (grey mould)**

This fungal disease can develop on any part of a plant that is above the soil level. It can be caused by dead leaves and spent flowers being left on the plant, too much humidity or overcrowding of the plants leading to poor ventilation. The number one cause is likely too much misting of the foliage and allowing the moisture to stay on the leaves. Symptoms will be different between plants, but this disease generally appears as a fuzzy, grey mould that covers affected flowers, leaves and stems.

### **Crown, stem or root rot**

The micro-organisms that cause these problems love moist conditions, so plants that have been overwatered are prime candidates for these diseases. On first observation the leaves droop and you think the plant needs water. But if you water it the stems and roots may turn mushy and rotten. On the other hand, if you notice it early enough, further damage can be prevented by placing the plant in a well ventilated, dry room and holding back on watering until development of the disease is stopped. Cacti and succulents are very susceptible to root and stem rot. Keep them fairly dry, especially during the winter months when they are dormant and do not need much moisture.

### **Leaf spots**

Leaf spots on houseplants can be caused by bacteria, fungi or poor growing conditions. In the case of fungi, the spores are spread in the air and water. Brown or yellow spots, sometimes with a wet looking centre, appear on the foliage. At the onset, the spots will be small (about a quarter-inch across) but can grow and join together until the affected leaves die. This infection occurs when water is allowed to

remain on the leaves. Cold water can also be a cause of spotting. Use warm (not hot) water and apply to the soil, not the foliage.

### **Powdery mildew**

Plants infected with this fungus disease become coated with a powdery-white mould. It differs from grey mould in color and lacks the fuzzy growths associated with grey mould. The spores are spread by air currents and do not require water to germinate. In the early stages, powdery mildew spreads very slowly and, if noticed, can be controlled fairly easily. African violets and begonias are often affected by powdery mildew.

### **Prevention**

Most of the disease problems touched on in this article can be prevented by good cultural practice, cutting off the damaged parts, being careful when watering, and by moving the plants to a drier, well ventilated area. If the problem persists you may need to treat the plant with a recommended fungicide. Fungicides are chemicals that are able to prevent or cure diseases caused by bacteria or fungi. They are classified into two types — protectant sprays prevent fungal spores from spreading to the plant and eradicant sprays prevent further development of diseases that have already started. Benlate (benomyl) works well as both a protectant and an eradicant. Fungicide use in the home should be a last resort. Read the label and follow general pesticide safety rules.

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# Safety Notes

*Safety Notes is compiled by the Office of Safety and Environmental Services, Department of Facilities Management, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Nfld., Canada, A1C 5S7. It is distributed in the university's employee newsletter, The Communicator, and to external safety organizations. For further information contact Wally Drover, manager of safety and environmental services, 709-737-4393.*

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[pmorris@morgan.uccs.mun.ca](mailto:pmorris@morgan.uccs.mun.ca)

# Safety Notes

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*(The Communicator, April 1997)*

## **Work-related accidents stats continue to improve in 1996**

The following charts illustrate work-related accident statistical comparisons at Memorial University for the last two years.

A review of these statistics indicates an overall decline of some 39 per cent in work-related accidents for 1996 compared to the previous year.

### **Nature of injury, accidents**

Two areas targeted during the past year for extra attention include falls on the same level resulting mainly in bruises and contusions, and sprains and strains due to overexertion. Both of these areas showed positive results with reductions in the area of 50 per cent.

### **Injuries**

The back still proves to be the part of the body injured most often, usually while lifting or handling materials. But these type of injuries have been reduced dramatically and continue to fall. Other frequently injured parts of the body include the legs, fingers, head, face, and neck.

### **Improvements**

This marks the second year in a row that there has been a significant decline in work-related accidents. But work injury trends remain the same with back injuries still leading the way. The challenge in 1997 is to reduce these and other accidents through practical, preventative measures. Education is still the key, and this spring the safety office will be embarking on a new back injury prevention program with the assistance of the Newfoundland Safety Council.

For prevention of all types of accidents, the responsibility rests with every employee to develop more awareness and a preventative mind set. This attitude is reflected in this year's campus safety theme **Safety Starts With Me**.

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# Safety Notes

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(*The Communicator*, April 1997)

## Safety sites in cyberspace

It is possible to access a vast amount of information on safety, environmental issues, transportation, hazardous chemicals and the like by visiting various home pages on the Internet.

<http://hazl.siri.org/msds/> is a searchable archive site for Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for information on hazardous chemicals.

<http://www.phys.ksu.edu/~tipping/msds.html> provides many links to MSDS sites.

<http://esf.uvm.edu/> is the University of Vermont's safety information page. There are links to many other safety sites including office safety and ergonomics sites.

<http://minerva.acc.Virginia.EDU:80/~enhealth/> is the environmental health and safety home page of the University of Virginia. There are many links.

<http://www.orcbs.msu.edu/biological/resource.htm> is the biosafety resource page of the American Biological Safety Association. Many rules, regulations and guidelines are included.

<http://www.hwc.ca/hlp/lcdc/hp.eng.html> is the home page of Canada's Laboratory Centre for Disease Control.

<http://ulysses.srv.gc.ca/aecb/homepage.htm> is the home page of the Atomic Energy Control Board, where and you can access information on radiation safety.

<http://www.ns.ec.gc.ca/atlhome.htm> is the home page of Environment Canada's Atlantic Region.

<http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/english/> is the home page of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. This page, and Environment Canada's home page, provide links to current environmental information.

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/> is Transport Canada's home page. You can look at a draft version of the Transport

of Dangerous Goods Regulations in clear language.

The list of web sites keeps growing. Try searching specific topics of interest using YAHOO or other search programs on Netscape. Try [www.yahoo.ca](http://www.yahoo.ca) if you want to restrict your search to Canadian sites.

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