



Manitoba
Government
and General
Employees'
Union

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Between the Lines

The MGEU Newsletter for MPI Members
Locals 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68

MARCH 2011

IN THIS ISSUE...

*Clearing up stat pay
confusion*

*Looking at our contract
three years in*

Tri-union conference

*New faces representing
your workplaces*

*PIPP organization
update*

*Happy retirement to
two long-time activists*

A Monumental Moment Marks the MGEU's 61st Convention

MPI was well represented at the MGEU's biennial convention this past fall. Our component was represented by eleven delegates from across the province. They participated in the debate on resolutions, brought forward by members like you, and elected the union's new leaders (see Provincial Executive list below).

At the convention banquet, Dedicated Service awards were handed out to members who have spent their careers as strong union advocates. Among those honoured was retired MPI member Dale Johnson (read more about Dale on Page 4).

This year's Convention was monumental as the union elected a new President for the first time in 25 years – and for the first time in the union's history, that President is a woman.

On October 23, 2010, Lois Wales (Cardiology Technologist - Area 5 Technical/Professional/Paramedical Component) became the MGEU's first-ever female president.

Lois is well-prepared for the job, having served more than three decades as an MGEU activist and as the MGEU's 1st Vice President since 1998. She's also chaired many of the union's standing committees and has sat on the Civil Service Master Bargaining Committee for more than a decade.

"Our members are our union, and we're stronger together. Now let's get to work! We've got lots to do!" exclaimed Wales in her acceptance speech.



Our members are our union, and we're stronger together. Now let's get to work! We've got lots to do! - MGEU President Lois Wales

2010 - 2012 Provincial Executive

PRESIDENT: Lois Wales, Technical/Professional/Paramedical
1ST VICE PRESIDENT: Michelle Gawronsky, Health Care Support
2ND VICE PRESIDENT: Stephen Roznowsky, GOLICO
3RD VICE PRESIDENT: Peter Roberts, Clerical
4TH VICE PRESIDENT: Jan Henley, Social Sciences

Your MPI Component Executive

Local 62 President (The Pas, Flin Flon)
Doug Eyres - 627-2204, deyres@mpi.mb.ca

Local 63 President (Dauphin, Swan River)
Sharon Stoltz - 622-2750, sstoltz@mpi.mb.ca

Local 64 President (Brandon)
Paulina Harron - 729-9541, pharron@mpi.mb.ca

Local 65 President (Winkler, Portage)
Val Doherty - 331-7519, vdoherty@mpi.mb.ca

Local 66 President (Arborg, Beausejour, Selkirk, Steinbach)
Jacques Lambert - 346-8059, jlambert2@mpi.mb.ca

Local 67 President (Winnipeg)
Beth Hazelwood - 985-7288, bhazelwood@mpi.mb.ca

Local 67 Chief Steward (Winnipeg)
Diane Arksey - 985-1993, darksey@mpi.mb.ca

Local 67 Vice President (Winnipeg)
Fran Frederickson - 985-0967, ffrederickson@mpi.mb.ca

Local 67 Member-at-Large (Winnipeg)
Amanda Caufield - 985-8904, acaufield@mpi.mb.ca

Local 67 Member-at-Large (Winnipeg)
Christine Bell - 330-6843, cbell@mpi.mb.ca

Local 68 Chief Steward (Thompson)
Sheri Ryan - 677-4710, sryan2@mpi.mb.ca

meet some of **THE FACES** representing your **WORKPLACES**

This past fall, elections were held across the province for the MPI Component's seven locals, and there were many new faces elected to new positions.

The President of each rural Local, along with the entire Winnipeg executive, makes up the MPI Component Executive (see list on the cover).

These fine folks meet to discuss issues at the top of members' minds. They also select one of their own to sit on the MGEU Board of Directors. This person is called the Component Director, and Local President Val Doherty was re-elected to this position.

Area 5 president Jeff Woods, Area 7 Chief Steward Dale Johnson and member-at-large Kay Strebly have retired, but there are many new (and some familiar) faces taking on new roles to fill their shoes. Here are some of the folks working hard for you around the Component.

Jacques Lambert

MPI Experience:

7 years - currently Senior Adjuster at the Steinbach Claim Centre

Union Role: Newly-elected Local 66 President

Reason for getting involved in the MGEU:

"I believe the area needs representation and leadership in this time of change."

Interesting Fact: Jacques is currently working towards his CIP designation.



Amanda Caufield

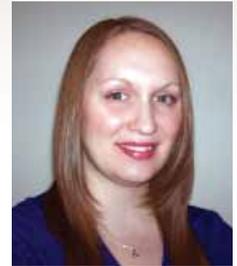
MPI Experience:

10 years - currently Collection Officer in Special Accounts and Subrogation

Union Role: Steward and newly-elected Member-at-large in Winnipeg

Reason for getting involved in the MGEU:

"I've always spoken my mind and stood up for people. When I was asked if I wanted to be an activist, I thought it would be a good use of my 'skills.' I'm hoping to change the perception the union has in the workplace and just simply help anyone who needs it."



Sheri Ryan

MPI Experience: 5 years - Service Centre Rep

Union Role: New Chief Steward in Thompson

Reason for getting involved in the MGEU:

"I want to learn more about the collective agreement and my rights and be able to communicate that to my co-workers."



Sharon Stoltz

MPI Experience:

24 years - Started as a Clerk with DVL, currently an SCR in Dauphin

Union Role: Many MGEU committees and Local positions - currently Local 63 President

Reason for getting involved in the MGEU:

"To me, knowledge is power and even more so when sharing in unity with fellow brothers and sisters of our union."

Interesting Fact: Sharon started in the MGEU as a Local President in DVL.



Paulina Harron

MPI Experience:

14 years - Senior Underwriter in SRE

Union Role: Newly-elected Brandon (Local 64) President

Reason for getting involved in the MGEU:

"I took the office of President because I wanted to make sure Brandon was represented during negotiations for our upcoming contract in 2012."



Diane Arksey

MPI Experience:

2 years - Medical Fitness Administrator in the Medical Compliance and Assessment Department

Union Role: Steward, Member-at-large, and recently-elected Chief Steward in Winnipeg

Reason for getting involved in the MGEU:

"As a nurse, I was able to see the difference that good union representation can make. I naturally want to help, and support co-workers."

Interesting Fact: Diane is a trained ICU nurse.





MGEU Negotiator
and Area 7 Rep
Miranda Lawrence

Workload Issues Lead the Way in Service Centre Concerns

I'm hearing repeated concerns about workloads from clerks, adjusters and estimators in Winnipeg claim centres. More specifically, the issue is that the volume of claims at the old centres has not reduced enough to validate staff levels being halved. And blaming winter doesn't cut it.

For example, all hit and runs are going to Pembina Hwy, but with only half the estimators now in the centre, staff are overwhelmed. City centres are handling T/Ls from the compound to help with their backlog and a lot of overtime is being worked. This is not sustainable. We have asked for a meeting with management as soon as possible to address workloads at these centres. In the meantime, let us know what you're experiencing.

Clearing the Confusion on Stat Holiday Pay

The stat holiday section of the agreement can be confusing because, as you'll see below, there are a number of factors to take into account. I receive many questions every time a stat comes around and with Easter on the horizon, I thought it would be helpful to talk about what it means to work the stat if you're asked to do so...

- 1. If you work a stat, you'll be paid at double time for the hours worked.** Then you will have the choice to receive an additional day off for another time OR a days pay (this makes up for not getting the stat off). But you will not ALSO receive regular stat pay, like the people who didn't work. So you effectively get triple time for hours worked – but NOT quadruple time.
- 2. If you take the day off in lieu, it can impact your pension sick leave and vacation** (if you are a Monday - Friday employee). If you take the day off, rather than taking the extra days' pay, you'll only receive 65.25 hours of pensionable earnings for that pay period and you'll be short one day's contribution to your pension sick leave and pension accrual. However, in the grand scheme of things it doesn't amount to much, so some choose to take the day off anyway. If the stat falls on your second day of rest (i.e. if you work Saturday and the stat falls on a Monday), this doesn't apply to you.
- 3. If the statutory holiday falls on a weekend (like Christmas 2010), the corporation will "observe" the holiday on the previous Friday or the following Monday and therefore those that work the "actual" stat on the weekend will ONLY BE PAID STRAIGHT TIME.** This is a holdover from when most employees worked Monday to Friday and we'd like to see this improved through negotiations.

Looking at Our Contract Three Years In...



This September we'll see the final pay increase of our four-year contract. This will be the fourth year in a row that MPI members have received a 2.9% increase.

The bargaining committee felt they had negotiated a good deal for members in 2008, but given the current economy, it looks even better now.

Many MPI members have taken advantage of the improvements your MGEU bargaining committee negotiated for in our last contract: such as improved family leave, improved health benefits, better benefits for term employees and those on maternity leave, more fairness in hiring practices, and increased meal and shift premiums.

There are other changes that have not taken effect the way we'd hoped. We were very excited about the changes for term positions, where they would be made permanent but without a home position. This was supposed to give term employees the security of a permanent job and time to find a home position. Unfortunately, many terms are simply not being renewed as the end of their two years approaches.

We're about a year away from the start of our next round of negotiations, which means it's time to start thinking about what you'd like to see changed or improved in your collective agreement.

Members of your bargaining committee will be holding meetings this fall to collect your ideas.

Sharing Experiences, Strategies Key to Tri-Union Success

This past September, your Component Executive welcomed other union members from COPE 397 (SGI) and COPE 378 (ICBC) to Winnipeg for an annual meeting, called the Tri-Union Conference. The meeting was an invaluable way to exchange ideas/strategies and share news (both good and bad) with union members from the other public auto insurance companies in Western Canada.

Our next meeting is planned for this June in Saskatchewan.



Your Component Director, Val Doherty (left), chaired the two-day meeting. Also pictured, Local 67 President Beth Hazelwood.

Happy Retirement Dale and Jeff!



DALE JOHNSON, Clerical Supervisor at the Pacific Avenue Service Centre, retired from MPI this past February, after more than twenty-five years of service with the Corporation.

Dale began her career with MPI in November 1984 as a Clerk-Typist II in the Commercial Vehicle Department. Dale held a number of different positions at various Winnipeg locations, before becoming Clerical Supervisor at Pacific in December 2005.

Those who have worked with Dale know she is knowledgeable, passionate and willing to stand up for her fellow MGEU members. Dale has been a member of the MGEU bargaining committee for the past five contract negotiations. Up until her retirement date, Dale was the Area 7 Chief Steward, the Ergonomic Resident Leader at her location, and a member of the Health & Safety Central Committee.

Dale recently received an MGEU Dedicated Service Award and is looking forward to travelling and spending more time with her family and husband Jim enjoying their cottage. Seeing how much fun she was having, Jim, a Claims Supervisor at the King Edward Street Service Centre, has just joined her in retirement.

JEFF WOODS was a proud MGEU member for 30 years, during his career at MPI. He worked all around the province including Thompson, Beausejour, Steinbach, Portage and Winnipeg.

He was involved with the union every step of the way and acted in many capacities – including as a local president, bargaining committee member, health and safety rep, area council chair, and grievance and appeals committee. Jeff also has the unique distinction of bargaining more contracts than any current management rep.

He retired in October 2010 and will be sadly missed as an activist. Jeff has been nominated for the MGEU Solidarity Award by the Component Executive.



All of the MGEU staff and members you've worked with over the years wish you both the best in your well-deserved retirements.

The Latest on BI3

Since the changes in Bodily Injury were announced, the union has been working to ensure the contract is followed and people are treated fairly throughout the process.

Many wanted the MGEU to stop the BI3 train, but the union's role is to make sure the Corporation is working within the parameters of the contract. Unfortunately, in this case, the employer is within their operational rights.

So this required a different approach. Because it's not possible to file grievances on this issue or take to the streets, we've stayed on top of members' greatest concerns with the transition (such as workload, stress and burnout, vacation approvals, staffing shortages, software glitches, training concerns, role definition, hiring fairness, and equality for rural staff).

We've been doing this by meeting and writing to members, asking for your concerns, presenting them to management and your VPs on a regular basis, and demanding answers and changes.

In response, management has come forward with town halls, answers by way of FAQs, and responses from the VP (which have been updated a few times).

While we have found that some of our concerns were not accepted (or have simply been viewed as exaggerations) and the pace of improvement is slow, some things have been implemented and we're staying vigilant.

Our next meeting to continue discussions on BI3 will be held on April 15 with the new VP for the area, Christine Martin, and VP of Human Resources, MaryAnn Kempe.

Please contact Miranda Lawrence or Val Doherty to let us know how things are going and what still needs to be done. The only way we can help is to hear from members. Comments will be kept CONFIDENTIAL.

Labour / Management Committee to meet April 15

We are meeting management next month to ask questions and get updates from them about ongoing issues of concern to members. It's not a time for bargaining or grievances, but it does allow us to discuss the direction things are headed in the "big picture." Management will post the minutes of the meeting on the MPI intranet, so watch for it in late April.

Some of the issues on the agenda include: two-year term conversions, diversity and respectful workplace, enhanced I.D. update, BI3 and *Fineos*, NIDMAR and RPL update, call centre merger update, and company vehicles.

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