

# UNION NEWS

Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Local 410

February 2008

Edited by Secretary Karen Lewis

## ***Happy 2008***

The executive Board of Local 410 would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a very safe and happy new year.

2007 was a very good year for our Local; we welcomed Cathy McLoughlan as our office administrator who has things running smoothly in the office, CIRB rulings have seen us welcome new members into our bargaining unit, and we have negotiated a 4 year extension to our collective agreement. We have also had a number of new people engaged as stewards and health & safety reps, and we have been diligent and strong in representing the best interests of all members through our grievance and consultative meetings.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your solidarity and support throughout this past year. We look forward to working with and for all of you in 2008 and we encourage you to become more active with in our Local in the coming months.

## ***Welcome X-Wave!***

*Message from president Phil Briffett*

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 we welcomed approx. 160 X-Wave employees into our Bargaining Unit.

They work in all four Atlantic Provinces; nearly 40% are here in NL and are now members of our Local! Our new members work in 7 different classifications; 4 of which already existed in our collective agreement, 3 of which are new classifications for our Bargaining Unit. The three new classifications include Data Operations, Client Service Rep I and Client Service Rep II. Let's take this opportunity to extend our solidarity & welcome them into our Bargaining Unit!

## ***Good News from the National!!***

*Message from VP & Rank & File Board Member Mary Croke*

### **Defense Fund Assessment**

Good News! The National Defense Fund has reached the \$25 million mark sooner than expected. As per the National Constitution, 3 months notice will be given to Locals that the Assessment will be coming off. Members will no longer see it as of the Feb 22, 2008 pay stub).

### **CTEA Merger**

More Good News! Members of the CTEA (Canadian Telecommunications Employees Association) voted 87% in favor of merging with the CEP. The CEP National Executive

voted unanimously to accept. The 12,000 former CTEA members are mainly clerical workers in Bell Canada, Bell Aliant in Ontario and Quebec, Amdocs, Telebec, Yellow Pages and Bell ICT Outsourcing Solutions. There are no plans at this time to make any of these members part of our Atlantic Council but they will join forces with other CEP members in their provinces to become stronger at the bargaining table. It is the largest ever merger in the telecommunications sector in Canada.

## ***Benefits Payback***

*Message from Treasurer Bridget Rowe*

As Treasurer of CEP Local 410, I am happy to report that as of December 2007 our interest free loan to the National has been paid in full for Health, Dental and other benefits that was covered during the strike. The deductions on your pay stub as an "After Tax Deduction" as "Health & Dental - NL and Benefits (not H&D) NL. were discontinued as of Dec 28th payday. Thanks to our National Union we were able to maintain our benefits for ourselves and our families during this difficult time of our strike.

## **Local Budget 2008**

*Message from your Executive*

During regular Sub-Local and Unit meetings this month, the Local's budget for the coming year is being presented and voted on by the members present. Compared to previous years, this budget is very conservative. There are a number of contributing factors. First, over the past few years, there were increases in per capita dues paid to the Council as well as the National. Second, income the Local was receiving for the past 3 years from the Council for debt repayment is now paid in full. Third, the cost of everything has increased which makes it more expensive to do business. This year, it will be fiscally impossible to service the membership and run the Local the same way we did in the past. While income has decreased, the expense of servicing the Local membership has increased. The geography of our province makes our Local an expensive one to service.

Highlights of Budget 2008...**Executive Board Meetings** are cut from three meetings a few years ago, to two in 2006 & 2007 and now only one meeting for 2008. That means your Sub-Local Chairpersons and Executive will meet face to face only once this year to discuss issues affecting the members and the Local. **Education** is another very important item that has been clawed back. There are stewards who were unable to participate in last year's training and we will have new stewards, particularly in the former XWave who will require that course. Therefore, we are

trying to arrange a training session with a few stewards at little cost. It is imperative that the membership has access to trained stewards to represent them when faced with issues in the workplace. As well, in the past we would budget for two **Sub-Local Swings** a year so the President and Vice President could meet, in person, with members in each Sub-Local and Unit, however this year, we have to cut back to one Sub-Local Swing.

To have a strong Local, one that can provide quality servicing to the membership and top-notch education to it's stewards, a dues increase is absolutely essential. The Local hasn't had an increase to the percentage of dues in 12 years. In 2007, the Executive proposed a change to the dues structure that would have extended the current 1.5% we pay on basic wages to apply to overtime and shift differentials. However, a majority of the members who voted turned down that proposal. Most members communicated to us that they thought the proposed new structure was unfair to those forced to work shifts and overtime. The Local Executive Board, hopefully in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2008, will recommend another proposal to the membership to increase dues which will apply to all members. We will provide the necessary notice of meetings and detailed information in the coming months.

## **Why Should You go to Union Meetings?**

*Message from the Executive Board*

We have sub-locals & units in all areas of this province. A membership meeting is where the decisions of this union are made. If you want to know what's going on, or if you do not like something that you know is happening you can have input- but only if you attend your monthly meetings! Also, if you attend 60 percent of meetings you will be eligible to attend conferences & conventions on behalf of the local. Meeting notices are posted every month in your workplace, at least one week prior to the meetings, and soon you will be able to check on our local webpage. On behalf of all of our sub-local and unit chairs, let us extend a warm invite to each and every one of you. See you at the meetings!!!!

## **Local OS&H**

"No job is so important and no service is so urgent that we cannot take time to perform our work safely." These are the words printed on the back of our collective agreement and they highlight our dedication to Occupational Health & Safety. We have a number of local OS&H committees throughout the province which strive to ensure that OS&H is at the forefront of everything we do.

We are pleased to announce that Brothers Deon Heath and Nick Johnson (Labrador) and Brother James Blackwood (Marystown) have accepted roles as Non-Management representatives for their Local OS&H committees! Welcome Brothers, it is our pleasure to work with you!

## ***Grievance Update***

As we reported in our last edition we have been pursuing a number of grievances. We wanted to give you an update; We presented 3 grievances on SDB denials, all of which were awarded. 3 on letters of discipline, 2 on classification flexibility, 2 on the SELQ's, 1 on lost time for a specialist appointment, 1 on a schedule change while on vacation.

We have also filed three policy grievances; 1 on the Overtime Meal Break and Meal Allowances, 1 on Regatta day scheduling and one on the recent decision to remove new mobility plans from the employee concession plan. There are also a few grievances that we have been working on and hoped to resolve at the second step, however we now find it necessary to proceed to the third step on those as well. We have a step 3 meeting planned for early February; we will update members as to the outcome of this step three meeting in our next edition, and we'd like to remind all members that if you have a problem or need advice on a potential grievance you should contact a steward in your area (contact info is available at [www.ceplocal410.com](http://www.ceplocal410.com)).

## ***National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women***

*A message from Secretary Karen Lewis with files from the CLC*

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 we mourned the fourteen women killed in Montreal in 1989 and every year we think

about all women who are murdered or experience violence at the hands of their partners, family members and strangers. Then, we recommit ourselves to taking action to end all forms of violence against women in our society.

December 6th is a day about remembrance and moving forward. Until all women in Canada have true economic and social equality, ending the violence we experience is not possible. Fighting violence, we have learned, requires an integrated approach. On March 8, 2007 the Minister responsible for the Status of Women in the Conservative government said the federal government was "committed to ensuring women's full participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the country." She also said her government was "taking action for real results," citing the introduction of legislation to allow for more effective sentencing and management of sexual and violent offenders. A law and order agenda, by itself, will not end violence against women. Punishing those who act out the violence does not address the source of that violence. It certainly would not have made a difference for the fourteen women we pause to remember every December 6th. We would mourn them still. Women, indeed all those singled out for abuse, discrimination and violence, are victimized because they are not seen as equals. Promoting women's equality, socially and economically, is where governments must also focus their efforts.

### **How can this be done?**

-affordable and safe housing;

- a living wage;  
-pay equity to close the wage gap (of 71¢ on the male dollar);  
-a national, public child care and early learning program;  
-equal access to Employment Insurance;  
-access to justice, including the resources to challenge in court governments' own actions, and legal aid;  
-support for women's centres, shelters, rape crisis centres and front-line advocacy and support;  
-support and protection in law for women who report sexual assault.

### **What do we get instead?**

Instead of promoting our equality, the federal government promotes crime-and-punishment measures that actually rely on women becoming the victims of violence, harassment and discrimination in the first place. At the same time, long-standing women's organizations with proven records of making a difference in the lives of women and their families have had their resources taken away. **Women's voices are being silenced, and our perspectives dismissed as strange, even dangerous.** This is hardly a path toward equality – and it sends the wrong message to those who harbor other views. Women, working together with other women for change, with the support of our communities and governments is what works. **Our right to equality cannot be won through apologies, excuses or permission.**

We will not be silenced.

We call on the federal government to reverse its

policy decisions on child care, pay equity, the Court Challenges Program, Status of Women Canada, and to restore advocacy and research funds to the Women's program. We call on the federal government to adopt an integrated approach to women's equality.

### ***Defense Fund***

As Mary eluded to in her message, the National Defense Fund (which is the fund that pays strike pay to all CEP members who need to go on strike right across the country) is getting back on track.

As members are aware, there has been a special assessment on our pay stubs to the effect of 0.06 cents on every 100 dollars of basic wages since Feb 23, 2007. Constitutionally the Defense Fund assessment will be removed entirely when our National Defense Fund reaches 25 million dollars. The Special Assessment will be removed as of the February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 pay stub.

This small increase was vital in ensuring that our Defence Fund was restored to a level that can sustain us in our ongoing struggles to protect the rights of our members against increasingly aggressive employers. We thank & commend all members for their continued willingness to stand together in the protection of workers rights!

### ***You Need Safety Net!***

*A message from the Local 410 Executive Board*

We are very concerned about members not using safety net and WE want all members, particularly those of you who

work alone, to know that your Executive Board and your Local OS& Reps support Safety net, and we believe that if used properly, it can save lives.

What would you do if you were working alone in a remote location and you suddenly became ill or injured and couldn't call for help? It's a scary thought – but it could happen. That's why we want to make sure you are aware of the [Aliant Safety Net](#) system and that you're using it when you should.

Safety Net is designed to help employees remain in regular contact with the office when working alone, in remote locations or in any conditions that may jeopardize safety.

With Aliant Safety Net, you don't have to worry about calling for help if you become ill or injured. Somebody will come looking for you, if you can't contact us.

The Aliant ***Safety Policy for Working Alone*** which states that “*employees who work or travel alone - or together in other high risk situations such as traveling in inclement weather - must initiate a Safety Net session for that time period...*”

Once you dial **1-877-863-4131** and create a session in safety net, it is logged, and you must check in (in one of the two above ways) before that amount of time has expired.

If you have not checked in, the system will contact you. If you do not respond, your information is sent to a surveillance team that will continue attempts to contact you. If they are not successful, then one or more

people will be dispatched to your location.

Your safety is a shared responsibility between the organization, our OS&H Committee and you.. This tool is yours to use – so we ask that you make your personal safety a priority and use it whenever you're working alone or in a potentially dangerous situation.

### ***Local 410 Women***

*Message from Jackie Furlong  
Local 410 Women's Committee*

#### **CEP Sisters ....Want to be involved in a small way?**

Why not become a member of CEP Local 410 Women's Committee. NO FUNDRAISING involved ...just helping to remember events that are important in the lives of Union Sisters and all other women. Maybe put up a poster at your workplace or maybe once or twice a year attend a local women's event in your area.

Local 410 women have represented the Local by marching in the annual Take Back the Night March to protest sexual violence against women, and in the December 6<sup>th</sup> Vigil to mark a national day of remembrance and action to end violence against women. The women's committee also distributed slippers which were donate by a local Suzy Shier. These slippers helped many unfortunate women in our community. On the west coast Sister Wanda Quilty undertook a penny drive to help a shelter in her area.

If you are interested in helping send an email to [jackie.furlong@aliant.ca](mailto:jackie.furlong@aliant.ca). I will be looking forward to working with you.