

“What You’ve Done for the Union”

By Wendy Despins, President

Friday in late September, I arrived in the office from our tour of northern meetings, and the office was humming with energy. The excitement in the air was palatable. It was day two of Level 2 Staff Representative training, and our large board room was filled with enthusiastic staff representatives participating in training exercises. There were loud voracious debates, **there was laughter, enthusiasm and that energy of excited learning.** It was such a treat to be welcomed back to that atmosphere. The room was filled with members, some of whom had previously been in other unions, members who were and are coming together under the banner of MAHCP. It is so rewarding to see the integration and acceptance of our membership, and each other, recognizing that we all have much to offer and all bring many different skills to the table.

The Executive Director and a Labour Relations Officer and I have concluded two complete tours of meetings with membership this past year, one tour in late winter through spring and one in the fall.



Throughout these meetings we have seen a steady rise in membership **attendance, at some sites we had as high as 95% of our membership attending.** It is encouraging to see membership come out to participate at these meetings, as well as expressing their appreciation for our approach and the content. **Many of you said it was the best meeting you had attended in 20, 25 or even 35 years.**

You’ve asked for more communication and we have risen to that challenge by:

- ✓ Having more unit meetings
- ✓ Being more visible and accessible
- ✓ Holding Staff Representative training courses

- ✓ More frequent Staff Representative meetings
- ✓ Developing a member friendly website
- ✓ Developing a better newsletter
- ✓ Being more visible in the workplace

and we are committed and prepared to continue with these activities.

More importantly your President and the Executive have heard from you through the many communication tools we have been developing. You’ve used:

- ✓ The web site “contact us”
- ✓ Voice mail
- ✓ The “Ask the President” form
- ✓ Heavy workload forms
- ✓ Grievances
- ✓ Questionnaires/surveys
- ✓ Attended meetings

You’ve made suggestions. You’ve stepped up to become involved, involved as staff representatives, as executive council members, as negotiating team members. You’ve helped the organization to grow. You have worked hard as staff representatives, as executive council members, as negotiating team members and it shows. Good communication is a dialogue, and with work and commitment it will always be evolving, changing and improving.