

President's Message

Labour Day and the start of the school year signify to me the end of the summer and has ingrained in me that September is the unofficial "New Year". It is further reinforced by our AGM being held in October. Thus it is a pivotal time to reflect back on what has been, while looking towards what can be. The reports in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) booklet speak to this past year. But . . . what about prior years? This year will be our 39th Annual General Meeting and it is a credit to our membership that because of consistently good attendance we were able to increase our quorum. I think attendance this year will be no exception. The meeting is a chance to meet with fellow members; meet the leaders you have elected to provide the governance and stewardship of the union and to meet with staff. It is here that you help to chart the course for our future. It is also an evening of fun and comradery. As the face of our union changes, as the demographic in the workplace shifts we see a greater need to document our history, providing a foundation of knowledge, which in turns builds understanding and solidarity.



Wendy Despina
President

The evolution of MAHCP over the course of those 39 years is quite remarkable.

In the past five years in order to impart some of our history we have undertaken a number of different ways to make what has been an oral history available to more and more of the membership. We are doing so at staff representative training, the annual staff representative conference and by giving presentations to the membership that showcases our history. And currently the communications committee is in the process of developing a MAHCP historical timeline for our website. To better assist the Executive Council and specifically the governance committee we created a timeline tracking document of our constitution. It includes all changes, rationales, and passed and

defeated resolutions. This creates a historical link and fosters understanding about decisions made.

We can't just look at our history to understand our union . . . it is JUST as important to study the future.

We have continued to move forward on our strategic visions. One of the strategic directions is the focus on and development of staff representative's. We have more members who are starting off in their careers being nominated and elected to staff representative positions. Many of you have taken the opportunity of the MAHCP training programs. Several Staff Representatives attended the Mel Meyers Conference in March, and the Level 1 and 2 training offered in June. Thank you to each of you for your acceptance of the nomination and your commitment to the role. If however, your workplace currently doesn't have a staff representative, and you would like to be one or know of someone you would like to nominate feel free to contact me for information about the process and the responsibilities. To provide greater support to the staff representatives we have increased training opportunities, both internally and externally. This October we are hosting our second annual staff representative conference. If you have not been able to attend staff representative training, don't despair as Level 1 and Level 2 training is scheduled in November (see page 6 for details).



Birgit Molinski and Wendy Despina

Another aspect of the staff representative project was the creation this spring of a pilot program for a Senior Staff Representative. In May, Birgit Molinski a staff representative at HSC-DSM embarked on eight weeks of extensive training. She had training from the Labour Relations Officers

(LRO's) on subjects that included the Labour Relations Act, Workplace Health and Safety, grievances, the grievance investigation process (GIP), arbitrations and contract interpretation. Although the primary focus of staff representatives is on workplace and labour relations issues it is important to know about and to understand the governance aspect of the organization. So part of her training was spent with me learning about governance, the work done by council members and how that differs from being a staff representative. Her time spent with me also included learning about and understanding the differences between governance and operations.

Birgit attended a number of labour relations related meetings including arbitrations, disciplinary hearings, grievance investigation meetings, and employee/management advisory committee meetings. She also attended an executive council meeting, council committee meetings and one day of the ad hoc defense fund committee meetings.

With her training completed Birgit has returned to her worksite for an eight month trial of the senior staff representative role.

It is hoped that Birgit will be a valuable resource to her fellow staff representatives, and that this program will be a positive change in the workplace.

So with a vision to the future of a union built solidly on education, providing the support and the tools for the job it is hoped that we will continue to build confident activists standing together with even greater solidarity

Labour Day. . . It was the thoughts of Labour Day and its origins that sent me down this path for my president's report. I hope that you have each enjoyed the Labour Day long weekend.

It is one of the many benefits that unions have given to society. Union bargaining and activities have far reaching effects and benefits beyond the scope of the membership.

(If you are interested in the history of Labour Day please go to www.mahcp.ca see the September 2006 Newsletter article "Labour Day")