



# HR LINKS

November 8, 2004

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**“We must be the change we seek in the world.” - Gandhi**

## Comings & Goings

Recent movement in the HR Community include:

- ☺ Louise Cornish, Senior Consultant, Organizational Design & Effectiveness, PSC
- ☺ Mary Jane Wortman, HR Director, Justice HR CSU
- ☺ Jeannette Smith, HR Initiatives, PSC
- ☺ Carla Ellis, Registrar, PSC
- ☺ Chris Keefe, OH&S Consultant Education HR CSU (**featured in Employee Focus later in Links**)
- ☺ Colleen Dollimount, Education HR CSU, intern
- ☺ Joanna Facey, OH&S Consultant, Justice HR CSU
- ☺ Mary Beth Gillis, Junior HRC, Education HR CSU (**featured in Employee Focus later in Links**)
- ☺ Candy Palmater, Diversity Consultant, PSC
- ☺ Sandra Kinley, Junior HRC, Justice HR CSU
- ☺ Heather Chandler has left the PSC Diversity portfolio for the Halifax Regional School Board
- ☺ Bev Cochrane, HRA, Education HR CSU has transferred to Project eMerge for one year

## Spotlight on OH&S: Justice Style

During the Summer of 2004 the Justice HR CSU went from struggling to keep up with OH&S to a full blown permanent OH&S Unit. **Enid Stout** has been

seconded from the PSC for 18 months to develop the program, staff and lead the new team which includes: **Margie LeClair** and **Joanna Facey**. Margie will be focusing on the health and wellness needs of Correctional Services including workplace health surveillance and control programs and employee support and abilities management.

Joanna will have a major compliance focus and is already involved in supporting the Joint OH&S Committees and representatives.

This new team has spent time meeting their clients, establishing lines of communication and forming internal partnerships.



(l to r Joanna Facey, Margie LeClair, Enid Stout)

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## Meetings happening:

- ✓ HR Development Forum - Fri. Nov. 5 & Dec. 3
- ✓ HR Managers - Wed. Nov. 17 & Dec. 15 1-2:30, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Terminal Rd.
- ✓ HR Directors - Thurs. Nov. 18 & December 16, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Joe Howe

***Put this one in your calendars today!  
Wednesday December 1 Annual HR  
Social at the Argyle Bar & Grill.***

If you would like the dates of your upcoming meetings posted here, please send your information to [smithjm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:smithjm@gov.ns.ca).

## Employee Focus & Welcome! Mary Beth Gillis



Frenchvale, Cape Breton - Kathmandu, Nepal and the Halifax YWCA all have this in common. If you answered in the form of a question and guessed Mary Beth Gillis you would be the next HR Jeopardy winner.

Mary Beth Gillis has joined the Education HR CSU as part of the Career Starts, Post Secondary Intern program. Mary Beth, a Junior HR

Consultant will focus on consultation, design and implementation of training and development activities as part of the new HR Strategy for the Department of Education, specializing in the area of diversity. Mary Beth brings to the Government of NS experience working for the YWCA of Halifax, and as co-ordinator of the International Internship Program at the Coady Institute at St. FX. While at the Coady Institute she was sent to work with the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, and Development at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, Nepal. (She tells me this is farther than Yarmouth)

“The Career Starts Program is an innovative approach to recruiting the next generation of Nova Scotians to share their experience and expertise for service in the Public Service of Nova Scotia....you should see the statistics on youth inclusion! There are so many individuals that aspire to work in the HR field especially in the public service, I feel fortunate and am excited about what I am doing.”

The Nova Scotia Government is highlighting DIVERSITY as a key issue in all HR areas, so it is even more significant to have Mary Beth with us at this time. Mary Beth has her B.Ed and has trained as a high school social studies and diverse cultures teacher and has a great interest in cross cultural diversity.

And the Frenchvale link? Mary Beth tells this cub reporter that she is a proud Cape Bretoner from a big family of Scottish Clans. Mary Beth, we are proud to welcome you to our community!

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## **Bereavement in the Workplace**

*How to recognize it, respond to it and respect it.*

Submitted by Employee Assistance Program Staff

Deaths occur at work, people often receive the news of a relative's death while at work, and employees often have to remain on the job after they learn of a colleague's death. Unfortunately, we also live in a society that does not really understand nor feel comfortable with the grief process. Consequently, if an employee's grief is responded to at all, it is often in awkward and unsure ways. Employees don't expect management or HR personnel to fix their grief, but they do expect them to respond to and respect their loss. The following information may be of benefit to managers who are confronted with employees coping with a loss.

### **Recognizing the grief:**

When managers are busy, it is easy to yield to attitudes such as, "Why mention something you can't do anything about?" The workplace is not the place to bring up personal matters".

Recognition can be as simple as a letter of condolence from a supervisor, or flowers sent to the funeral or mention of the employee's loss in the newsletter (with the employee's permission if it is a family member). Few things hurt and offend more than to experience a loss and have no one acknowledge it.

### **Responding to the grief:**

If employees witness a death (or even a near death) of a colleague at work, this is considered a Critical Incident. The EAP can link managers with a resource who can educate and debrief employees to minimize the emotional impact. This

intervention is known as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) and is best provided within a 24-72 hour time period.

If colleagues learn of a death in their coworkers family, EAP can provide managers a resource to facilitate an awareness session on grief and loss. Employees learn tips on what to say, how to support and welcome their colleague back to work. Having printed materials available on grief and loss can also be of benefit.

As employees react to grief, their productivity, attendance, health and relationships with colleagues and customers may suffer. Some turn to alcohol or other drugs to cope with the pain. Managers and HR personnel educated on the signs and symptoms of an employee not coping well with their loss are better prepared to approach and refer employees to EAP and other appropriate resources for help in a timely manner. Employees should also be reminded that family members are eligible for Employee Assistance Program services.

### **Respecting the grief:**

Respecting an employee's loss is an important way to demonstrate respect for that person as an individual. It also enhances morale when staff realizes that what happens in their lives matters to their managers as well. Respect develops when managers implement such actions as outlined above. It shows employees the sincerity of concern when assisting them in times of loss.

The Employee Assistance Program can provide guidance and support to

managers and HR personnel when in dealing with the issue of Bereavement in the Workplace. For more information, please contact EAP at 1-800-777-5888 or 424-7948.

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**BUCR UPDATE:** John Campbell reports that “implementation of the results of the review will be the subject of discussions by the parties in the current round of civil service negotiations.”

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## **Employee Focus & Welcome! Chris Keefe**



(Chris Keefe, Education HR CSU)

Chris Keefe is a Charlottetown native who with his wife Carla, lived in Nova Scotia for three years in the mid 90's and is very happy to be back. Chris is the new OH&S Consultant with the Education HR CSU. Chris will focus on promoting OH&S throughout the workplace by not only maintaining compliance with the OH&S Acts and Regulations but also creating and

promoting strategies around a healthy lifestyle and workplace.

Chris is a graduate of Holland College and is no stranger to hard work. Growing up on a farm in Kinkora, P.E.I., he also farmed on his own for several years. When asked to describe one of the most exciting things that he has done he replied “I flew an airplane over Peggy’s Cove and then went scuba diving there that same summer.” Chris joins the Nova Scotia Government directly from the Department of Education in P.E.I. We look forward to working with you Chris, welcome to the team!

## **Employee Survey Update....**

PSC Commissioner Rick Nurse has made a request to the Deputy Heads asking for names of individuals to participate on an Advisory Committee. Howard Windsor and Rick Nurse are meeting shortly to not only confirm the membership but to put the Terms of Reference together and get the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting scheduled. More information to come.

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**HR Links:** are you a closet journalist or reporter? Just want to contribute to communication in Human Resources? Or if you would like to submit something for the next issue? Your editorial board includes: Jane Allt, Mary Dauphinee, Michelle Collins, Colleen Gareau (Communications NS) and Jeannette Smith. Send info to: [smithjm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:smithjm@gov.ns.ca)

**“I want to set an example that will never be forgotten.” - Terry Fox**

## **Strategic Succession and Talent Management**

- Valerie Hearn, Sr. Consultant Human Resource Planning and Succession Management with the Public Service Commission has recently returned from a conference where best practice organizations such as Shell, Ford Motor Company of Canada, Scotiabank, KPMG (just to name a few) were presenters. These organizations presented their case studies on what they were doing in the areas of succession management and leadership development.

Valerie says "I was able to come away from the conference feeling very confident that we are definitely on track with the programs we have in place, and I was very excited to find that in some cases we are even **ahead** of the best practice organizations!"

"It was also important to hear that many of the issues and questions we have about our approach are the same issues and questions from the best practice organizations." Questions such as:

- Should "high potentials" be told they are high potential?
- Should we even be using the term high potential (as it can be seen as exclusionary to all other good performers in an organization)?
- How do we provide development opportunities for people who are already overloaded? and,
- How do we keep mid-career workers engaged?

Valerie wants to incorporate answers to these very important questions into our current and future succession management and leadership development programs.

## **Negotiations Update**

1. **Civil Service Master** - Negotiations commenced in June with an exchange of Employer and Union proposals. There have been several days of negotiations and other dates are scheduled through the fall.
2. **EDC** - Civil service bargaining unit comprised of faculty positions (approximately 65 employees) at Nova Scotia Agricultural College. Expiry March 31, 2004. Notice to bargain has been served, however, as of October 22<sup>nd</sup> no negotiations had taken place.
3. **CUPE Local 1867 - (TPW)** Negotiations commenced in September 2002 and reached an impasse in May 2003. Conciliation occurred between August and November 2003. The Union filed for interest arbitration in December 2003. A decision of the Highway Workers Employee Relations Board regarding arbitrable items has been challenged through appeal and a Nova Scotia Supreme Court decision is pending. Interest arbitration is expected to ensue following finalization of the arbitrable items.
4. **NSGEU Local 480 (Adult Corrections)** Negotiations commenced in the fall of 2003 and reached an impasse in May 2004. The parties have been engaged in conciliation in September and October and the collective agreement will be concluded through interest arbitration, likely to be finalized early in 2005.

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