



Atlantic Region
Région de l'Atlantique

ATLANTIC NEWS

YOUR PIPSC ATLANTIC REGIONAL NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021

From the Director...



Happy Holidays. Last year, if someone predicted in 2020 we would not be able to gather and our personal and work lives would be virtually based, I would have said I don't think I will see that in my lifetime. How wrong I would have been. This past year has been full of challenges for us all. Despite the challenges, we have found ways to move forward and adapt, doing what we need to do to keep each other healthy and safe. Virtual connections have replaced in person contact and become the new norm.

In this newsletter you will see more Regional Executive profiles and we will continue this practice as new members are elected to this constituent body. Every year, the Regional Executive works to find ways to better engage the membership. This year we have had to rethink our traditional methods

and come up with ideas to gather virtually. In the absence of Regional and Steward Councils, we have held a number of virtual sessions for stewards and stewards in waiting: Two Steward Check Ins, Covid 19 in the Workplace, Resilience in a Virtual World with Paul Huschilt and a session with Jennie Esnard. The uptake for these events increases each time and overall, based on the response and participation, these sessions have been well received. In January we have Case Law and Trends, always a popular topic, with Employment Relations Officers Max Way and Elissa McCarron. The Executive continues to plan virtual events and welcome suggested topics or ideas of how to engage the membership during the absence of in person gatherings.

Heading into the 2021, who knows what restrictions we will have to contend with. Some challenges will remain the same and others will be new and not anticipated. PIPSC will be tackling various initiatives as we move forward - virtual training for example. Remember the Regional Executive are always here for you - reach out if you need assistance or someone to talk to. Remembering to connect with coworkers and family during these times is important. Just saying hi (virtually) could make all the difference to someone's day.

Wishing you health and happiness in the New Year.

In Solidarity,
Kimberley Skanes
Director, Atlantic Region

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DND Halifax Branch Profile

There was one Halifax Branch for all members until 1988. Some of our members working for DND felt there were unique issues when working alongside the military that just don't apply in an all-civilian Department. A proposal to create a separate Branch was submitted to PIPSC and approved.

The Branch's first AGM was held on September 23, 1988. The original executive consisted of:

Chair: Gordon Grant
Vice-Chair: Nancy Witherspoon
Secretary/Treasurer: Mounah Zrein
Members at Large: Mike Jessome, Simon Sagar and Paul Smith.

Our current executive consists of:

President: Everett Scott
Vice-President: Jennifer Cantwell
Treasurer: Kevin Jack
Secretary: Paul Smith
Members at Large: Mounah Zrein, Christine Dugal, Joe Rossiter, Eric Thornhill, Joe Williams, Don Eldershaw and George Turner.

As you can see, Mounah and Paul have been active right from the beginning. Mounah was Treasurer until recently. Paul has been Secretary through most of our existence, but he is retiring soon so we are looking for a replacement.

Our membership was around 200 initially and has grown to almost 400. The Branch has represented our members at Regional Councils, National AGMs and other events. We have organized social events and Lunch and Learns on a regular basis (until recently!). We place a wreath on behalf of our members at Remembrance Day ceremonies. Since we work alongside the military, we feel it is appropriate to show respect for their sacrifices. We have ensured our members are represented in Consultation with Canadian Forces Base Halifax and

several Units within the Base. Issues we have helped members to deal with include paid parking, dress code (there isn't one), reorganization of units, shift workers extra pay for working on statutory holidays, orientation for new employees, interpretation of the NJC Travel Directive and of course recent changes to deal with COVID-19.

We have also been active in recruiting stewards. We have recently recruited several stewards in Classifications and Units that previously had no stewards.

Atlantic Region Steward Virtual Events

This year has been a different one for everyone. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 our in-person events were suspended for 2020. The Atlantic Regional Executive and Training Committee decided to host various virtual sessions for the stewards of our region over the past six months.

The first event was a Steward check-in on June 24 with the Regional Director, Regional Executive and ERO Max Way. As our first virtual session, it was well attended. Since then there have been two more virtual check-ins: October 20 with the Regional Director, Regional Executive and ERO Elissa McCarron. The next one was held on December 16 with the Regional Director, Regional Executive, ERO Elissa McCarron and guest speaker Jennie Esnard, Chairperson of the Human Rights and Diversity Committee. The check-ins provided a platform for stewards to discuss issues and/or concerns from their workplace with other stewards in different areas of the region and provided an opportunity to ask questions to the various speakers.

The Atlantic Regional Executive also hosted two COVID-19 in the Workplace sessions on November 4 (am and pm), presented by EROs Paul Hartigan and Max Way. This information session provided details to our stewards on leave code 699, OHS in the

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workplace and at home and other relevant issues surrounding COVID-19. Once again the stewards had the opportunity to ask the EROs questions pertaining to COVID.

On the evening of November 24, guest speaker Paul Huschilt presented a humorous session on Resilience in a Virtual World. He brought humor along with tips on how to manage life during the pandemic.

As each virtual session is announced, the participation from our region's stewards continues to grow. Please keep an eye on your emails for future virtual sessions. If you have topics that would be relevant to our stewards, please forward them along to the Atlantic Regional Executive or the Atlantic Regional Training Committee.

101 PIPSC AGM

The 101 PIPSC Annual General Meeting was the first ever virtual PIPSC AGM held on Saturday,

December 5. Atlantic delegates attended a virtual caucus meeting to review the AGM resolutions Thursday night prior to the AGM.

The AGM convened at 11:00 am Eastern on Saturday. The AGM began with an address from President Debi Daviau followed by a short period of question and answers. Following the president's address, the delegates commenced the business aspect of the AGM where resolutions were presented and debated starting with the budgetary resolutions. Delegates approved the 2021 budget. Late in the day, motions to refer the remaining resolutions to the board of directors was proposed and debated. Another motion to recess for a couple of hours was proposed and debated. Finally, a



motion to recess the AGM to a later date determined by the Institute was proposed, debated, and carried. Once the vote was completed for the motion to recess, Debi provided some final remarks for that session of the AGM. At the time of writing this article the date for the second day of the AGM has not been announced.

Getting To Know your Regional Executive



A little about me: Hi, I'm Jennifer Cantwell and I am from Little Bras d'Or, Nova Scotia. I've called Halifax my home since leaving Cape Breton to attend Dalhousie University in 1997. I live in the city with my husband Martin and

daughter Cassidy. We also have a big, grey Labradoodle named Kili (after Kilimanjaro). I have been working as a Physiotherapist for 17 years with the first 5 in private practice and the last 12 of those years working with DND.

What do I do for fun? I love most sports! I've been playing competitive Ultimate frisbee for 15 years as well as squash for 12 years. I have had my share of injuries and started to practice yoga as a result. I now consider myself a devoted yogi and have aspirations of becoming an instructor someday. When I'm not playing sports I'm out hiking with my family, reading a good book or experimenting with a new recipe.

Why I became a steward? After being hired by DND as a contractor and seeing what the union could do for its members, I became very interested in PIPSC. When I finally was hired as a public servant I quickly started to volunteer with PIPSC. It started as just helping with events and has evolved into me becoming a steward and a member of my local Branch, Group, and Regional executive. Being a Steward allows me to inform members of their rights and how to navigate any union related processes. I like to be a helping hand to my

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coworkers. With COVID 19 effecting us all on so many levels, it's important that Stewards are on deck ready to assist our members. I haven't forgotten my time as a private or contracted clinician and want to help keep our union strong.



A little about me: Hi, I'm Gerald Paul Ira Hill, that's right my parents loved me so much, they gave me a four name handle! I'm from Summerside, PEI and was born and raised on the island. I actually grew up in a little community called Mayfield, a beautiful spot most have never heard of but it's about one minute from Cavendish! This was a great place to grow up in the summer, as you can imagine and many have experienced, but in the winter we got excited when we saw a snow plow! Brrrr!! I've been working in the IT field for 24 years, the first half with the Province of PEI and the past 12 years with DVA and SSC. My current role in SSC is a CS within Cloud Research and Development.

What do I do for fun? I love to play billiards, 8-ball mostly but also a little 9 and 10 ball. I have travelled around Canada and have been to the Worlds in Las Vegas three times. I love to travel, not only to warm and tropical places but throughout the Maritimes and Canada. I believe we live in one of the most beautiful countries in the world! My favorite vacation is cruising to different tropical islands. I also like to golf but my game is just fair at best! I love hanging out at my cottage with friends and family enjoying the beach, card games, clam digging and bonfires.

I have two beautiful, active and athletic teenage daughters ages 16 and 17 and a lovely wife - if I told you her age, I would not be attending any further union meetings!! We have a lot of fun as a family and I will be sad to see my oldest leave for university in September.

Why I became a steward? I have always been active within my union throughout my Provincial and Federal career. I like engaging members and bringing to light the good things unions provide its membership. I take great pleasure in standing up for our member's rights and ensuring they are informed. I thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve as a member of the Atlantic Regional Executive.



A little about me: Hi y'all. I am Carolyn Hynes (aka: C, Cee Low; or Jackie O). I have the privilege to reside in the oldest city in North America, St. John's, NL (da Rock). I am an enormously proud mom to four adult children (3 boys, 1 girl); step mom to two adult girls; "meemaw" to a smart, witty, and creative eight-year-old named Chloe. I also hold title as dog mom to two of the most loved boxers, Cassius and Max; Cat mom to "Gerti the Great"; granddogma to Herbert and Annie; and grandcatma to Keith, Jack, and Olive.

I worked as registered nurse in a variety of clinical settings as well as Nurse Instructor prior to joining ESDC in Nov 2002 as a Medical Adjudicator. I currently work remotely with NHQ as a Medical Adjudicator Consultant.

What do I do for fun? In one word: hiking (with my puppers and selfie stick)! I spend most of my free time hiking the beautiful East Coast Trail, which is literally located in my back yard. This year I was privileged to hike numerous spectacular trails throughout NL and NS. I love being in nature even when I have a Bear encounter, NOT, lol. When I am not hiking, I can usually be found running, walking, playing/practicing ultimate Frisbee; learning yoga; or relaxing with a good book/movie with a good glass of Vino tinto.

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Why I became a steward? My grandfather would say I was born a Steward and that PIPSC found me, lol. I have always been an inquisitive, determined, justice-seeking individual. Working in numerous un-unionized positions in my younger days, I was well versed in the inequities between employer and employee. Those inequities triggered my interest in Human Rights and Unions.

PIPSC has provided the opportunity to be an advocate and support for members, to continue to grow as a steward/leader through the excellent training opportunities provided and build strong friendships that will continue well beyond my career. On a side note, to my union friend Mike, “you did not invent Turnip Fries”. 😊. To be a PIPSC Steward is a true privilege.



A little about me: My name is Marcel Journey. I have worked as a Computer Systems specialist (CS) for the Department of National Defence for almost 30 years now. I am so fortunate to have a job I love and find exciting. It may sound weird,

but I often find myself looking forward to Monday mornings so I can get back into the workplace and pick up where we left off the week before!

Why I became a steward: I have been steward with PIPSC for almost 20 years. Throughout all those years I have served on one executive or another, branches and sub-groups in both Halifax and Greenwood, as well as both the Atlantic Regional executive and the CS Group National executive. In addition, I have spent half my years as a bargaining team member. I have sat on, and chaired, committees of the board and now find myself knee-deep in consultation. What I really love is defending our members in the workplace, standing up for members who don't think they have a voice. I have experienced the havoc that a workplace bully can create and it made me a much stronger steward.

I am a big proponent of the Atlantic region. I firmly believe we have some of the greatest stewards in the country; stewards who always put the needs of the members first. I am proud to serve as Vice-Chair of this great region.



A little about me: Hi, I'm Kimberley (Kim) Skanes. A Business Auditor with the Canada Revenue Agency, I have been with the Agency since February 1990. My first 4 years were as a casual employee. I became a PIPSC

member in May 2000 and a steward in 2006. First elected to the Regional executive in May 2012 and subsequently elected as Regional Director in 2016.

What do I do for fun?: That is assuming that I have time for fun...lol. Two hobbies I enjoy are reading and puzzles, of which I have done a lot this past year. Also, this past year my boyfriend, Greg and I have taken up bike riding. It had been over 20 years since I rode a bike and now that the weather has turned colder I am missing what became a daily activity for us. So, I guess the saying is true, you never forget how to do something as it's just like riding a bike...lol

Why I became a steward: I completed many labour relations courses while in University and these were always of interest to me. How it worked and the role that unions played. It was many years after university that I became involved. My late husband, Gerry, was an active member of the Union of Taxation Employees and it was his encouragement to be involved that convinced me to put my name forward for a position on the local Subgroup and become a steward. That was in 2006 and I haven't looked back. Being a steward is often viewed as a thankless job, but it's the personal satisfaction that comes from being there for someone when it's needed and making a difference for them and others in the workplace is what makes it all worthwhile.

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