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WELCOME TO THE NRCAN CAPE LOCAL NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the fourth Newsletter from the NRCan CAPE Local. An NRCan local for the National Capital Region was first created in March 2006.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2007 was held on June 13th in Gamble Hall with 32 members attending. Draft minutes of the meeting have been prepared and will be approved (as well as those for 2006) at the next AGM. Here are the highlights of the meeting:

- Section 2.1 of the CAPE NRCan Local Bylaws was amended so that the Annual General Meeting would be held: “before the end of June of each year” instead of “in October or November of each year”.
- Claude Vezina, the Labour Relations Officer for CAPE representing NRCan discussed the new EC classification standard.
- Six people volunteered for positions on the NRCan CAPE Local Executive and a motion was approved to acclaim them: Margot Ashfield, Franco Bello, Geoff Bokovay, Carol Fairbrother, Sarah Lawson and Melissa Ryan. (Positions were established—as noted in the table above—at a subsequent Executive Meeting. Sarah Lawson has moved to Peterborough and, while she could no longer continue as President, she remains active in the Local as a Director.)

LABOUR MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

Labour-Management Consultation Committees (LMCCs) provide an opportunity for union and management to communicate and maintain a sustained dialogue. The departmental LMCC meets twice per year as well as a number of sector level LMCCs. Minutes from the LMCCs are posted at: <http://www.int.nrcan.gc.ca/ci/ems/1/h-srumc-e.htm>.

Departmental LMCC, November 29, 2007

Carol Fairbrother represented CAPE at the departmental LMCC held on November 29, 2007. A number of updates were given on the Corporate and Administrative Shared Services, Sunset Programs, Federal Laboratories, and Employment Equity. The upcoming Labour Management Symposium was also discussed.

You may have noticed the story about the LMCC in *The Source* http://wwwint.nrcan-nrcan.gc.ca/source/staticarchive.php?doc_type=news&action=view&article_name=news-2007-12-c.htm&language=en. It is a privilege to serve as a union representative at this table. I wish that more employees could experience firsthand the sense of union management collaboration.

Corporate Management Services Sector LMCC

Carol Fairbrother attended the Corporate Management and Services Sector (CMSS) LMCC on September 24, 2007. As you may be aware, on September 7, 2007, the reporting accountability of the Shared Service Office (SSO) was changed so that it now reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister of CMSS. It was expected that this change would have little impact on SSO employees. A CMSS Human Resources Plan was presented at the meeting. It will address the recruitment and retention issues in the sector, including SSO (SSO has experienced a high turnover rate which has affected its overall performance), Labour Relations and Human Resources. This meeting also announced that NRCan would likely be creating a Chief Financial Officer position to meet the requirements under the Federal Accountability Act. The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2008.

Energy Technology and Programs Sector / Energy Sector LMCC

The Committee has had regular meetings twice a year but starting with the next meeting, scheduled for February 8, 2008, the group will meet every 4 months.

Geoff Bokovay and Franco Bello, attended the meeting of the ETPS/ES LMCC on October 11, 2007. Items that were discussed at the meeting included:

- Current status of the affected and surplus employees in ETPS
- Workplace environment in Bell Corners, Booth Complex and the Observatory
- HR Plans, reaction by employees
- Expansion of Emeritus Program (for Scientists) to include other professionals

Shared Services Office LMCC

Sarah Lawson represented CAPE at the SSO LMCC on October 4, 2007. Management suggested holding one sector LMCC for both CMSS and SSO now that SSO reports to the ADM of CMSS and the SSO executive Director is a member of the CMSS LMCC.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE FOR 580 BOOTH STREET

Geoff Bokovay attended monthly meetings of the Workplace Health and Safety Committee for 580 Booth Street as the representative for CAPE. The Committee is a joint labour-management forum to address workplace health and safety issues (a requirement of the Canadian Labour Code). During 2007, the Committee discussed a variety of issues including: indoor air quality and temperature, fire safety, building cleaning, elevators and workplace hazards.

While CAPE has a responsibility to participate in this forum, individual members are encouraged to report health or safety issues via the building hotline number (1-800-463-1850) as quickly as possible. Should members have lingering unresolved issues, please contact Geoff at 992-9779. The NRCAn CAPE local would also appreciate hearing from members who would be interested in serving on the Workplace Health and Safety Committee for 580 Booth Street in 2008.

LABOUR-MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

Carol Fairbrother and Franco Bello attended the first NRCAn Labour-Management Symposium, January 9-10, 2008, at the NavCanada Centre in Cornwall, Ontario. This was an initiative patterned after a successful symposium with labour and management at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The objectives of the Symposium were to encourage labour-management relationship building and to get insights into each other's points of view. We would have to say that the Symposium met its objectives and we even started down the road of finding solutions to some common challenges. We would like to commend the Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Ministers who all made this event a priority in their calendars. In Carol's view, the best session was on the Informal Conflict Management System (ICMS) where, through a role playing exercise, we came to appreciate that the ICMS is not so much about finding solutions but in coaching people in how to resolve conflict in the workplace for themselves.¹

EC CONVERSION AND CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

On July 17, 2007, we had a great turnout for a joint CAPE-NRCAn EC Conversion Information Session in Camsell Hall. Claude Danik, CAPE Executive Director gave some background to the development of the classification standard and some recommendations for what employees should be looking for. Sandra Fletcher, NRCAn Manager of Classification and Organizational Design, brought it all together by explaining the process at NRCAn and what to expect next. We then had time for some questions and answers. **We would be happy to set up another session; please let us know if you would be interested.**

¹ Dr. Claude Barraud is the Senior Officer of the ICMS. Contact information: 996-0237; cbarraud@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

In December, NRCAN updated the EC Conversion website:

<http://www.int.nrcan.gc.ca/ci/ems/1/h-wdr-e.htm> and gave our Local Executive an update. You will note that all of the broad banded work descriptions have been revised using the new classification standard. All Directors General were notified on December 7, 2007, that the next step in the process is for managers to match each employee's position with the appropriate work description by mid January 2008. These results will be reviewed by HR, and afterward, subject to approval by the Canada Public Service Agency (CPSA), an Advance Personal Notification (APN) will be given to each employee. At this time the employees can discuss with their managers the content of their work descriptions. After contract negotiations have been completed the APN is finalized with an Official Personal Notification (OPN). At this time, members have a right to file a grievance if they believe that their revised work descriptions do not reflect specific work/activities of their positions. Employees wishing to file a grievance should contact CAPE within 35 days of receiving their Official Personal Notification (OPN).

As of January 14, 2008, CAPE had still not received the conversion database that tracks the movement of ES and SI positions to the new classification levels of the standard. This database is needed for contract negotiations. Our contract expired, June 2007 and with all the slippages about EC conversions, the negotiations are likely to drag on, well into 2008.

One final note, Claude Vezina, the Labour Relations Officer for CAPE members at NRCAN, has been temporarily assigned to work on the EC conversion. During this period, Claude's portfolio has been assigned to Allan Stead; his contact information is listed at the beginning of this newsletter.

TERM EMPLOYEES

NRCAN is taking an active approach to the management and monitoring of term employees with a view to developing a policy by March 2008 under the Human Resources Renewal Committee. The policy is expected to provide a corporate-wide approach to the identification of positions that could be staffed indeterminately. Focus groups with term employees were held in November and December to gather their perspectives on recruitment, work experiences, workplace satisfaction and retention. NRCAN is recognizing that employees with portable job skills are of value to the organization and should be retained.

CAPE's AGM

Sarah Lawson attended CAPE's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 29, 2007. The agenda included a discussion of the financial statements and budget as well as proposed amendments to the By-laws and Constitution.

In December CAPE announced that membership had approved the Constitutional and By-law Changes as well the proposed two year budget.

2007 marked the first time CAPE's AGM included invited guests. Mr. John Fryer and Mr. Milt Issac spoke on the topic of *The Future of Bargaining Agents in Canada's Federal Public Service*. Both speakers encouraged CAPE to reach out to politicians. Mr. Fryer (author of the Fryer report - http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/fryer/wtpi-teip-1_e.asp#ove) recommended bargaining agents focus on expanding the scope of issues subject to bargaining. He encouraged CAPE to: fully use existing mechanisms (e.g. LMCC's); exercise our right to have union meetings at the workplace during workplace hours; remember that the Supreme Court of Canada is on our side; work together; and to be prepared for the 5 year review of the Public Service Modernisation Act.

WORKPLACE WELL-BEING

Sarah Lawson represented CAPE at the NRCan Workplace Well-being Committee meeting on November 16, 2007. An overview of the Departmental HR plan was provided and the latest draft of the Workplace Well-being Framework was discussed. The Strategic, Research and Analysis Unit of CMS's Human Resources and Security Management Branch have pulled together a very interesting set of data on Workplace Well-being at NRCan – please contact Sarah (sarah.lawson@nrcan.gc.ca) if you would like a copy of the latest draft.

NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL (NJC) ANNUAL SEMINAR

The National Joint Council of the Public Service of Canada is the Forum of Choice for co-development, consultation and information sharing between the government as employer and public service bargaining agents.

Through the National Joint Council (NJC), the parties work together to resolve problems and establish terms of employment that apply across the public service. NJC subjects include government travel, relocation, commuting assistance, isolated posts and government housing, foreign service directives, work force adjustment, safety and health, the bilingual bonus and public service health plans.

Sarah Lawson represented CAPE at the National Joint Council (NJC) Annual Seminar from September 25 – 28, 2007 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The NJC seminar is an annual event that provides an opportunity for union and employer leaders from across Canada to gather to discuss important issues facing the labour relations and human resources communities of the public service. In advance of the seminar the bargaining agents meet to discuss issues and to provide reports on NJC Committees (which range from Occupational Safety & Health to the Dental Plan). Topics of discussion at the seminar included the Atlantic regional perspective, Public Service Renewal, Union-Management Consultation, and the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act.

SPRING LEARNING SESSION

We are looking into planning a learning session for CAPE members in the spring. One topic that we are considering is “Workplace Etiquette”. If anyone would be interested in this topic or would like to suggest another topic for consideration, please contact Melissa Ryan.

MEMBER REPRESENTATION - WHAT CAPE DOES FOR YOU

CAPE Representation services are provided to all CAPE members, subject to its Constitution and By-laws, protocols, representation history, jurisprudence and financial resources. The following is an example of a case where CAPE represented two members (from NEC minutes).

SI Classification grievances (2 files) – at issue was the classification of two positions at the SI 2 level. The grievances were presented to the Classification Grievance Committee. In their decision, the Committee accepted CAPE’s argument that two of the factors, “Responsibility for Contracts” and “Supervision” should be amended and allowed more points under the SI standard. The review of the two factors resulted in an increase of 29 points, sufficient to bring the two positions to the next level, SI 3. The committee’s decision was accepted; the effective date is November 2002.