



# HR LINKS

February 14, 2005

Vol. 2 No. 2

**“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” -Martin Luther King Jr.**

## Comings and Goings

Recent movement in the HR Community includes:

- ☹ Isabelle Naud has left the Justice CSU on February 8 for the Federal Prosecution Service.
- ☹ Enid Stout is leaving the Justice CSU for another opportunity on February 18<sup>th</sup>. (Please see page 8)
- ☺ Charlie MacDonald has accepted the Diversity Management Consultant position with the PSC and starts on February 14
- ☺ Barb Hobson has been seconded as a Benefits Clerk to the PSC from Natural Resources
- ☺ Wanda Pierrynowski starts on February 14 with the PSC in the role of EAP Consultant.
- ☺ Pamela Coffin-MacAulay starts on February 21 with the PSC as a Strategic Services Officer

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# How's Work Going?

by Carrie Hotton

When the first Government-wide employee survey was launched last year, Government committed to regularly asking employees for input about their work environment. The 2005 mini-survey will be distributed February 21<sup>st</sup>. Although not a lot of time has passed

since the release of the employee survey

results from 2004 (the first full survey of all employees), this mini-survey will allow us to make comparisons and note any changes in employee opinion.

The survey is being administered to 1,500 civil servants, highway (CUPE Local 1867) and correctional workers (NSGEU Local 480). Full-time employees, excluding contract and casual staff, as of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 had an equal opportunity of being selected to participate. The sample employee group is representative of department, age, gender, years of service, and pay plan groups. Within each of these sub-groups, employees were selected at random.

Employees have an opportunity to provide candid input to improve the work environment for all of us. Survey packages are being sent to selected employees via interdepartmental mail. The survey is administered by paper only; some of our employees are without internet access so we are unable to offer the survey electronically this year. Employees will be able to complete the survey in about 30 minutes. Completed

surveys must be postmarked by the deadline - March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Similar to last year, results will be communicated and posted on the survey website in the summer, 2005.

For more information, please visit the employee survey website, [www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey](http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey). To learn more about corporate-level responses to the results, please contact Jeannette Smith at the PSC (424-7504, [smithjm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:smithjm@gov.ns.ca)). To learn more about the survey process, please contact Carrie Hotton (902-424-6655, [hottonca@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hottonca@gov.ns.ca)) in the Evaluation and Audit Division of the PSC.

## Behind the Scenes - The Registrar

There are a number of individuals in the HR Community who make significant contributions behind the scenes. In many of our CSU's there is some type of Training and Development or Human Resource Development function. Generally these units are made up of facilitators, trainers, program developers and the vital support role - the registrar. To most in a department the registrar is a voice or the name on email; the one who answers training and development questions, registers employees for courses, provides course information and manages billing.

Angela Ament with Resources CSU, Shirley Stoodley with the Department of Health and Lynda Hodder with the Education CSU all took a moment to do some reflection recently for the HR Links. Between these three women they have been with the Nova Scotia Government working in the Training and Development function for 40+ years, so have they seen it all?

"Some of the more popular courses that employees from Health have been taking over the past 18 months have been Pre-Retirement, Diversity and Leadership Development. The computer courses have always had a high demand," commented Shirley. Both Lynda and Angela echoed



Shirley's comments on the demand for these courses.

(Photo - Shirley Stoodley, Dept of Health)

Angela said tact and a sense of humour is really important in this role, she chuckled when she recalled a time when an employee called her to arrange for a drive to a mandatory course she was recently approved to take. She went on to add, "some of the biggest changes I have seen over the years is that more attention is being given to personal development, succession management and now that performance appraisals are being done on a regular basis more employees are being trained on how to understand them, which is so important."



(Photo -Lynda Hodder, Education CSU)

"You can actually gauge what is happening in the Public Service by the kinds of courses that employees are taking" commented Lynda, "for example we do know that many employees will be retiring over the next few years and the pre retirement course is always booked."

Angela, Shirley and Lynda were asked to put their thinking caps on and blue sky (training and development people do this the best). The question posed to each of them was "If money was no object what would you do to make the whole registration process easier?" The comments were as different as each of these women! Lynda felt that having the department CSU's coordinate all the training and confirmation requests using a government data base would cut down on the duplication, confusion for employees and make more of a one stop process. Angela wants a network server. "Having an online system much like SAP and HRMS would be wonderful." Shirley would

like to see one section that is dedicated to training and development and professional development programs. This section would be responsible for managing the overall budget and scheduling staff trainers and space. "This would make it so much easier for employees and less confusing."

One thing that all three agreed on was that to be successful in this role, you need a person who is extremely organized and enjoys dealing with people.

(Note: No photo of Angela Ament available.)



## Focus on Testing and Training

by Joanne Kerrigan, Project eMerge

Project eMerge is Becky Macdonald's destiny.

"Watching HRMS come in, it seemed really interesting," say the Justice HRA. "I said to myself 'Whenever they replace this system, I want to be involved.'"

Becky's dream came true on January 5, 2004. She is one of eight employees from various departments developing training, one of two developing Time Management courses specifically.

"It's great because this is a particular interest of mine, and I've been able to learn so much from the consultants and other experts on the project."

Time Management will be the second stream of courses introduced in March, after Basic Navigation courses begin.

Becky looks forward to presenting the new system to her colleagues. "There's a lot to learn definitely, but the training has lots of hands on, and step-by-step documentation that you take away with you afterward."



(Pictured above - Becky Macdonald, the Queen and the Col.)

The other focal point for the project right now is testing. The third and final cycle of scenario testing will be complete by February 14, with stakeholders observing tests during the week. Scenarios, for example short term illness or salary revision, were selected for testing and approved by stakeholders. The scenarios selected were ones deemed most critical to business, involving large numbers of employees, and with the greatest complexity in terms of system function. In the second and third cycles, tests were run with actual data from HRMS (scrambled for privacy), and were run for every important step of the life cycle of an employee in the system. As well, these two cycles tested custom reports and the interfaces to other systems, such as the Pensions system.

The other form of testing, parallel pay, began February 7. A sample of HRMS data is loaded into SAP and runs as if for payroll, and the results are then compared against HRMS. The next cycle will run a larger sample of data, and the third and final cycle is of the full population of employees and pensioners.

Karen King is an HRA from Transportation and Public Works. She joined the project as a tester in October.

"I can't believe how much I've learned," she reports. "At first it was almost overwhelming - it's a big system - but recently at one of the Lunch and Learns I realized how comfortable I've become."



(Pictured above - Karen King)

Karen is one of three employees working on error testing during parallel payruns. Her group re-tests items that have created errors and been adjusted.

"I'm really looking forward to putting what I've learned to use. The reporting is impressive - I think it is going to be really beneficial to departments."

The work Karen and the eMerge testers are doing relies on the existing and new systems being "frozen" during the test period. In other words, no changes can be made in HRMS and none in SAP other than to reflect test results. In order to minimize the disruption to business operations, stakeholders suggested that the restriction be phased in according to the type of change to be made. As a result, some types of changes were suspended beginning January 20, but others such as position creation will not be suspended until March 15.

Updates and information on Project eMerge are available at [www.gov.ns.ca/econ/emerge](http://www.gov.ns.ca/econ/emerge)

## Update from IPMA

by Allison Chubbs, Program Director

### **Feb. 16 Health through Optimal Nutrition** (8:00 AM - 10:30 AM)

by Heather Sparrow, Registered Nutritional Consultant and owner of the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition

### **Mar. 23 Career Planning Workshop** (8:00AM - 12:30 PM)

by Kelcy Benedict, Senior Consultant, CGI and certified in Barbara Moses, Career Planning and Career Coaching and Franklin Covey, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

### **April 20 Succession Planning and Management** (8:00 AM - 10:30 AM)

by Jeff Young, Professor, Department of Business and Tourism, Mount Saint Vincent University

### **May 18 Executive Coaching** (8:00 AM - 10:30 AM)

by Shaun Newsome, Industrial Psychologist presently conducting executive coaching for the senior management of the Leadership Continuity Program offered by the PSC

### **June 15 TBA**

#### **HR Links Editorial Board:**

Jane Allt  
Mary Dauphinee  
Michelle Collins  
Vanessa Hammock  
Jeannette Smith  
Contact the HR Links Editorial Board at [smithjm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:smithjm@gov.ns.ca)

**Next issue:** Monday March 14, 2005.  
Deadline for submission of articles and updates: **Wednesday March 9<sup>th</sup>** to [smithjm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:smithjm@gov.ns.ca)



## Corporate OHS Update

by Sue Pettit, OHS Consultant

The demand for ergonomic workstation assessments, across government, is an on-going issue for OHS Specialists and line departments. Musculoskeletal discomfort experienced by an individual can quickly develop into a condition involving time lost from work, and/or a prolonged period of pain and recovery for the affected individual. Fortunately, these outcomes can be minimized by ensuring workstations are set-up and adjusted properly in the first place (i.e. by being proactive). When people do experience musculoskeletal symptoms, and report them early on, one can often halt their progression by promptly assessing and adjusting the workstation.

To address this need/opportunity, a one-day training session was developed to teach OHS Specialists how to conduct a very basic, front-line workstation assessment.

Several types of situations were identified as being appropriate for the training to be applied:

- to proactively 'audit' employee workstations to ensure that basic adjustments are optimal for the person performing the task(s).
- to assist new employees to learn how to adjust their own workstations correctly.
- to ensure newly installed or modified workstations are set-up to the basic standard.
- to address reports of discomfort from employees. Note that in this situation, the basic assessment may require further intervention by a trained ergonomics professional, depending on the severity and nature of complaint received.

On the flip side, this training is **not** intended to replace the need for trained experts in some instances. An expert should be brought in to assist persons with existing medical conditions (e.g. return-to-work post injury), physical



limitations, and/or if their musculoskeletal symptoms are chronic in nature.

Seventeen people from across the province attended a pilot session on Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. In addition to OHS Specialists, a business manager who is responsible for purchasing and setting up computer workstations also attended. In regional offices of government, the task of addressing discomfort complaints from staff may fall on the shoulders of someone other than an OHS Specialist. The training is intended for individuals fitting this description, too.

Over the coming months, additional training sessions will be offered throughout the province. In the meantime, we will be looking to have prospective attendees identified within each department, covering off regional offices as well.

## Managing a Changing Workforce

by Karen Volmer  
HR Development Consultant  
Justice Learning Centre

On February 10, 2005 the Public Service Commission brought in Dr. Linda Duxbury from Carleton University to speak on the topic of Managing a Changing Workforce. Dr. Duxbury spoke in the morning to Deputy Ministers and senior managers within the provincial government, and in the afternoon to the Human Resources Community. Dr. Duxbury's very interesting talk focused on the generational differences in the Canadian workforce and the problems associated with a shrinking workforce.

According to Dr. Duxbury, there are four generations in the workforce: the Veterans (born just before or during World War II), the Baby Boomers (1947-1964), Generation X (1961-1972) and the Echo Boomers or Nexus group (1972-1990). Each generation is influenced by different societal factors and has different core values. The key to motivating and retaining good employees is to understand these differences and use them in your organization.

Why should we care about these generational differences? We should care because our workforce is shrinking; retirements are increasing

and the birth rate is decreasing. The labour shortage is a long-term issue, perhaps lasting 10-20 years. Understanding these differences and acting upon them is crucial to attracting and keeping good employees. We as employers need to understand what employees want from their jobs, their bosses and what they will do if the organization doesn't deliver.

### **Generational Influences and Core Values**

Veterans are influenced by the stock market crash, World War II, and the atomic bomb. Their core values are caution, self-sacrifice, and deferral of rewards. The Veterans' work ethic includes loyalty, dependability, and persistence. They value wisdom and experience over technical knowledge.

On the other hand, Baby Boomers are influenced by economic prosperity, The Pill, the lunar landing, Vietnam and Rock & Roll. Their core values are optimism, entitlement, and self-fulfillment. In general, Boomers are team-oriented, workaholics who place a high importance on status symbols.

Generation Xers are influenced by economic recession, AIDS, nuclear threat and personal computing. Their core values are adaptability to change, pragmatism, and immediate gratification. Gen Xers have a work ethic that sacrifices personal life for advancement. They desire job security and want recognition for their efforts.

Finally, the Echo Boomers are influenced by technology, a child-focused society, violence, terrorism and Rap music. Their core values are optimism, diversity, street smarts and global networking. They look for independence, autonomy, work-life balance, and a fun workplace. Echo Boomers distrust authority and hierarchy.

Based on all these difference influences and core values, it's no wonder that each generation wants different things from their careers.

Managing this workforce effectively will give organizations a competitive advantage. Organizations need new leadership models based on honesty, inspiration, and competence. In return they will get employees with a sense of team spirit who have pride in the organization and a commitment to its success.

## **The Drum Beat**

by Candy J. Palmater

Can it really be February already? Why is it that as a child it seemed the summer stretched on for ever and now, I can barely keep up with the speed at which the seasons are passing by. Ah well, February is a great month for a couple of reasons. First of all, Valentine's Day happens this month as as most of you know, I love holidays that include receiving flowers or gifts. My dear old Dad will turn 83 on the last day of the month, which gives me more reason to celebrate. Finally, February is wonderful because it is African Heritage Month!!

It was in the early 1900's that African American scholar, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson lead the struggle, and research for the truth, and instutionalized what was then referred to as "Negro History Week." A Harvard trained Ph.D., Dr. Woodson dropped out of mainstream academia to devote his life to the scientific study of the African experience in America, Africa and throughout the world.

A serious platform was launched in 1926 to counteract the distortion of Black History. Today, the international observance has expanded to encompass the entire month of February. The month of February is significant and recognized for the birthdays of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Eubie Blacke, NAACP and the first Pan African Congress.

Here in Nova Scotia, it was 1984 when the Halifax Library partnered with the Black United Front and writer/actor David Woods, to organize the first celebration of Black History Week at the Halifax North Memorial Library on Gottigen Street. Interest in this kind of celebration grew and in 1991 the Black History Month Association formed. The rest, as they say, is history.

Please take the time to log onto the Black History Month website for a list of events during the month. [www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/BHMA/](http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/BHMA/)

Now for the "**Dear Candy**" section of The Drum Beat:

**Dear Candy,**

I noticed the word Micmac has turned into Mi'kmaq. What is the difference between the two words and how do I know when to use one or the other?

**Yours truly,  
Lingo Challenged**

**Dear Lingo Challenged,**

The word Micmac was an English attempt at the plural form of the word Mi'kmaq. Many years ago the Mi'kmaq rejected this demeaning title and demanded to be called what they were, Mi'kmaq or The Family. To find more about this and other Aboriginal topics, sign up for Aboriginal Perceptions Training.

**Dear Candy,**

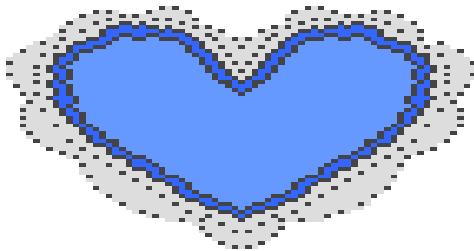
Why is the government saying Diversity management now instead of Employment Equity? Is this just semantics or is there a difference?

**Yours truly,  
Twisted by Terminology**

**Dear Twisted,**

Employment Equity was a concept that grew out of the early Affirmative Action programs which began in the United States. Over the years programs have tried to move away from a quota type of program to a more holistic approach to the problem of under representation. The Nova Scotia government has moved to a philosophy of "valuing diversity." This philosophy is meant to create an environment where there is room for all forms of difference within the human experience.

Questions for Candy can be sent in confidence to [palmatcj@gov.ns.ca](mailto:palmatcj@gov.ns.ca)



## Upcoming HR Meetings:

EAP Awareness Lunch & Learn - February 15<sup>th</sup>  
noon - 1PM, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Training Room Joe Howe Building

Thursday February 17<sup>th</sup> 4-8PM HR Social at Stayner's Wharf Pub & Grill 1781 Upper Water St.

- ✓ HR Directors: Thursday Feb. 17 Joe Howe Building
- ✓ HRD Forum: Friday March 4<sup>th</sup> 9AM Terminal Rd. Building
- ✓ HR Consultants: Thursday March 3 Maritime Ctr. 8<sup>th</sup> Floor
- ✓ Next HR Breakfast - Wednesday May 4, 7:30 - 9:15 AM Location TBA



## Good Luck Enid

by Mary Jane Wortman, HR Director  
Justice CSU

As mentioned on the first page, Enid Stout, Manager of Occupational Health and Safety for the Justice CSU is leaving the provincial government on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Enid has been working with the province for 10 years and with the Justice CSU on secondment since July of 2004. Enid has worked in the area of OH&S for many years and has several professional affiliations including memberships in the Occupational Health Nurses' Association of Nova Scotia. While on loan from her home department, the Public Service Commission, Enid has led the Justice response to the Public Service Commission audit of the department's OH&S practices and programs.

Even though Enid was only with Justice for a short time, she has been a valued member of the CSU team and will be missed. Best of luck Enid in all your future endeavors.

## **A word or two .....**

By Rick Nurse, Public Service Commissioner



This is my second contribution to the HR Newsletter in as many months, and the words I'd like to ask you to think about are "change is"!

We've all had occasion to wonder about the need for change, the pace of change or the way

that a particular change was achieved. Sometimes these experiences cause us to conclude that "change" in and of itself is bad or perhaps even unnatural; and, that, as human beings, we prefer the experience we know to the one we don't know.

I want to suggest that the reverse is infact the case.

First, the word change is a neutral word and that depending on how we experience it, brings a positive or negative connotation. Depending on the purpose ("outcome") of change, the way change is brought about (process) and the impact of that change on you, change is either good or bad. Similarly, and even more to the point, change is essential to our physical, emotional and perhaps spiritual growth. Yes, there is a time in life when we'd rather not continue the physical changes that we experience; but, even these as I've often said to friends on their birthdays ... consider the alternative!

So, what's my point?

Here it is, if you agree that change is a neutral word and if you agree that change is in fact essential to our well being, how should we approach change to make it a more positive experience?

The answer lies in one of my favourite McDonald's ads when the children are discovering that "they've" changed the

McNugget. One of the kids takes a bite, savours the new flavour and finally smiles and says,"change is good". Another, folds his arms, pouts and says "why don't they change broccoli!" He too has a point. The message ... we need to seek to understand why the change is necessary to be able to determine whether or not the change is "good" or "bad", we need to contribute to the change process if the change (process) is to be good... contribute in a half full, not half empty way ... and we need to understand, seek to influence and then come to terms with the impact of that change on us. In truth, the personal impact of some change is more significant than we are prepared to tolerate. In these circumstances, the judgement call is about whether you can actually influence and effectively alter the impact, in a professional way and with optimism, or whether it's one of those times when one change causes you to make another change to change jobs. Again, this can often prove, in time, to be a "change is good" experience. One final point, when faced with change, ask yourself what you expect of others in the change process and model your answer. Change after all is all about you!



**Happy Valentine's Day!!!!**

Don't forget the HR Social, Thursday Feb.  
17at Stayner's Wharf Pub & Grill