



## Message From the Secretary

Published by the United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 for our members

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Alberta rarely has good news to celebrate in the area of Health Care, but the most encouraging events have all been in the past week, on both the provincial and national fronts.

Firstly, of great news not just in Alberta, but across Canada, is the Supreme Court of Canada's decision rejected the Harper Government's attempts to close the only Safe Injection Site in Vancouver's impoverished Lower East side. The Federal Conservatives vehemently sought to abolish the program despite the overwhelming scientific evidence of its role in saving lives. This ruling has opened up the opportunity for additional sites in cities across Canada. Sites are already proposed in Montreal and Victoria.

Encouraging news in Alberta is the election of Alison Redford as Alberta's new premier. Her support of public health care and education is truly a breath of fresh air in a province noted for its starvation of public services. Ms. Redford was the only candidate for the leadership of the PC's who called the UNA Provincial Office with a request to meet with the Executive Officers to discuss matters of mutual interest. Whether or not we support the PC's, it appears to be good news for health and education.

On the Labour front, we continue to mourn the tragic death of Jack Layton. His sudden passing came at the height of his career, one marked by an unending fight for fairness, honesty and support for all members of society, but particularly, those who are our most vulnerable citizens, the poor, seniors, First Nations and all other marginalized groups. Canada has lost

one of its best and brightest!

It is especially important now that we follow Jack's example and stand united, given the strong anti-labour political environment in the US but also in Canada where the Harper government has now intervened in three union attempts to obtain a fair Collective Agreement. The middle class is under attack on both sides of the 49th parallel.

The Local 115 Executive is now, busily looking forward to the upcoming Provincial AGM, October 25-27 inclusive. We are anticipating lots of new educational opportunities, meeting new friends, and having lots of fun!

As the end of 2011 approaches, we wish you a pleasant autumn and Happy Thanksgiving to all.

In Solidarity,

**Ruth Duffy** - Secretary, Local 115

**LOVE  
IS BETTER  
THAN ANGER.**

**HOPE  
IS BETTER  
THAN FEAR.**

**OPTIMISM  
IS BETTER  
THAN DESPAIR.**

J. LAYTON  
1950-2011



## First Year Nursing Scholarship deadline approaches



*UNA President Heather Smith presents the 2010/2011 CFNU scholarship to University of Alberta Nursing student Sheila Pederson with 1st Vice President Bev Dick, 2nd Vice President Jane Sustrik, and Sheila's sponsor Donna Nelson.*

### Previous Scholarship Recipients



UNA will again award seven Nursing Scholarships in 2011 to assist students in their first year of an approved nursing program in Alberta.

The scholarships encourage young people, particularly those with a family history in nursing, to take up the profession.

Scholarships are \$750.00 each, and students must be related to a UNA member in good standing, plus complete a short essay and an application to be eligible for the award.

Completed applications must be received at the UNA Provincial Office no later than 4:30 pm, October 14, 2011. The awards will be announced in late January 2012.

Visit the Scholarship page for more information and to download the Scholarship Application form.

<http://www.una.ab.ca/resources/>



**GET READY FOR  
UNA'S 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**M**ore than 800 members of the United Nurses of Alberta will gather at Edmonton's Northlands Expo Centre on Oct. 25, 26 and 27, 2011, for the 34th Annual General Meeting of their union.

The three-day AGM, the most important event of UNA's year, will include annual approval of the business of the union, important discussion of most important issues faced by unionized nurses in Alberta and a look at some of the key policy issues we face in the coming year.

The theme of this year's convention is "Nursing our Future." Key daily activities include:

**Day 1:**

A panel on Revenue and Energy, one of the most important issues facing the province in 2011.

**Day 2:**

The attack on unions today, and what unions need to do about it, with Armine Yalnizian of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Stephanie Bloomingdale, Secretary Treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO.

**Day 3:**

Motivational presentation by Steve Robbins, the "Chief What If Officer"... The topic? "Why we love our comfort zones."

Remember, UNA members are UNA's decision makers, and many of our union's most important decisions are made at our AGM.

**For more information,  
keep an eye on  
[www.una.ab.ca](http://www.una.ab.ca)**

# AGM Prequel

The members of Local 115 have put forward several policy and constitutional amendments to be considered at the UNA 2011 Provincial AGM. We are excited to speak to these amendments and have the members vote to potentially alter the course of our organization. Here is a brief summary of the amendments and their rationales.

Two of the amendments deal with creating an equal salary replacement regime for UNA members doing the work of the union. Currently, there is a discrepancy between remuneration for full-time, part-time, and casual members. Members taking full-time leaves of absence to do union work enjoy several benefits that part-time and casual members do not. For example, members on full-time union LOA continue to accrue named holidays and vacation entitlement, whereas part-time and casual members do not receive pay in lieu of named holidays, nor do casual members receive pay in lieu of vacation entitlement. On the contrary, articles in the collective agreement allow for pay in lieu for part-time and casual members working for the employer. Not only is there a disparity based on employment status, then, but both of

these shortcomings in UNA's funding policy appear to violate provisions set out by the Alberta Employment Standards Code. Local 115's policy amendments seek to rectify these incongruities.

Another amendment contemplates that UNA executive board meetings alternate locations between Calgary and Edmonton. Presently, most executive board meetings are held in Edmonton. Members who

The final amendment put forward by Local 115 is an attempt to increase the youth contingent at UNA delegate meetings. The amendment aims to set aside a minimum of 25% of the local delegate contingent for those aged 35 and under. Young UNA members are the future of the organization and participation by this age group should be facilitated whenever possible.



wish to attend these meetings as observers therefore necessitates travel to Edmonton. This puts many members at a disadvantage due to the large geographic distance required to travel to Edmonton, not to mention hotel costs, meals, and family obligations. By alternating meeting locations between Calgary and Edmonton, there will be fewer obstacles for observers from more regions of the province to attend.

We feel that these amendments will enhance our organization by creating an equitable compensation scheme for all members regardless of employment type, reduce geographic disparities for members to attend executive board meetings, and foster an active youth contingent at UNA meetings. All members are encouraged to share their

thoughts on these amendments with either the Local Executive or one of the 38 delegates from FMC who will attend the AGM and can speak to the issues on their behalf. In our next newsletter we will report back on the outcome of the proposed amendments.

In Solidarity,  
**Cameron Westhead**  
 Treasurer, Local 115



## U of C sees rising enrolment of men in nursing program

By Jamie Komarnicki, Calgary Herald: October 3, 2011



University of Calgary nursing students, from left, Graham Courtney, Ryan Wilkie, and Tyler Hume are members of the Nursing Guys Club. They are among an increasing number of men entering the faculty of nursing at the U of C. Photograph by: Gavin Young, Calgary Herald

**C**ALGARY — When Tyler Hume began university, he planned to pursue a career in medicine, but his first stop was a nursing degree to fulfil pre-med requirements.

That's when he was smitten.

"I just kind of fell in love with nursing and patient care," said Hume, 19.

Today, Hume is a third-year nursing student and plans to stick with the career.

The teenager is also president of the University of Calgary's new Nursing Guys Club.

The group was formed this year after the Calgary school saw an all-time high number of males enrolled in first-year nursing.

Hume said the club is hoping to harness this year's momentum to continue attracting men to a career traditionally dominated by women.

"We're trying to get more guys to enter the faculty. This year we noticed a lot more, so we wanted to start the club to get more guys excited about coming in,"

Hume said.

"Another reason we're starting it is just to let people know that guys can care, we can be these compassionate people."

Roughly 13 per cent of the university's 123 nursing students entering the faculty from high school are men.

That's compared with an average of about nine per cent in the past 10 years.

Male transfer students brought the total to 21 per cent.

The national average is about 6.2 per cent, according to the Canadian Nurses Association.

The faculty's dean, Dianne Tapp, said the U of C has been working hard to attract more men to the department.

"We've been really working hard to get the message out, with guidance counsellors at high schools, with our prospective students when we're doing recruiting, that nursing is a great career for men and women," Tapp said.

Ryan Wilkie, 23, who entered the faculty after finishing a degree in biological science, said he enrolled in the program to "get involved in helping others in some capacity in health care."

"A lot of people think nursing is just about the caring and helping others, which it is, but it's also a lot more that people don't realize," Wilkie said.

The men's nursing club plans to host academic events and information sessions at which there will be guest speakers.

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# Lease battle over Calgary seniors' facility illustrates problems with private care

**T**he plight of elderly residents of a Calgary seniors' residence who faced eviction during July is another example of why public health care and private market-oriented healthcare providers are not a good mix, UNA President Heather Smith said.

Media reports in early July revealed that 29 seniors living in the assisted living wing at Carewest Colonel Belcher facility were scrambling to find new homes after Alberta Health Services and the current private owner of the suites, Chartwell Seniors Housing REIT, failed to agree on a lease renewal agreement.

"This is just another example of the government touting private-sector 'solutions' that turn out to be the wrong prescription for curing the ills of the health care system," said Smith at the time. She noted that in 2003, the agreement that led to the arrangement between Chartwell and AHS was touted as a model partnership between the public and private sectors.

The 30 beds Chartwell wanted to close to make available for more



profitable uses are part of a complex of 145 seniors suites operated by the company and 175 nursing home beds run by Carewest, a wholly owned subsidiary of AHS. About 20 of the 30 designated assisted living beds are reserved for veterans.

In late July, after heavy media coverage and criticism by health professionals and consumer advocates, AHS was able to negotiate a contract with the private, for-profit company that allowed the seniors, several of them war veterans, to stay at the assisted living facility in the city's northwest.

Smith called on AHS and the province to clearly state the true details of contracts signed for all public-private development of continuing care facilities in Alberta. She called the situation reminiscent of what happened at the Health Resource Centre, also in Calgary, a private

sector hip and knee surgery clinic that went bankrupt after contracting to provide surgeries for the public health care provider.

"Public health care facilities need to be fully in the public sector, where they are both less expensive to run and where proper staffing levels of Registered Nurses and oth-

er professionals can be assured," Smith said. "This kind of financing just doesn't work in health care." In this case, it appeared the company initially wanted out of the deal simply because it could make more money in the current market by providing more expensive hotel-style services.

Chartwell Chief Operating Officer Richard Noonan initially told Calgary media his company intended to upgrade the 30 suites and rent them out privately for more money. "We'll be able to charge whatever the market can bear," he was quoted as saying in the Calgary Herald.

## FirstClass Tutorial at Local 115...

The Local 115 Executive is holding a FREE FirstClass “Class” for any members who would like to learn more about this UNA Communication tool (as well as those who would like to learn more). Contact the Local if you are interested!



## UNA Locals on Facebook:

- Local 1**  
(Peter Lougheed Centre)
- Local 11**  
(Misericordia Hospital)
- Local 33**  
(Royal Alexandra Hospital)
- Local 79**  
(Grey Nuns & Edmonton General)
- Local 95**  
(Alberta Children’s Hospital)
- Local 115**  
(Foothills Medical Centre)
- Local 120**  
(Lethbridge Regional Hospital)
- Local 121**  
(Rockyview General Hospital)
- Local 211**  
(Calgary Community)
- Local 222**  
(Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka)
- Local 301**  
(University of Alberta Hospital)

## AFL / CLC Jasper Labor School Draw

**Deadline:** November 2nd by 16:00

**Draw held:** UNA Local 115 meeting on November 9th.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

There are 2 one week sessions, the first is from January 16-21 and the second is January 22-27. UNA Local 115 is planning to send 4 Executive members and 6 members at large. Request your LOAs as soon as possible for the week you would plan to attend if their name is drawn.

More info at: <http://www.afl.org>



“Social media tools like Facebook give the union movement a way to connect...” David Cournoyer