

# UNION UPDATE

2023 PRIORITIES FOR THE INDUSTRIAL/RETAIL/OFFSHORE SECTOR



## GREG PRETTY ELECTED PRESIDENT

On January 5, 2023, FFAW-Unifor's Joint Council elected Greg Pretty as President of the largest private sector trade union in Newfoundland and Labrador. Pretty brings nearly 40 years of experience in labour management and organizing, having started his career with the union in the early 80's under Richard Cashin.

Since 2003, Pretty has served as the Director of the Industrial/Retail/Offshore Sector. He has negotiated over 100 collective agreements over his career and has extensive experience with both the inshore and industrial/retail/offshore sectors of the FFAW.

*"Being President of this Union is a 24/7, 365 job that requires a demonstrated commitment to building solidarity among all sectors of our 14,000 strong Union. Proven experience in negotiations, arbitrations and in dealing with the many levels of bureaucracy, legislation and policy are non-negotiable credentials to ensure stability and strength into the future. I bring all of this to the table in addition to my lifelong, demonstrated commitment to improving the lives of working people in Newfoundland and Labrador," says newly installed President Greg Pretty.*

Career highlights include:

- Coordinated the Over the Side Sales campaign (1983)
- Advisory Board Member of MUN's Marine Institute (2006)
- Labour Co-Chair of the National Seafood Sector Council (2007)
- Board Member of Canadian Marine Advisory Committee (2000)
- Board Member of Labour Standards Committee NL (2000)
- Board Member of Metro Business Opportunities (1995-Present)
- Co-Chair of NL's Labour Arbitration Committee (2008-2016)
- Two terms as Vice-President of NL Federation of Labour (2004-2010)
- Current Board Member of Workplace NL. Chair of Client Service Committee, member on the Finance Committee and member of the Sub-Investment Committee
- Prior to taking on IRO Director role in 2003, serviced the inshore sector in 4R, 3Pn, 3Ps and 3K, as well as served on negotiating teams for groundfish, pelagics, shrimp and crab.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



## GREG PRETTY

January 5th, 2023, I joined a very select group of our own, historically renowned Union leaders, Richard Cashin, Earle McCurdy and Keith Sullivan, as the fourth President of the FFAW.

Just as I was about to be sworn-in in front of Executive Board members and the Industrial and Inshore Councils, the door of the room swung open and our First President, Richard Cashin entered the room to thunderous applause and a standing ovation. Talk about emotion!

Without Richard, of course, none of us would have been in that room that day.

As I stood at the podium, I thought about how Richard put the lives of everyone in the room in motion with the truly revolutionary idea he brought to fruition over 50 years ago. With workers united, he went toe-to-toe against the greed and the avarice of Fish Merchants - and won.

He gave fishers and plant workers a voice on working conditions and prices, and he changed this province in so many ways.

He drop-kicked a retrogressive 1970's NL economy into the twentieth century. With first ever negotiated prices for fish and plant wages, rural communities took on a strong, new vibrancy. Better boats and better wages created strong rural community economies. The creation of the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company, Loan Boards, Workers Compensation all enhanced the lives of workers. He created our one true Renaissance Period.

Yes, my friends, she was the best of times coming out of the worst of times. By the 80's people came to know there wasn't much "good" in

the good old days, nothing but hard work and a lot poverty.

Richard Cashin's vision for NL changed all of that. He was a one-man wonder of rural development.

Richard knows very well how precarious Unions like ours are. He knows the same greed that kept us subservient for generations lurks just around the corner. Those who would destroy it still walk amongst us.

They too have changed with the times. They portray themselves as philanthropists and impresarios but there's the same anti-union, anti-worker crew of Fish Merchants. They continue, fighting and scratching behind the scenes, for control of the whole ocean and everything in it. They dream of their "good" old days, pre-FFAW, when they paid pennies for fish and less for labour.

"Oh, to return to the good old days!" they mutter in their sleep. Richard's message for rural Newfoundland and Labrador is the same as it was then. There comes a time when one has to take a stand and fight back against those who lobby to economically punish you and your communities.

We must also remain vigilant against those who have been co-opted by processors and promised a lion's share of your resources in return for their anti-union allegiance.

Yes, it was an incredible feeling as I was sworn in as President of the FFAW. I am energized by our elected leadership and our staff. I am looking forward to meeting new members and reconnecting with old friends across this great sea of strong, stalwart FFAW members.

You can be assured we'll take your issues and concerns to all levels of the Provincial and Federal governments.

There is much to be done. Let's get at it.

Together!

## CASHIN ENDORSES GREG PRETTY

Richard Cashin made a rare public appearance on January 5, attending the Joint Council election as a special guest in support of candidate Greg Pretty, whom Cashin worked with in the 80s.

Pictured are all four current and past presidents of FFAW-Unifor: Greg Pretty, Richard Cashin, Earle McCurdy and Keith Sullivan.



# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER



## JASON SPINGLE

2023 has kicked off fast and furious here at the FFAW. We have a number of high priority files being worked on this winter and spring, and we're wasting no time getting down to business.

Despite how it may appear from media, we are not just a fishermen's union, and I want you to know that our non-fishing sector is just as important to the foundation of this organization.

Around 4,000 of our 14,000 members account for our Industrial/Retail/Offshore sector. This includes many members in fish processing plants and dockside monitoring, but we also represent employees of Molson Brewery in St. John's, Harbour Grace Cold Storage, Quality Hotel in Gander, Canship, Altera, Cahill Fabrication, Steelfab and more - we've got a lot more diversity than many people realize.

It's this diversity that makes us not only the largest private-sector trade union in this province, but we are the *strongest* trade union in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have a history of bargaining some of the best contracts in the history of this province. High wages, landmark benefits and protections - these wins shape not only your workplaces directly, but they indirectly lift all workers higher.

Coming up this year are negotiations with Ocean Choice International plants, and we hope to wrap up negotiations with our members in their groundfish trawler. We also renegotiate the agreement for Provincial Ready Mix cleaners, who are contracted out of Vale's nickel refinery in Long Harbour.

Community Credit in Marystown, Ramada Hotel in St. John's, Icewater in Arnold's Cove, and Barry Group in Witless Bay and Harbour Breton, as well as Beothic Fish Processors are all FFAW locals who will be across the table negotiating with their employers this year.

We are a Union that holds employers accountable, and we hope to expand the umbrella of protection to new workplaces. Because Unionization sets the standard for better. Better pay, better benefits, better protection. There is strength in our diversity and in numbers. I look forward to visiting you, our IRO members including at your locals over the coming months! And if you know someone in a non-unionized workplace that could benefit from a collective agreement, have them give us a call. We'd love to help them.

# UNIONS FOR BETTER



## ORGANIZING UPDATE: GROWING OUR UNION MAKES US STRONGER

In November, members of FFAW-Unifor and other Unifor locals in Newfoundland and Labrador attended a training session with our National Organizing Department to learn more tactics and tools to bring workers to our Union. Workers have reached out to FFAW in Long Terms Care, Manufacturing, and Processing, we continue to advance our organizing throughout the province with recent drives and ongoing outreach.

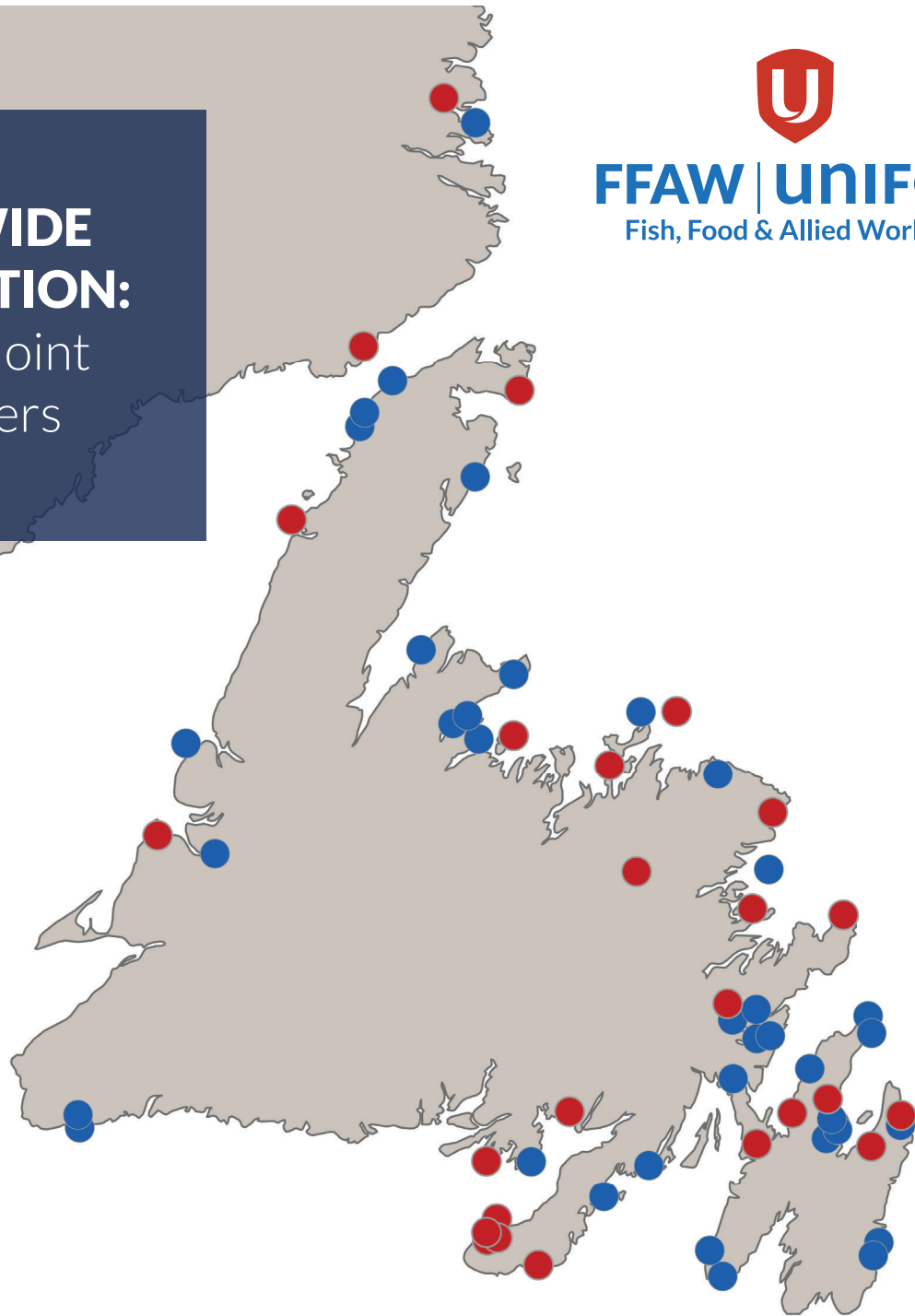
If you know anyone or any workplace that would benefit from the protection and advocacy of our Union, please reach out to [astuart@ffaw.ca](mailto:astuart@ffaw.ca) or [jointheunion@ffaw.ca](mailto:jointheunion@ffaw.ca). You are the experts in your own communities and our best representatives in sharing the benefits of joining together with workers in creating an even stronger union.

**Workers united, will never be defeated!**



**FFAW | UNIFOR**  
Fish, Food & Allied Workers

## PROVINCE-WIDE REPRESENTATION: FFAW-Unifor Joint Council Members



- IRO
- Inshore

FFAW-Unifor is led by the 16-member Executive Board and two sector specific councils - the Inshore Council and the Industrial/Retail/Offshore (IRO) Council. Full listings of these elected representatives can be found in the latest issue of the Union Forum as well as on our website, [www.ffaw.ca](http://www.ffaw.ca).

The next Executive Board election takes place in 2024, and the next Constitutional Convention will be held the same year.

# COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATING THE BEST CONTRACTS FOR YOU

## EI Sickness Extension

After years of calling on the Federal Government to increase EI Sickness to ensure no worker faces added financial uncertainty while suffering an illness, we won an **additional 11 weeks of EI Sickness Benefit coverage**. You could receive 55% of your earnings up to a max of \$650 a week.

Fish, Food & Allied Workers

### COMPLETED IN 2022

- Cahill Fabrication
- Fogo Island Co-op
- FRC Dockside Observers
- FRC Office Staff
- FRC Data Entry
- Molson Breweries
- MOWI
- Notre Dame Seafoods Inc. – Comfort Cove
- Ocean Choice International – Newfoundland Lynx

### COMING UP IN 2023

- Icewater Seafoods Inc.
- Ramada Hotel
- Community Credit Union
- Barry Group – Harbour Breton
- Barry Group – Witless Bay
- Ocean Choice International – St. Lawrence
- Ocean Choice International – Bonavista, Port Aux Choix, Triton
- Labrador Catering
- CanShip – Tugs
- Beothic Fish Processors
- MOWI

### ONGOING

- Altera Infrastructure
- Ocean Choice International – Groundfish Trawler

## SHOP STEWARD TRAINING



Members from OCI Fortune, OCI St. Lawrence, Marystown Community Credit Union, and Clearwater in Grand Bank joined our IRO Staff Representatives for shop steward training in Marystown. Our Union is made strong by volunteers like these new shop stewards! If you'd like to have shop steward training at your workplace, please contact your representative to arrange.

# PENNECON

## Vale's Contract Flip

Last year, Vale, the world's largest producer of nickel and iron ore, re-tendered a contract for maintenance services at the site in Long Harbour. As a result, 160 FFAW members were laid off as of May 31, 2022. Your Union took issue with how this contract re-tendering and lay-off was conducted, and took action.

When the laid off members were not immediately provided the termination pay due to them under the Labour Standards Act, the Union filed a grievance. This June 9, 2022 grievance also covered employees who were excluded from receiving termination pay in whole or in part for (improper) reasons. Your Union attempted to settle the matter with the assistance of a Government of NL appointed mediator, but this was unsuccessful. FFAW subsequently filed for arbitration, which was scheduled February of 2023 before Arbitrator Jim Oakley. In December of 2022, the parties settled this important matter, along with a number of other outstanding grievances that had been filed prior to the mass layoff. Your Union was successful in negotiating the following settlements:

- Eight Employees who were provided insufficient termination pay, or excluded from termination pay for invalid reasons, were provided over \$27,000 in total settlements.
- The Employer paid out \$36,000 in general damages to be split amongst the laid off employee as full and final settlement to the FFAW termination pay delay grievance.
- Fifteen employees were provided approximately \$3,000 in overtime adjustments as settlement to an overtime calculation grievance.
- Seven laid off employees were paid over \$6,000 as settlement for an unpaid salary grievance.
- Other grievances, including those of a disciplinary nature, were settled with payments to members.

FFAW President Greg Pretty and union staff met with Provincial Labour Minister Bernard Davis to continue to express outrage with Government's continued inaction on the issue of contract flipping.

On November 22, FFAW staff made a presentation to attendees of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour Convention on the issue of Contract Flipping and how we intend to force government to ban it.

FFAW has filed an Application of Certification with the NL Labour Relations Board in an attempt represent the workers in Long Harbour again. A Labour Relations Board hearing was held from January 9-13 in St. John's. Stay tuned for updates.

## Elections Process and Elections Committee Decision

**Q: Why wasn't the entire membership allowed to vote?**

A: Keith Sullivan resigned in the middle of an election term, and therefore a mid-term election with the Union's Joint Council was held per the terms of our Constitution. Over 60 elected individuals representing all sectors and regions within the Union voted during the mid-term election.

The next general election will take place in 2024, at which time the entire membership will be given the opportunity to vote if a position is contested. This is different from most unions, which give voting privileges to Convention delegates only.

**Q: Why did the Elections Committee deem one candidate ineligible?**

A: The arms-length Elections Committee made the decision to eliminate a candidate because that candidate was determined to be an active member of an organization that seeks or sought to represent members of FFAW-Unifor. The organization was still registered as operating, and the candidate was still listed as a director on the government registry.

Per the legal definition, the candidate did not meet the requirements per the FFAW's Constitution.

**Q: Why was the candidate deemed ineligible?**

A: FFAW-Unifor members voted in 2018 to unanimously accept eligibility requirements into the Union's Constitution with the intention of protecting the institution from individuals who seek to destroy it. The Affidavit is the result of these protections, and the Committee can only interpret what exists within the Constitution. Members had the opportunity, but did not, bring forward changes to these eligibility requirements at the 2021 Convention.

**Q: Why couldn't the Elections Committee have let him run or made an exception?**

A: The Elections Committee is tasked with following the Union's Constitution. They do not have the mandate to make judgement calls or exceptions outside of what is explicitly in the Constitution.

**Q: Why did the Executive Board endorse Greg Pretty?**

A: The Executive Board is comprised of 16 elected individuals representing both sectors of the Union. Keith Sullivan's resignation came as a surprise to the Board and, in the interest of maintaining stability as we embark on the 2023 fishing season, the Board determined Pretty to be the most suitable replacement. Given Pretty's record as one of the most experienced negotiators in the province and his willingness to run for the position, the Board's endorsement was a sign of continuity and stability for the FFAW. The Elections Committee has no part in this endorsement.

The next general election will be held in 2024, and should the position be contested at that time, the entire membership will be eligible to vote.

# WORKPLACE UPDATES

## ALTERA INFRASTRUCTURE

FFAW bargains agreements on behalf of our members on the three big shuttle tankers, and negotiations for a new contract are currently ongoing. The company is attempting to remove the Consumer Price Index (CPI) benefit in their agreement, something members remain steadfast in protecting.

## RAMADA HOTEL ST. JOHN'S

The Ramada Hotel continued to struggle with the after-effects of the pandemic, especially the company's decision to not reopen the dining room. The company proposed contracting out the dining service - something the Union and its members soundly rejected. We remain hopeful for a better year in 2023.

## SEASONAL PROCESSING PLANTS

Plants like Barry Group in Witless Bay and Happy Adventure Seafoods in Happy Adventure continue to Operate on a seasonal basis due to limited supply of raw material. However, efforts continue to ensure our members get enough hours and weeks of work to qualify for EI benefits.

## COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION MARYSTOWN

The Community Credit Union in Marystown continues to grow and provide more services to its many members through the friendly professional services provided by the FFAW members working there. They are a community-minded organization when it comes to raising money to help others and support the community. Bargaining starts at the end of this 2023.

## MANUFACTURING & PROCESSING SAFETY SECTOR COUNCIL

Doretta Strickland, Sheila Howell and Allan Moulton sit on the Seafood Processing Sector Committee. Joey Warford and Allan Moulton sit on the Manufacturing Safety Committee. Participation on these councils is important for FFAW members and we look forward to ensuring meaningful progress is made in 2023.

## ST. ANTHONY SEAFOODS

FFAW remains fully engaged with a number of grievances arising out of the 2021 production season where employees were required to work excessive hours in violation of their rights under the Labour Standards Act and Collective Agreement. Most recently, FFAW represented a group of approximately 60 employees in a multi-week arbitration hearing where FFAW argued that St. Anthony Seafoods (Royal Greenland) and its supervisors violated its legal obligation to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its workers, among other arguments. A further arbitration hearing is scheduled in mid-February on additional grievances. Stay tuned for updates on the outcome of these important battles.

## ICEWATER SEAFOODS ARNOLD'S COVE

The ongoing grievance with Icwater continues at print time, with the Committee meeting Jan. 27 and outlining a tentative settlement which, while needing some revision, will be subject to ratification vote by membership in the coming weeks.

## HAPPY RETIREMENT TO ERIC DAY

Eric Day retired from Barry Group Harbour Breton this year, following a long career in aquaculture, seafood processing, community activism and union building.



Eric served as the IRO Council Member for his workplace until his retirement, and also served several terms as Vice-President of the Executive Board - the highest elected position representing all members in the IRO sector.

Since FPI pulled out of Harbour Breton in 2004, Eric and his committee have been on the forefront to keep the region alive, meeting with successive governments to ensure the town and its people have a life and a future. Eric carried that campaign until his retirement, and we know he will continue to be involved in that struggle and in future battles.

## FOGO ISLAND CO-OP

The new Fogo Island Cooperative Society Ltd. Collective Agreement was signed in late October 2022. In November, two grievances related to unpaid labour and statutory holiday pay were settled on behalf of a group of employees.

## LABRADOR CATERING

Labrador Catering Industrial cleaners in Long Harbour continue to adjust to a new employer in Labrador Catering. Your Union has been meeting with the employer in Labour Management Meetings and is set to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding to provide clarity on the use of casual employees in early February.

## MOLSON BREWING

FFAW staff and the Local Committee have been balancing several issues at the Molson plant in St. John's, including day-to-day staffing issues. On January 11, FFAW communicated with Federal Government officials including MPs Joanne Thompson and Minister O'Regan protesting the Federal Government's plan to sharply increase excise tax on beer sales.

## COLD NORTH SEAFOODS LA SCIE

FFAW continues to try and get the employer to the bargaining table for members responsible for Offloading, as the processing plant has been torn down.

## HAPPY RETIREMENT TO WILLIAM STACEY

William Stacey retired from the Newfoundland Lynx in December 2022. Mr. Stacey was an exemplary employee since joining first Fisheries Products International - subsequently Ocean Choice International, on May 26, 1979. Mr. Stacey provided invaluable contributions to his workplace and in serving as a delegate for his fellow workers on the vessels he worked on. Upon his retirement Mr. Stacey was the 2nd Mate on the Newfoundland Lynx.

FFAW-Unifor wants to thank and congratulate William for his 44 years of dedicated service and wish him and his family the best in his retirement.

# JOIN THE FFAW'S FACEBOOK BUY/SELL GROUP

FFAW-Unifor is now offering a Classifieds service to members and relevant industry professionals! Join the Facebook group to list any items or services you have for sale, or that you are in search of.

The next Union Forum will feature a new Classifieds section and all FFAW members will be eligible for one free listing per calendar year. More details coming soon!

## FFAW MEMBER LIFE INSURANCE POLICY

If you are a paid-up, card carrying FFAW-Unifor member under the age of 70, you are part of the Union's **Life Insurance Policy**.

As of May 2013, life insurance for FFAW-Unifor members has increased from \$10,000 to **\$15,000**. If your death is accidental, your family will receive **\$30,000**. Your family will receive a tax-free, cash benefit through this insurance policy.

### Your union card is proof of your insurance.

Your insurance coverage is only valid until July 31, 2023. After this date, if you have not paid your dues for the upcoming year you are not covered.

In total, over half a million dollars was paid to members' families in 2022 alone, and nearly \$5 million has been paid to members' families since 2015. This is an important benefit of being a FFAW-Unifor member - ensure your beneficiary form is up-to-date. Call us today at 576-7276 if you have questions.

## WOMEN'S UPDATE

Since the creation of our stand-alone Women's Committee, members have been hard at work in their communities and workplaces. On December 6th the Women's Committee released a statement commemorating the tragedy at Ecole Polytechnique and reaffirming the Union's commitment to ending violence against women. In addition, the Committee sent a letter to the NL-FHSA advocating for increased access to PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons) as there remains barriers for many crew members who are dependent upon enterprise-owners to access the device. It is important that crew gain the independence to access these life-saving devices by also being offered subsidies and financial avenues for easier purchase.

Stay tuned for more from the Women's Committee in the coming months as plans come together for International Women's Day on March 8th and training opportunities.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the Women's Committee or are looking to start a committee at your own workplace, please reach out to your sector area

Brenda Pieroway, *IRO West Coast* bpieroway@ffaw.ca  
Patsy Chaulk, *IRO Central* patsychaulk@icloud.com  
Valerie Hickey, *IRO Eastern* valeriemfrankhickey@outlook.com  
Beverly Davis, *IRO Avalon* bdavis@ffaw.ca  
Nancy Bowers, *Women's Rep Exec.* nancy\_bowers@hotmail.com  
Alyse Stuart, *IRO Staff Representative* astuart@ffaw.ca



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