

**NUPGE Advisory Committee on
Women's Issues
April 11, 2010 – Ottawa, Ontario**



In attendance:

**BCGEU/NUPGE
HSABC/NUPGE
HSAA/NUPGE
SGEU/NUPGE
MGEU/NUPGE
OPSEU/NUPGE
NBUPPE/NUPGE
NSGEU/NUPGE
NAPE/NUPGE**

**Colleen Jones
Suzanne Bennett
Mariana Burstyn
Jackie Krasko
Michelle Gawronsky
Cindy Haynes
Ginette Friolet
Dawn Ferris
Arlene Sedlickas**

National Union

**Brenda Hildahl
Karen Hawley**

Guests:

**BCGEU/NUPGE
MGEU/NUPGE
NBUPPE/NUPGE**

**Judi Fillion
Lois Wales
Susie Proulx-Daigle**

Regrets:

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Linda Richardson

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by chair Brenda Hildahl. Sister Hildahl welcomed the sisters and introductions were made around the table. A special welcome was extended to new ACWI members Michelle Gawronsky from MGEU/NUPGE and Jackie Krasko from SGEU/NUPGE, as well as to Ginette Friolet from NBUPPE/NUPGE who was attending for Sister Linda Richardson.

A warm welcome was also extended to Sister Judi Fillion, Secretary-Treasurer from BCGEU/NUPGE, Sister Lois Wales, First Vice-President from MGEU/NUPGE and Sister Susie Proulx-Daigle, President of NBUPPE/NUPGE.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Committee was asked to review the agenda. Chair Hildahl advised the Committee that the main focus of the meeting would be on the "Quality of Women's Lives" Conference. Sister Gawronsky moved and Sister Krasko seconded that the agenda be adopted. Carried.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 22 & 23, 2009 MEETING

Sister Haynes moved and Sister Ferris seconded that the October 22 & 23, 2009 minutes be adopted. Carried.

COMPONENT REPORTS

BCGEU/NUPGE

Sister Colleen Jones reported:

As I am writing this report, we are preparing to ratify our tentative agreement for our 15th Master Agreement that was reached on the morning of March 26, 2010. This process began last November when we held our bargaining conference to prioritize our bargaining proposals. Our top priority was to renew the provisions in the memorandum on employment security and I am proud to say that our Master Bargaining committee, which covers approximately 29,000 members, was able to achieve that. This is very important as the government plans to reduce its public service by up to 3,500 positions over the next three years. We were also able to secure, for the first time ever, new language regarding bullying in the workplace. We were able to achieve bereavement leave for stepparents and family illness leave for spouses who must take care of their spouses during an illness. These are only a few of the items that we achieved during this round of bargaining. This was a very difficult round of bargaining for the committee given that the government was very strong on their zero mandate. We had to make some very tough decisions for our members as everything had to be costed and found within the agreement. To see more information on this tentative agreement check out our website at www.bcgeu.ca.

I had the opportunity to attend events for International Women's Day held in Vancouver on the weekend of March 8th. The day began with a pancake breakfast at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. We prepared to serve approx 500 women and children that morning. The breakfast was a huge success which is sad in one respect but also felt good to see these women and children get a good meal and warm drink to start the day. Funding for some of the programs that support these women has been cut once again so the centre is really struggling to support the need. The BC Fed also held a conference in Vancouver called "Women's Voices at the Table". It was a World Café style event with 15 tables and different subjects at each table. I co-facilitated the table on education which was very informative. This was a great event which was open to the community and full of participants all afternoon. On International Women's Day, Carol James, leader of the BC New Democrat Party addressed the breakfast held at the Hilton Hotel in the morning followed by the BC Fed's Women's Committee meeting.

Our own BCGEU Women's Committee will be holding its first meeting of the year in June and at that time we will be discussing and planning our upcoming regional conference in October. We will only be having one regional conference this year as bargaining has taken up most of the spring.

All of us in the BCGEU and the HSABC are getting very excited and looking forward to hosting the National Union of Public and General Employees Convention in June.

HSABC/NUPGE

Sister Suzanne Bennett reported:

Background

The Health Sciences Association of BC represents more than 16,000 health care and community social services workers in British Columbia. Women constitute 85 per cent of HSA's membership. We work in acute care, long term care, child development centres, transition houses, and community counselling.

The union's standing Committee on Equality and Social Action helps educate members about women's equality, and disburses funds to support community organizations active in various women's outreach initiatives. In addition, the union promotes women's equality, participation, and health issues through many other venues – including proactive political action and platinum-level regional sponsorship of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation's annual Run for the Cure.

HSA delegates to NUPGE Quality of Women's Lives conference

HSA invited the union's members at large to apply to attend the upcoming conference, asking them to supply a brief 250-word essay explaining why they were interested in attending, and what they hoped to learn. As a result, all six applicants will be joining us this weekend, along with three members of HSA's board of directors.

All attendees will be asked to bring back information from the conference to share with the rest of the union's membership; a feature article on this conference is planned for an upcoming issue of the union's magazine.

HSA sincerely thanks NUPGE for organizing this conference.

HSA convention

Our union's convention is taking place later this week, from April 15 – 17 in Vancouver. Activists also have an opportunity to attend various pre-convention workshops:

- Defending public health care
- Public speaking
- International solidarity
- Contract interpretation basics

Although not specifically geared towards women's issues, all the workshops will be informed about the ongoing importance of promoting women's rights.

For example, the overwhelming majority of workers in public health care are women. Protecting their services and their jobs means helping to protect well-paid, secure work

for women. Public speaking courses – offered periodically to activists – help women gain the tools to advocate for themselves, their colleagues, patients, and clients. The international solidarity workshop is specially geared for HSA activists. HSA staff has worked with Co Development Canada to develop this course, which will inform activists about the importance of solidarity and partnerships – and activists will learn more about the women’s advocacy organizations that HSA has long partnered with in South and Central America. And finally, HSA’s contracts all reflect language strengthening rights for working women, including full health and welfare benefits for part time workers, enhanced maternity leave provisions, and generous leave provisions for family care.

At last year’s union convention, delegates took part in a lunchtime panel about the health and social costs of poverty. Recognizing that women bear the brunt of poverty, four union women working in a range of areas – social work in urban long term care, support work for urban HIV positive women, social work in northern rural acute care and support work for older women – described the challenges and rewards of working with BC’s most vulnerable. The fifth participant on the panel was Seth Klein, director of the BC office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), who told delegates that poverty is not inevitable in BC. He invited delegates to take part in the CCPA’s poverty reduction plan.

Due to the success of the panel last year, this year’s convention will feature a similar panel presentation on recent cuts to health and community social services in BC. One of the featured panelists is a chief steward at a transition house, who will discuss the increasingly desperate situations that workers are struggling to solve, with fewer and fewer community resources. She will also discuss how women who, in such emotionally and psychologically stressful conditions, cope with the increasing strains they encounter every day.

Videos of both panel discussions will be available this spring. Please let me know if you would like to reserve a copy.

NUPGE convention

Delegates to HSA conventions in past years have asked the union to work with NUPGE on various topics. In particular, HSA is bringing forward to this year’s NUPGE convention two resolutions:

- calling for the abrogation of Shia Law in Afghanistan
- calling for debt forgiveness by the IMF / World Bank

Promoting women’s health & awareness

In the area of women’s health, HSA is a platinum-level regional sponsor of the CIBC Run for the Cure, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation’s most important fundraising event. HSA has been involved with the BC Run for the Cure since 1997, and recently increased our participation to the regional level, ensuring HSA’s involvement at each of the 10 run locations in BC, and acknowledgement of the work of HSA and health science professionals in the fight against breast cancer.

Community social services month

HSA has been working in partnership with various sister unions (including the BCGEU, the Hospital Employees' Union, and CUPE) on various issues affecting our members working in community social services.

This spring, unionized workers in BC's community social services finally gained access to the province's municipal pension plan. HSA convened pension workshops across BC to inform members – primarily women – about the advantages of enrolling in a secure public pension.

The unions jointly asked various municipalities across BC to declare March as Community Social Services Awareness Month. Activists and staff developed detailed campaign materials, including instructions on how to arrange a presentation to city council, a model resolution, speaking notes, and guidelines for working with the media and writing letters to the editor. These materials are available at the campaign website at: www.communitysocialservicesmatter.ca.

Community social services workers held a walk in BC's capital city on March 27. A Victoria-area HSA activist – also a chief steward at a transition house – attended logistics and planning meetings on the union's behalf. The union supplied hand-held pennants highlighting various services, such as services for abused women and children who witness abuse, addictions counseling, infant and child development, and family advocacy.

Coalition to Build a Better BC

HSA has endorsed the Coalition to Build a Better BC, bringing together arts, women's advocacy, child care, legal aid, health, social services, community and faith groups to fight recent funding and services cuts imposed by BC's Liberal government. The Coalition is holding a rally on April 10th in downtown Vancouver.

Prior to the rally, HSA recruited four activists to attend a pre-rally workshop, bringing together activists and advocates from a variety of groups and sectors to share information about ongoing cuts and their effects.

HSA/NUPGE

Sister Mariana Burstyn reported:

Political climate

Budget 2010 – Finance Minister Ted Morton announced a commitment to appropriate health-care funding that includes a one-time injection of \$759M to Alberta Health Services (AHS) to eliminate its accumulated deficit. The government also increased its base operating grant to AHS, which will see increases of six per cent for 2010-11, bringing the grant to more than \$9B. The operating grant will increase by six per cent in both 2011-12 and 2012-13 and by 4.5 per cent in both 2013-14 and 2014-15 under the five-year funding plan.

While this sounds like good news for health care, cuts to other important services including Children and Youth Services, Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Income Support will ultimately increase the burden on the health-care system down the road.

Morton's budget also failed to address a growing demographic need – seniors. The 2.2 per cent increase to seniors and Community Support is, in effect, a cut to services, as Alberta's senior population, combined with inflation, is growing at a faster rate.

Cabinet Shuffle – Gene Zwozdesky was appointed Minister of Health on January 15. Since his appointment he has reversed a number of initiatives by the Alberta Health Services (AHS) board, to the point where it often appears he is directly running what is supposed to be an “at arms length” organization. Nevertheless, the reversals have all been ones that we are supportive of.

Campaigns

The *Join Together Alberta* campaign was conceived and launched jointly by a number of Alberta unions and non-governmental organizations. HSAA is a key partner in this effort. All of the participating organizations share deep concerns about the impacts that deep cuts to public services will have on individuals, families and communities within Alberta.

The campaign advocates a “high-road” approach to our future – one that focuses on smart investments in people, communities and the economy – as opposed to a low-road approach that focuses on cutting spending and leaving individuals, families and communities to increasingly fend for themselves.

The *Join Together Alberta* campaign included a series of 22 town hall events across Alberta to rally public resistance to anticipated and actual budget cuts aimed at dealing with Alberta's projected deficit of \$4.3 billion. We believe that the *Join Together Alberta* campaign was a significant factor this budget. While there were substantial cuts in a number of areas, they were less drastic than anticipated, particularly in Health.

Domestic violence project

The HSAA sponsored project for dealing with domestic violence in the workplace is in the testing phase. See <http://www.acws.ca/workplacedv/plan.php>.

Gender equity in Alberta

On March 8, the Parkland Institute released a new fact sheet showing the sorry state of women's equality in Alberta. Alberta women who work full-year, full-time earn just 66 per cent of what men earn. The Canadian average earnings gap is 72 per cent. Women now form 58 per cent of Alberta's undergraduate university population, and have made up over half of the university population since 1993. However, those gains do not translate into a smaller wage gap. Female university graduates employed full-year and full-time, earn just 67 per cent of what Alberta men with university degrees

earn. In 2002, female university graduates earned 79 per cent of men's earnings – demonstrating that the oil sands boom boosted men's earnings far more than women's did.

Organizing and collective bargaining / communications

On January 15, 2010, HSAA members overwhelmingly ratified the Memorandum of Agreement that transitions the nine regional health authorities into a single collective agreement. HSAA's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agreements have also been combined, and now will be "transitioned" into the province wide facilities agreement. Alberta Cancer Board transition was effected through a binding arbitration process.

It is expected that Alberta Health Services will ratify this agreement in the near future. Once that ratification is complete, HSAA will be providing our members with an explanation of the changes to the Provincial Collective Agreement.

A significant outstanding issue is the transition of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Alberta Alcohol and Drug Addiction Commission (AADAC) to Alberta Health Services, which would see close to 1,200 EMS and about 400 AADAC workers transferred into the province wide paramedical professional and technical bargaining unit represented by HSAA. The transfer is being challenged in the courts by CUPE and AUPE, leaving these workers in limbo.

HSAA continues to organize "non-union enclaves" within the Alberta Health Services jurisdiction, as well as bringing on board a number of rural EMS services.

The HSAA 2009 billboard campaign received an Award of Distinction in the Outdoor Advertising Category, during the Advertising Club of Edmonton's Annual ACE Awards Night held March 6th. A team of judges from across the country selected the *Lucky for Him* campaign for the honor.

Labour Relations Conference – The theme for HSAA's Labour Relations Conference (LRC) last October was DIVERSITY. Meaghan McNeil, HSAA education consultant, did a great job of organizing this event and it was a huge success.

At the LRC, we stood up against poverty, and we added our numbers to the STAND UP website. Only 200,000 people stood up in North America for this cause so we were a significant part of that number.

December 6th commemoration

The Alberta Federation of Labour Women's committee organized a fund raising brunch in memory of 14 women who died at Montreal's École Polytechnique 20 years ago. Over 100 attendees listened to the remarks delivered by HSAA president Elisabeth Ballermann, Dr. Gotell, Professor in the Women's Studies Program at the University of Alberta, and MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona Ms. Rachel Notley. Funds raised were donated to the Olga Blondheim Fund and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

HSAA president Elisabeth Ballermann attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women's 54th annual meeting (UNCSW54) in New York. The Commission meets annually, but this was the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA) on gender equality.

MGEU/NUPGE

Sister Michelle Gawronsky reported:

MGEU bargaining

The three major bargaining groups at this time are Community Support, Colleges and Civil Service, and Community Support. Negotiations are ongoing with EFTs (guaranteed hours of work) for Homecare Attendants as one of the greatest issues. Colleges' bargaining continues with dates set in the near future. This round of negotiations has been very frustrating for our team. Our Civil Service Component is gearing up for bargaining. This is the largest component within the MGEU with approximately 13,000 members. It looks as though negotiations are going to be tough. Finance Minister Rosann Wowchuck announced prematurely that there is no money in the budget as Manitoba is in a 600 million dollar deficit so no one should anticipate more than a zero per cent wage increase at the tables. The Budget for 2010 was all about restraints. Our President, Peter Olfert, has responded informing the Finance Minister that MGEU does not negotiate through the media. Proposals will be exchanged this week.

MGEU arbitration

Health Care Support Services negotiating team are enjoying an extremely positive award ruled in February on the issue of vacation. The Arbitrator ruled totally in favor of the MGEU. The language that will be written in their Collective Agreements will be exactly as the MGEU presented during the hearing. Vacation has been an ongoing issue since the inception of the Regional Health Authorities in 1996 and affects approximately 5,000 members.

MGEU steward handbooks

Our Membership and Education Committee along with the MGEU Education Specialists have updated and printed our Steward Handbook in a Steward "friendly" format. It is now small enough to carry in your pocket. Stewards across the province are very pleased as they have their "book" at their fingertips at all times.

MGEU Women's Committee

Our Committee attended numerous events on March 8th – International Women's Day (IWD). The Sisters began the day at 7:00 a.m. volunteering at the Pancake Breakfast and Women in Politics Forum sponsored by the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL), Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and Winnipeg Labour Council (WLC). The event was held at the Union Centre with guest speakers Jennifer Howard, MLA and Judy Wasylycia-Leis, MP. This was the first and it is hoped it will become an annual event.

The proceeds of the event were donated to the December 6th Memorial Fund, a project of the MFL Women's Committee.

At 11:30 we participated in the march to the Legislative Buildings to attend the luncheon sponsored by Jennifer Howard, Minister on the Status of Women in recognition of IWD. The theme this year was "Milestones in Women's Equality: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". Minister Howard opened the luncheon with welcoming remarks and Premier Greg Selinger joined in welcoming everyone to the Legislature. He also relayed a message of the importance of the women's movement in Manitoba, Canada and around the world. He spoke of the forward steps women have taken through the years.

The guest speakers Dr. S. June Menzies and Beverly Goodwin were absolutely riveting. The sharing of their life stories and their struggles were both fascinating and informative. A quote from Jennifer Howard said it all – "The rights women now enjoy in Manitoba and all across Canada were fought for and won by the women who came before us, it is up to us to ensure that progress continues. I encourage all women to remember change cannot happen without them. The generations of women to come are depending on us to pave the way."

We finished off our day attending a dinner organized by the Grassroots Women of Manitoba. This organization honours women "whose lives are lived in the best of struggles". The evening was extra special to our committee as our previous Chair, Kelly-Ann Stevenson (Ivory), was a recipient of an award. Kelly-Ann was honoured for her Trade Union Activism.

In between these events, on March 9th our committee held our regular meeting. During this time we continued the planning of our conference for May 2011.

Website

Our committee has worked with our MGEU Communications Specialists to develop a "Women's Committee Link" on the MGEU website. This gives our committee a further avenue to communicate and bring information to the membership.

MGEU president

Our president, Peter Olfert, announced at the last Board meeting that he will not be allowing his name to stand at our Convention in October 2010. President Olfert has been our president for 24 years and it will be very hard to let him retire.

Our committee is looking forward to attending the NUPGE Women's Conference in April.

SGEU/NUPGE

Sister Jackie Krasko reported:

Saskatchewan Government and General Employees Union

SGEU has been extremely busy over the past months. SGEU has enhanced and expanded its communications program in 2009. SGEU ran numerous advertisements promoting our services and making the public aware of the short sightedness of privatization (TV, newspapers & radio ads, billboards, posters and pamphlets, newsletters and magazines).

Some of the campaigns done by SGEU in the past year were: the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority Anti-privatization, Community-based Organization Tri-union, PSGE Pro-Public Services, Licensing and Inspections, Health Services Providers' and the *Labour Legislation Campaign*.

From the great work of the SGEU communication staff and members, SGEU has won Silver in the International Public Affairs TV category for the 2009 TV ad "A Whole Lot More". Pollie awards are given out by the American Association of Political Consultants and for the best political and public affairs communication. To view the 30 second ad online please visit the website at www.sgeu.org and select the news letter from March 24, 2010.

SGEU Women's Committee

Silent Witness Project

The Silent Witness Project was presented at the Annual General Meetings in all the sectors with the exception of Health, which will be done at their Annual General Meeting in the fall. Our presentations were very well received and generated a great deal of interest and discussion.

On December 6, 2009, Sister Joyce Hobday set up a display of the Silent Witness Project in Saskatoon at the National Day of Remembrance. The Saskatoon Star Phoenix and the Regina Leader Post published an article on the Silent Witness Project as a result of the display.

We are encouraging Saskatchewan families to get involved by referring their stories of women who have been victims of family violence to us, the SGEU Women's Committee.

We want to make presentations at all union conferences and events as well as participating in publicly organized events that recognize violence against women.

We presently have two silhouettes and are in the process of adding four more silhouettes.

SGEU convention

The convention will be held in Saskatoon on April 15 – 17, 2010. The theme for the convention is “Standing Together”. The Women’s Annual Luncheon will be on April 15th, with the theme of “History of Women”. There will be a guest speaker and door prizes at this luncheon.

SGEU Women’s Biennial Conference

The Women’s Conference will be held in Saskatoon, on November 18 & 19, 2010. At the present time the conference is in the planning stages.

The Prairie School for Union Women

The Prairie School for Union Women is open to all unionized and non-unionized women across Canada. The school is hosted by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. It will be held at Waskesiu National Park, Waskesiu, Saskatchewan from June 13 – 17, 2010.

The SGEU Women’s Committee is sponsoring six members and one committee member for this event.

Public service sector

The Public Service Bargaining Council has endorsed a tentative agreement to take to the membership for ratification. A province-wide ratification vote was held in the month of March.

Given the current environment, and the government’s stated intention to downsize executive government, the bargaining council made the decision to explore options to ensure employment security for the term of the collective agreement. They were able to attain employment security for permanent full-time and labour service employees in the event of job abolishment, for the term of the agreement, which runs until September 30, 2012.

A tentative agreement was negotiated quickly to ensure there was an agreement prior to the provincial budget release on March 24, 2010 and to ensure there was an agreement on an employment security letter.

It is clear that the employer is using Essential Service Legislation to bring to the table some very regressive and vindictive proposals. Clearly the employer sees the Essential Service Legislation as the opportunity to attack our collective bargaining agreements in many areas.

For the complete bargaining update please go to the following website:
http://www/sgeu.org/sites/default/files/Feb%202010%20report.revised_1.pdf.

The Saskatchewan Government and General Employees’ Union announced on Monday, April 5, 2010 the successful ratification of a deal between its Public Service Sector and the government.

Education sector

There is an existing duality between publicly funded education and privately funded education. One emphasizes the student and society, the other places importance on big business, corporations and money.

With the belief that we survived Essential Services Legislation, we are still left with cutbacks in education and the decrease in skilled training. With the economic trend the way it is we need better training more than ever. Without broader based education to prepare for alternative employment in the future, people are being left jobless because of training that is too skill specific.

Public institutions are paying less attention to programming and have become more driven for partnerships with businesses to attract money. The question is, "Are we sneaking into privatization in the post secondary area of education?" We need to be aware that private providers are selling a product at a very high price, with little regard for the purchaser – the student.

We need to support public education and ensure that government tax cuts don't undermine our education system and that accessibility to education for all contributes to production and growth in our economy. The government's involvement in financial and quality control is essential.

At this moment the Education Sectors are all either in negotiations or about to begin and, with the economy the way it is, our position is unstable.

SIAST

The two SIAST units bargain separately and at a common table; both have been without a contract since June 2009. These two units have almost 200 active grievances so they are very busy.

Gabriel Dumont Instate has been busy using a new steward system, an election of new chief stewards, and winning arbitration. Some of the grievances are going to arbitration, which is unusual for them.

Regina School District #4 is on edge due to the employer's plans to reorganized coordinators in community schools. The trend seems to be that when a coordinator leaves, a teacher replaces them.

Regional Colleges are actually six individual units that bargain as a group. Currently they are working on their non-monetary proposals. Unfortunately for this group the employer is not interested in any sort of talk and has created a very poor atmosphere for any sort of negotiations.

Northlands College was successful in setting an early agreement on non-monetary proposals. Northlands and the regional colleges bargain together on collective agreements, classification and compensation structure throughout Saskatchewan.

Health sector

With the implementation of a biennial general meeting the focus has been on education. Five members of the Executive were elected to the Health Providers Negotiating Committee.

We are still in the process of developing a Communications Pamphlet for the Health Sector that will outline who we are, reports from all locals, steward structure, etc.

SGEU strongly supports the principle of high quality health care and urges the government to stick to what is set out in the *Canada Health Act*. SGEU opposes any form of privatization in this sector and believes that our system needs to be strengthened.

With cutbacks in staffing to client ratios we are undermining our long struggle to maintain what we have. Instead we should be preconceiving how we manage our health care system and provide the much needed finances to maintain high quality care.

SGEU urges the expansion of the system with a pharmacies program and other expansions that are needed to improve the health status and quality of care for all Saskatchewan people.

Health bargaining unit

Health providers bargaining unit

The three unions involved in this unit are SGEU, CUPE, and SEIU. The vote of the membership in December 2009 passed for job action.

Based on the discussion these three groups had with the Labour Relations and Mediation Branch of the Ministry of Labour in December 2009, the unions agreed to do an assessment of the bargaining process which would be done by the Branch's Executive Director.

The relationship with SAHO was not what was in question, rather about maintaining and improving health care services in Saskatchewan. Recruiting and retention issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. It is necessary to achieve an equitable collective agreement that recognizes the employee as an equal player on the health care team.

We are still negotiating regarding essential services after the meeting in December and we are still waiting for a response to our discussion.

A photo shoot was complete and this was a great recognition tool for our awareness campaign. We now have faces on billboards and a pamphlet to provide information to the membership and the public.

Crown sector

There are 14 bargaining units in the Crown Sector and all are in the process of negotiations.

The Crown Sector has spent time on the essential services legislation trying to figure out what it means for the different units. In some units essential services is an issue and in other units it is not yet an issue.

Retail regulatory sector

Saskatchewan liquor and gaming authority

Liquor and spirits sales are up by 13 per cent over the past two years. About 11 per cent of profits from this sector go directly back to Saskatchewan residents. Many new part time and full time employees have been hired with a brand new store opening in Regina.

Late last year the government allowed two new wine stores to open in Regina and Saskatoon. From the privately owned liquor stores the public sees some profit returned, but in the government owned liquor stores every penny over costs is returned to the people of the province.

We need to support and keep our stores from becoming privatized and want to thank those involved in the great TV and media ads aiding in our struggle.

OPSEU/NUPGE

Sister Cindy Haynes reported:

Approximately 150 women from throughout the province gathered in November as we celebrated 25 years of the existence of our Provincial Women's Committee. Our theme "Empowering Women in These Difficult Times" was obviously an important factor in the huge turnout of applicants this year. Our Secretary-Treasurer, Patty Rout, addressed the women focusing on the importance of networking in these trying times. The guest speaker for the Friday night reception was NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, who emphasized the importance of empowering women as we take on the many roles of work, family, and community. We welcomed women from 25 years of OPSEU's activism, and heard some of the stories of our early struggles in our women's movement within OPSEU. A videographer was on hand to capture the important comments of all the women present.

A combination of guest speakers, panelists and workshops encouraged us to take action, and make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us. We once again had our *Bundle UP* campaign which assists women and children in need all over this province with donations of scarves, gloves, mitts and hats. Tickets were sold throughout the weekend for 25 prizes – with fundraising going to a remote Aboriginal community in need – the Moosonee Family Resource Centre.

It became obvious that some of the struggles from 25 years ago still exist today – pay equity, child care, job security, part time work, precarious employment, as well as newer issues like same-sex benefits, elder care, parental leaves and flexible working arrangements.

A number of activities happened in February across the province for Black History Month. Three OPSEU women participated in a radio show called Black Talk, on inter-racial relationships, which was well received in the London Community. The OPSEU Women's Committee is planning our women's breakfast at convention in May, and are preparing resolutions around child care, equal pay for work of equal value. Many of us participated in the Commemorative March on February 14th for the over 500 Missing or murdered Aboriginal Sisters across Canada.

Various events happened across the province for International Women's Day, including breakfasts, marches, seminars, art shows, and rallies; we encouraged women to get involved in this 100th anniversary.

Children's Aid Societies (CASs) cannot keep operating and protecting vulnerable children in Ontario without adequate funds to meet their statutory mandate. The one-time funding of \$27 million announced on February 15th has not eased the financial crisis faced by CASs. If anything, it has deepened the anxieties faced by agency staff and voluntary boards. The amount is less than half of what was needed and 11 agencies who are facing deficits received zero funds. At least two of the 11, Huron-Perth CAS and CAS of Northumberland, have said they won't be able to make payroll as soon as March 12th.

CASs provide a broad range of protection services that support children and families in order to prevent circumstances that might require intervention by the agency. CAS staff work with biological families to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect, teaching parenting skills, providing counseling, and other support to families. Agencies have cut the following services to children because they lack the funds to pay for them:

- Transportation costs, including volunteer drivers, for children to attend therapy, access visits with parents and siblings, and other programs;
- Drug-screening to see if parents are still using drugs;
- Recreation budgets, limiting the access foster children have to sports programs; and
- Production of "life" books for children in foster care, through photographs and anecdotes, these books tell the story of a child with a foster family, thus helping a child gain an important sense of self and of being loved and cared for.

It is time our government provides sustainable, annualized funding so desperately needed by Ontario's Children Aid Societies.

Privatize the Liquor Board: The McGuinty government is preparing to receive the findings of a study into the possible sale of Crown corporations. Members of the Liquor

Board Employees Division hosted a February 17th reception at Queen's Park where they told MPPs the LCBO must stay in public hands.

Colleges Accept Offer: Verification of mail-in ballots has confirmed that faculty at Ontario's 24 community colleges have narrowly accepted the employer's contract offer. The offer from the Colleges results in a new collective agreement for three years. Formal complaints have been filed, as the Colleges mishandled the vote – allowing no advance polls and hiring over 800 part time faculty members after the strike vote was called in January.

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Sister Ginette Friolet provided a verbal report of Sister Linda Richardson written report:

Over the past six months NBU has been busy on many issues.

We have recently completed a successful union activist training session with over 150 activists in attendance.

Negotiations are ongoing, since the first of the year, in two hospital groups. These groups share a common goal to break the Liberal government's heavy handed approach to bargaining, with zero wage increases for all public servants, for the first two years.

NBU has been diligent in creating structure for the union. There are "workplace structure" committee meetings held on a monthly basis. There is now a base to work with and to build on to engage the members within the workplace.

Our retirees continue their fight to access government intervention regarding the high cost of health insurance which burdens their fixed income after retirement by approximately \$345 per month.

Information has recently been revealed to the public regarding the huge pension padding for MLAs with up to 85 per cent increases. Because of public outcry the opposition vows to bring change to the current MLA pension situation.

Ninety per cent of the province is against the sale of our Crown asset, NB Power, to Hydro Quebec. An ongoing campaign against the sale has been conducted since October 2009. The sale is being viewed by many as a corporate takeover by big business leaving New Brunswick people with a large hole in their future and a stain on the blanket of democracy in the province. This sale overwhelmingly assists big business and does nothing for the average citizen. The people want to at least vote on the sale and have been denied this simple democratic right. The premier is determined to go through with the sale regardless of what is said or done!

The current Liberal government has held their stance on selling off the assets at an apparent loss. They hired an expensive and controversial PR firm at the tax-payers' expense.

A Coalition of 30,000 New Brunswick people have been formed. NBU has been a key player and our Executive Director, Tom Mann, headed efforts in the Coalition to rally the citizenry and bring the voice of the people to the government and stop the sale of the Crown assets.

Actions have included several rallies, picketing, advertisements, a civil lawsuit, petitioning of over 20,000 signatures and, on March 20, a *Voice of the People* rally was held at the Legislature in Fredericton. About 4,000 people attended from all over the province to make their voice heard in a peaceful but moving moment for all New Brunswick. People were able to see they were not alone in the challenge to stop the sale no matter what happens.

I am very proud my union is part of this historic movement in my province. I invite everyone to view our website www.nbpowernotforsale.org for updates and to support us. I want to thank the National Union for providing their support to my union and for democracy in my province.

I am very pleased to announce that the NB Union Board of Directors has approved our women's committee holding their first "women's conference" in November 2010 following a union activist training session.

I want to thank this committee for all of the suggestions given at the last meeting for my women's committee. I brought your great ideas back with me. All suggestions were excellent and discussed with our women's committee. We liked all of them!

We are starting our first conference off as a "pilot" project to see how it works and hopefully it will blossom into something for many women to attend and learn, share and grow to become stronger as union women in the workplace, at convention and in the community. Our focus will be union women's function at convention and in the workplace. We will have a mock convention as a highlight to practice our skills.

NSGEU/NUPGE

Sister Dawn Ferris reported:

General Issues

Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Convention

The NSFL hosted their convention in October. It was an exciting four days. The NSFL Women's Committee hosted a Women's Breakfast that was well attended. Since their convention, Sister Rocky Beals from NSGEU Local 8 has been selected to sit on the

NSFL Women's Committee this term and Sister Wendy Williams, President of Local 246 of the NSGEU, was awarded Sister of the Year along with Koren Beaman, Local 1 of the CAW. Both women were presented with Bread and Roses and a plaque during the NSFL Women's Committee Potluck Lunch on March 6th, in celebration of International Women's Day.

Political landscape in Nova Scotia

For the first time in Nova Scotia history the current NDP government has sought out public opinion on the current financial situation. The NDP government has also sought consultation with the NSGEU for a civil servant program review. Because of an ongoing effort, led by treasury board officials, to gather input from government employees our members will have a say. In November, 2009 Joan Jessome asked the NDP government to allow our members to have a voice in this process and the government agreed. This will not be an easy process but our members are working with government to identify areas where more service is needed and other areas where services could be delivered differently, with more efficiency and with no loss of jobs. This was all very exciting during this process. Unfortunately, on the day I wrote this report, the Chronicle Herald's front page story is "NDP Government to cut civil service by 10 per cent". The story states that this will effect over 1,000 members and will hopefully be done through attrition, which Joan Jessome has coined "back door layoffs" when members retiring are not replaced.

Bargaining

As I reported in October, we are now involved in negotiating for approximately 90 per cent of our membership. Our decision to have the Civil Service as our lead table was a good one. However, things have stalled and we were not able to open and close negotiations in the time we had anticipated. I will add though that the NSGEU is still hopeful that good language will be achieved in this round. Some of our smaller locals have achieved very good contracts without government interference and the tone is still optimistic and hopeful that good advancements will be achieved.

Women's Issues

Local members take on abusive executive director (ED) follow-up

The end result to the Local 33 story regarding an ED who was abusive to our members t was absolutely outstanding. The NDP government decided to follow through on its demand that the Board replace the ED or funding would be withdrawn. The Board for Richmond County Home Support Services Society (RCHSSS) refused to let the ED go and were astonished to have their funding withdrawn. This process was done well and with care. Funding was given to an interim employer, the Guysborough County Home Support Agency, until a new agency is formed in Richmond County to replace RCHSSS. This may take eight months. There are 33 members of Local 33 and all of our members were transferred to the new agency without interruption to the people they provide support.

NSGEU Women's Issues Committee (WIC)

The WIC have been busy planning our conference which is being held on April 30 / May 1 & 2 weekends. This year's theme is "Finding our Strength through our Struggles: Women of NSGEU do great things". We have a wonderful agenda covering topics to empower, inspire, educate and encourage our sisters and we have a sprinkling of fun in the mix as well.

The WIC also attended the CLC's rally on March 6th for International Women's Day and our committee has decided that we will host an event for International Women's Day 2011. We are currently looking at hosting a World Café type event with the focus on Rural Poverty, but we are in the early stages of this and it may change.

We have also developed a plan, in keeping with our NSGEU "Women do great things" theme, of highlighting a story of a sister who does great things. Starting in our last issue of The Stand, we featured Holly Renaud, a member of Local 65. Holly had grown her hair since 2002 and it was long (to her hips), wavy and a beautiful red colour. On her 50th birthday she held a "cutting" ceremony and shaved her head, her hair was donated to the Canadian Cancer Society through Pantene Canada and a fundraising event was held with the money being donated as well. It is our goal to feature a sister or a group of sisters in each edition. This has been well received and we already have women and topics for our next few issues.

Future plans

The NSGEU is hosting its biennial Administrative Professional Conference April 16 & 17 and plans for our week long labour school are well underway.

It has truly been a busy six months since our last meeting and we are facing a few months of business ahead of us, but I have to say I am enjoying every minute of it all!

I look forward to seeing you on the 11th of April.

NAPE/NUPGE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported:

Highlights from NAPE's Women's Committee

Since our last advisory meeting, NAPE's Women's Issues Committee has had one formal meeting and attended several planned events throughout the province.

December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

The committee took part in the National Day of Mourning on December 6 to commemorate the women who were murdered during the 1989 Montreal Massacre. A number of vigils were held across the province and the committee participation was spread throughout.

March 5 – 7 – Women’s conference

The Women’s Committee held its annual conference on March 5 – 7. The conference took place at the Comfort Airport, St. John’s. The theme of the conference was Women Empowering Women. The committee felt it was a fitting theme to kick off International Women’s week.

The office registered 144 participants and guests. However, the actual numbers were down to 128 once the conference commenced due to inclement weather.

The conference began Friday night with opening remarks from the President and Secretary Treasurer. The guest speaker for Friday night was Sister Lana Payne, President of NLFL, who spoke about the status of union women. She reminded the participants of the struggle other union sisters must still endure – particularly the sisters on strike in Marystown, Burin. The evening ended with a wine and cheese social.

On Saturday the conference provided participants with an opportunity to learn about the struggles women have gone through, not only in their province, but also in developing countries. The conference workshops included such topics as:

- ♀ Elder Abuse
- ♀ Domestic Abuse
- ♀ Identity Theft/Computer Fraud
- ♀ International Panel-Africa
- ♀ International Panel-Amnesty International

On Saturday night the Women’s Committee hosted a banquet and organized a Silent Auction. The guest speaker for the evening was Sister Sabreen Mowlaii who spoke on her experiences and struggles to leave her country – Iran. She described how she was smuggled out of Iran and her eventual move to Canada. She reminded the participants that they should not take for granted the right to freedom of speech, freedom of choice, or freedom of expression.

The Women’s Committee introduced a new initiative at the banquet. With so many great women taking on leadership roles, the committee wanted to recognize the women in the labour movement who have provided outstanding leadership in the struggle for women’s equality and justice. The committee unveiled an award aptly called the Athena Award. Athena was a Greek Goddess who was considered rational, intelligent and a great defender in war but also a potential peacemaker. The committee believes these are characteristics a leader should aspire to. The first recipient of the award was our president, Sister Carol Furlong. A plaque bearing her name and the names of future recipients will be displayed at the NAPE office.

During the banquet, a Silent Auction raised \$1,036 and the money will be donated to a women’s shelter. Each participant to the conference also brought a set of towels to donate to the women’s shelter. As the centre is a not-for-profit organization, it welcomes donations that will assist in helping women who need to seek shelter.

Sunday morning ended the conference on a lighter note. The presenter provided the participants with a chance to laugh and relax.

March 8th – International Women’s Day

During International Women’s Day celebrations on March 8th, the Women’s Committee purchased tables at various luncheons and dinners throughout the province. It was a great opportunity for women to come together and network with union and non-unionized women.

Update from NAPE – General Information

Bargaining Updates

Marble Mountain Resort

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees reached a three year deal with Marble Mountain Resort. Approximately 120 workers accepted a new collective agreement which included an increase in wages and improvements in contract language.

Burin/Marystown Community Training and Employment Board

Talks have broken down between the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees and the Provincial Government for a group of workers who act as job coaches to persons with disabilities. The bargaining unit is comprised mainly of women and persons with disabilities who earn minimum wage rates.

The group is on strike while replacement management workers are earning overtime hourly wages that would be equivalent to, or greater than, a full day’s wages for most of the strikers and their clients. The bargaining group has asked for nothing more than the wage template offered to 40,000 other public sector workers.

Haiti Relief Fund

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees donated \$15,000 to the Haiti Relief Fund. NAPE gave the money to Oxfam Canada to help in its effort to support the people of Haiti.

QUALITY OF WOMEN’S LIVES CONFERENCE

Sister Hildahl distributed the Committee’s conference bags and badges. The Committee then reviewed the material contained in the conference bags. The committee reviewed the agenda and noted the key speakers. An overview of the *Key Findings of the Quality of Women’s Lives Survey* was provided. Sister Hildahl informed the committee that the meeting would end early in order to provide the committee time in the afternoon to read the Key Findings. Discussion was held regarding the need for the committee to be involved in the panel discussion and plenary session to ensure that these sessions are active.

Sister Hildahl informed the committee that the findings of the conference will provide the basis for a National Executive Board resolution on life/work balance which will be taken to the NUPGE Convention in June 2010.

F Y I

The committee was directed to Tab 5 of the meeting binder which contained the NUPGE website story on Equality Day (April 17). A copy of NUPGE's Posters for People Equality Day was also contained in the binder. The committee was advised that if they would like copies of the poster to contact Sister Hildahl.

OTHER BUSINESS

The committee was informed that there will be an ACWI meeting before the NUPGE Convention on Thursday, June 17, 2010.

The committee discussed the fact that there will be a women's caucus at the NUPGE convention as well. Several committee members raised concern about the continued practice of holding the women's caucus at 7:00 a.m. It was noted that holding the caucus early on Saturday morning combined with the fact that Saturday evening is the NUPGE dinner results in an extremely long day. The committee discussed the fact that if the caucus was moved to noon on Saturday it would result in higher attendance.

Sister Gawronsky moved and Sister Ferris seconded that the women's caucus at the 2010 NUPGE convention be moved from breakfast time to lunch time. Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Sister Ferris motioned and Sister Gawronsky seconded for the meeting to adjourn at 12:30 p.m.