

**NUPGE Advisory Committee on
Women's Issues
June 17, 2010 – Vancouver, BC**



In attendance:

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

**Colleen Jones
Suzanne Bennett
Mariana Burstyn
Jackie Krasko
Michelle Gawronsky
Cindy Haynes
Linda Richardson
Dawn Ferris
Eileen Brown-Wilt
Arlene Sedlickas**

National Union

Brenda Hildahl

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.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 member Eileen Brown-Wilt from PEIUPSE/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 resolutions to Convention pertaining to women's issues and the Women's Breakfast Caucus being held on Saturday at Convention. Sister Ferris requested that discussion of Bill C304, National Housing Strategy, be added to the agenda. Sister Gawronsky moved and Sister Haynes seconded that the agenda be adopted as amended. Carried.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – APRIL 11, 2010 MEETING

Sister Haynes moved and Sister Ferris seconded that the April 11, 2010 minutes be adopted with noted changes. Carried.

COMPONENT REPORTS

BCGEU/NUPGE

Sister Colleen Jones reported:

Administrative Services Day of Recognition

Component 12 (Administrative Services) has a special day each year that celebrates the work these members do. It is a fun day of activities and events that acknowledges the importance of administrative services across British Columbia. Component 12

members are essential in providing public services in communities across British Columbia. A very high percent of these members are women who have received notices of job redundancies or displacement over the past few months due to the government cutbacks, layoffs and restructuring. On this day we show our support and solidarity with these members, not only because of the struggles they are facing at this time but also because of the work they do and services they provide.

May is Child Care Month in British Columbia

First Call's "2009 Child Poverty Report Card" states that in 2007, BC had the highest rate of child poverty in Canada for six years in a row. They estimated that 156,000 children in BC were living in poverty. We all know that if children are living in poverty so are their parents. The BCGEU has been calling for the poverty rate to be reduced for children in single mother households and others, by 30 percent in four years and 78.5 percent within 10 years. The union is also calling for targets and timelines so the goals of poverty reduction can be met.

With so many cuts to women's programs and child care funding, these numbers are going to be difficult to reach. Just recently many of the school districts around the province have had to increase rental costs in order to stay within government budgets and meet other cost pressures. Some monthly increases have been reported to be as high as \$14,000 a month. Many daycare centres will be forced to close their doors unless parents can come up with the extra funding.

May 17 - International Day against Homophobia

I know this day has passed but I think it is important that I still include it in my report because of the importance that it be recognized. We stand in solidarity on this day and every day with our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members, and with LGBT communities around the world. We will continue to reject all forms of discrimination towards anyone, as LGBT persons are a part of our communities, families, workplaces and unions. BCGEU members will be participating in many of the pride events that will be happening throughout the province, now and during the summer.

I am pleased to announce that we ratified our tentative agreement on May 30th. The agreement was ratified by 71 percent. The results of the voting indicated that the members weren't that happy about the agreement but they also understood that this was a tough round of bargaining. They also put the bargaining committee on notice that next round of bargaining they want to see wage and benefits increased as they have gone without for long enough. Our Community Social Services Component is back to the bargaining table and we are hoping there is an agreement for these members which is respectful of the work they do and the support they provide to our communities and families around the province.

Aboriginal Solidarity Day – June 21

Our Aboriginal members work in all areas such as social services, native court work, health care, education, friendship centres, band offices and fire fighters. We represent Aboriginal workers in government and other organizations. The BCGEU is very supportive of our Aboriginal members and ensure that they have a strong voice as well

as recognizing their unique needs and traditions. We are looking forward to celebrating this day with them.

Lastly, I would like to mention how extremely excited BCGEU is getting about the upcoming NUPGE Convention. We are all looking forward to hosting this event and showing you our beautiful province. We have an exciting weekend planned and look forward to sharing it with all of you.

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 percent 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.

Report to HSA members on NUPGE Quality of Women's Lives Conference

HSA sincerely thanks NUPGE for organizing this conference. Our union's participants (six members, three board members) were grateful for the opportunity to share ideas with activists from across the country. Staff interviewed participants and wrote an article for *The Report*, HSA's membership magazine. The article is attached.

HSA Convention

Our union's Convention took place from April 15-17 in Vancouver. Activists also had an opportunity to attend various pre-convention workshops on:

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

Although not specifically geared towards women's issues, all the workshops were informed about the ongoing importance of promoting women's rights, through advocacy or through protecting crucial public services.

During Convention, the union's Committee on Equality and Social Action presented to delegates a report of the year's activities. The committee's report published in the union's annual report is attached. The committee also hosted during Convention a mini

marketplace of social activist fundraisers, as well as a handful of commercial vendors who had agreed to donate a portion of sales to HSA's Equality and Social Action Fund. The display booths included:

1. Little Travellers beaded dolls raising funds for AIDS / HIV care in Africa
2. Co-Development of Canada's ethical coffee and chocolate
3. People's Co-op Books
4. Canadian First Marketing, supplying union-made promotional materials and union logo wear
5. Orient Expressed Jewellery
6. Semiprecious Jewellery
7. Canada Without Poverty
8. BC Health Coalition

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.

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 April 10 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

Alberta is the only province in Canada that continues to shed jobs – and it is the only province that did not increase spending to deal with the recession. Figures released from Statistics Canada show the unemployment rate in Alberta has risen to 7.5 percent – its highest level since 1996. There are 87,200 fewer Albertans working in full-time jobs

today than there were at the top of the pre-recession boom (October 2008) – even though the province’s working age population has increased by 99,000. Since the recession began, about 22,000 jobs have disappeared in construction; 31,000 in manufacturing; 22,000 in engineering and technical occupations; 33,000 in trade and about 7,500 in oil and gas.

Eight beds for heart patients at the Mazankowski Heart Institute will not be in use because of staff shortages. Health Minister Gene Zwozdesky said four of the beds have never been used and the other four will be moved to the critical care unit. A cardiology technician at the hospital said staff are run off their feet. With more staff, they could perform more surgeries.

The Alberta government has commenced a comprehensive review of health legislation. Given the history of creeping privatization and de-listing, we will be actively participating in this review, and will work with social partners to protect public health care.

Campaigns

HSAA continues to support the Join Together Alberta campaign. They also share a belief that the best way forward for Alberta is to embrace 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 – one that focuses on cutting spending and leaving individuals, families and communities to increasingly fend for themselves. Alberta clearly has the means to build a better, brighter and more sustainable future for all its citizens. What it needs now is the vision and the will to make that future a reality.

Alberta College of Pharmacists revealed a plan to regulate Pharmacy Technicians across the province. All Pharmacy Technologists will be required to undergo training and write a new exam. Other health care professionals in Alberta were not required to take training they had already completed or pass new exams. Pharmacy Technicians believe they should receive the same consideration and that any new requirements be instituted on a “go-forward” basis. HSAA supports their demands. However, the ability to influence the decisions of professional regulatory bodies is limited and the best option may be to assert that the employer will have to bear the cost of courses, exams and time off, estimated to be between seven and 10 million dollars.

Domestic Violence Project

Statistics Canada estimates the annual national cost of domestic violence, including lost productivity, to be billions of dollars. With the country’s highest rate of domestic assault, Alberta pays a particularly high price in terms of absenteeism, reduced productivity, decreased staff morale and liability costs. For every workplace, a sound domestic violence policy has become the new benchmark in both risk management and employee wellness. 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> .

Organizing and Collective Bargaining, Communications

HSAA bargaining committee was able to conclude negotiations for a tentative agreement with Pharma Plus Specialty Pharmacy Services Inc. At the time of writing, a mail-in ratification vote is underway, to be concluded by June 4, 2010.

HSAA members employed with the former Foothills Regional Emergency Medical Services have ratified the Transitional Tentative Agreement for EMS Local Conditions. HSAA successfully negotiated a one-year deal with a group of Communications Specialists at Foothills Emergency Services Commission. The agreement provided modest increases for the staff as well as certainty for their terms and conditions of employment at the Calgary Hospital.

Legal challenges relating to the consolidation of Alberta's health system into a single "region" have concluded. Legislative changes will bring up to 2,000 workers into the HSAA paramedical professional and technical bargaining unit. This move was opposed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP), who argued that the involuntary move of members to another bargaining unit violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Both the Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB) and the Court of Queen's Bench held there was no Charter violation. We have been advised there will be no further appeals, and therefore are in the process of integrating workers from several Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the former Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC).

Health Sciences 39th Annual General Meeting

Health Sciences 39th AGM was held on May 20 & 21, 2010 in Edmonton, AB. HSAA President Elisabeth Ballermann delivered her annual President's Address, which included remarks about the province's new health care landscape. "The machinations of our provincial government will require continued vigilance and advocacy. We can, and do have success in protecting members, their jobs and their professional integrity," said our president.

Alberta Health and Wellness Minister Gene Zwozdesky attended our AGM. Minister Zwozdesky told 200 HSAA delegates attending that "nurses and doctors may get a lot of the media attention, but it's you folks that are the backbone of the entire health care system." With media in attendance, Zwozdesky took several questions from delegates, including rather direct ones from HSAA members.

Alberta New Democrat Leader Brian Mason, also addressed the Health Sciences AGM, promising delegates that his party would continue fighting the "good fight" for public health care.

At the AGM, a new HSAA web site was launched. The new site, <http://www.hsaa.ca/>, has a fresh design, a reorganization of information and features a new Members-Only Access section. It will offer our members easier access to the information they're after, from negotiation updates and collective agreements to education and HSAA news."

HSAA President Elisabeth Ballermann presented HSAA member J.R. Bérubé with the prestigious Barb Mikulin award. The U of A Hospital Respiratory Therapist received a standing ovation during the ceremony. The Mikulin Award recognizes substantial contributions by a member to both their union and community.

SGEU/NUPGE

Sister Jackie Krasko reported:

SGEU Convention

The SGEU Convention was held from April 15 - April 17, 2010. There were approximately 230 Delegates, Observers, Life Members and Guests in attendance for the three-day Convention. I am pleased to announce Bob Byrne will remain our President for another term. Helen Hrynychak will also remain as the NUPGE Vice-President for another term.

SGEU has sponsored a new website called "If You Love Saskatchewan" <http://ifyoulovesaskatchewan.ca/>. The website is designed to make the public aware of the Saskatchewan Government's sell off of the Public Services. All of the SGEU's television and radio ads can be viewed on the website.

SGEU will hold their Equity Conference from September 20 – 22, 2010 in Saskatoon. Seventy-five members are expected to attend.

SGEU will be sending four delegates to the NUPGE Leadership School in Ottawa being held during the last week of August.

Numerous Union Leadership Development courses are now planned for this fall.

SGEU Women's Committee

The Women's Committee held their Annual Luncheon at Convention. It was a very successful luncheon. We had approximately 38 women who attended. Some women did not stay for the meeting, as the room was overcrowded. Muna De Ciman gave a short presentation on the work she is doing in Africa with Empowering Women. She was well received by the group. At the end of Muna's presentation the hat was passed to collect donations to go towards the women in Africa.

The Women's Committee then had a short quiz for the women to fill out at the luncheon. There were 12 questions regarding famous Women in History. The group was allowed 10 minutes to work on the questions. A PowerPoint was then shown that provided all the answers and a brief outline of the achievements each woman had accomplished. Thanks to Sister Joyce Hobday for making the quiz and PowerPoint presentation.

The Women's Committee met on May 26 & 27, 2010 in Regina. The main focus of the meeting was finalizing the agenda for the SGEU Women's Committee Conference that will be held on November 18 & 19, 2010. The theme for this year's conference is "We Are Women".

The Prairie School for Union Women

The Prairie School for Union Women was held this week from June 13 - 17, 2010 at Waskesiu National Park, Waskesiu, Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour had an excellent response to this year's Prairie School for Union Women. The Women's Committee tried to register an additional sister before the deadline for the early-bird registration; however the School was already full and had a long waiting list.

Public Service Sector

The Saskatchewan Government and General Employees Union announced on April 5, 2010 the successful ratification of a deal between its Public Service Sector and the Government. The Public Service Members should receive their back pay on their June 25, 2010 paycheck. To date the new agreement is still not available to the members.

Health Care

A Health Care rally was held at the Legislative Building on May 18, 2010. The members attending the Provincial Council meeting were provided a bus service from the Ramada to the Legislative Building. Health members also came by bus and car from Regina and around the province. The rally was to show support to the health care workers and to get the government back to the bargaining table.

MGEU/NUPGE

Sister Michelle Gawronsky reported:

The MGEU Women's Committee sends sincere appreciation to Brenda Hildahl and NUPGE for the very interesting, informative and educational Conference on "Life/Work Balance" for the Sisters. We found it most enjoyable and had a great time. We have all shared the information with our workplaces and area councils as well as set up the links on our MGEU Women's Web link.

Since our return in April our Committee has been working diligently on our Convention Report for our MGEU Convention in October of this year. We also continue to organize our Women's Conference planned for May 2011.

The MGEU continues to bargain for 31 groups; some of the larger are the Community Health Workers, Civil Service Workers and Colleges.

We have had and continue to have "informational pickets" for the Colleges; this is generating public awareness of the bargaining issues. At this time management has lowered their monetary offer three times.

On June 9th we will be holding an "informational picket" with the Correction Officers, again getting public support for their bargaining.

We are in the process of creating a new Component at the request of a number of "like" Locals. This would add one more seat to our Board of Directors.

All aspects of our union are gearing up for our Convention scheduled for October 2010. As our President Peter Olfert has announced he will not be letting his name stand, we have two people declare for President at this time. It appears as though all positions within the Officers are going to be challenged. It is expected to be a very exciting Convention.

Our Board of Directors is looking forward to attending the NUPGE Convention. For some it will be their first NUPGE event.

Our province has lost a wonderful Member of Parliament – Judy Wasylycia–Leis has decided to stay closer to home and has added her name to the Mayor Candidate’s list for the city of Winnipeg.

OPSEU/NUPGE

Sister Cindy Haynes reported:

OPSEU had its annual Convention in Toronto on May 6, 7 & 8th. A number of resolutions were dealt with including supporting June 21 as National Aboriginal Day. As well, a special emergency resolution was brought forward by the Women’s Committee denouncing Harper’s actions at the World Conference on Maternal Health where he indicated he wouldn’t sign the coalition agreement if any of the partner countries supplied funding for abortions. This was met with unanimous support by our members.

Over 1,000 protesters marched to the Ministry of Labour on the first day of OPSEU’s Convention demanding that the McGuinty Liberals open the ballot boxes and count the votes of disenfranchised workers. OPSEU Convention delegates were joined by labour leaders from across the province. The members have voted, yet the ballot boxes remain locked – 17 months later! The amended Colleges Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA) technically allows part-time college workers in Ontario to unionize, but it has been a complete failure in practice. The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is calling on the International Labour Organization (ILO), an agency of the United Nations, to re-open its investigation of a complaint that the Ontario government is denying 16,000 part-time community college workers the basic right to form a union and participate in collective bargaining. This is met with strong gratitude by our members!

The Women’s Breakfast was once again a large success, with over 200 members attending. We highlighted our recent 25th Anniversary Conference held in November, 2009 and the history of our women’s movement in OPSEU. Regional appreciation awards are given to one woman in each region who has shown dedication and motivation towards advancing the issues of women. Certificates and a rose are given to each recipient. Our special Bread and Roses award this year was given to Terry Downey, an OPSEU member, who has an executive position with the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL). Terry was once a member of OPSEU’S Provincial Women’s Committee, at a time when they initiated the member awards to the women, as well as the Women’s Bread and Roses Award. She continues to work province-wide on the many issues affecting women and the labour movement.

Our guest speaker was Andrea Calver, head of the Ontario Coalition of Better Child Care, who works tirelessly to bring these concerns to the forefront. One important issue is the fact that Ontario Colleges offer an Early Child Care Education Program, yet they are closing the Colleges’ on-site child care facilities, claiming they aren’t profitable! There is a cost for child care! Our students need onsite care, as well as a training ground for students in the programs. Members who work at the centres are also OPSEU members who lose their jobs when a closure occurs. We continue to support and take actions on these issues.

Over 200 members demonstrated at our province's THINK TANK for the Liberals at a Collingwood, Ontario resort, drawing great media attention about how the recent Ontario Budget attacks working people, and promotes cuts and public service freezes, which will really only HURT the province, not help it.

Our Provincial Women's Committee is initiating a postcard campaign about the long standing issue of employers in Ontario firing pregnant employees. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has confirmed this is a continuing issue. We are in the planning stages of this campaign.

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Sister Linda Richardson reported:

NB Union Women's Committee members met following the Quality of Women's Lives Conference on April 13, 2010. The upcoming events of the NBU's Biennial Convention in October 2010 and the first ever NBU Women's Conference in November were topics of discussion and planning.

Our Women's Committee is tentatively planning for Janice Daigle to provide a session of "Laughter Therapy" at our Biennial Convention's Women's Breakfast. The Breakfast is a regular event for NB Union's female members.

For the first ever NB Union Women's Conference, we are planning to conduct our own "Quality of Women's Lives" survey. The questions for the survey will be included in the invitation to the women's conference and the results of the survey will be released at the conference to the members. Other highlights include sessions on public speaking, managing meetings using Roberts Rules of Order and a session on body language. We are very excited and highly anticipate this first ever event for NBU women to be interesting, educational and successful.

Our union currently has three bargaining groups in negotiations. The current bargaining climate is dominated by a two-year wage freeze policy by the employer for everyone. The government has offered the two hospital groups, Paramed-Technical and Diagnostics and the SHCP – Therapeutics, a two percent wage increase over four years with the first two years at zero and the second two years at .5 percent every six months. Our health care groups are gearing up for a storm because they will not settle for less than the doctors or nurses (neither of which received zeros in their first two years). Our bargaining groups are providing solidarity by implementing a large scale "Equal" advertising campaign. The four parts to the health care team include doctors, nurses, paramedical and specialized health care – equally professional, equally committed, equally yours.

Our community college instructors are now in the final days of a government decision to move them to a corporation style of management. NBU believes the government is also trying to divide the college members along linguistic lines.

Workplace structure meetings for the two hospital groups are in place in every section of the province and are considered successful. The next phases are beginning to take shape. The members are taking ownership of their meetings and the final result will be the liaisons will be equipped to file grievances and assist with servicing the collective agreement when and where possible. We are very optimistic about the development of this program which is member oriented and driven.

NB Union has supported the Coalition of New Brunswickers which is now referred to as "Public Power for the Public Good". This group will lobby the government during the election period this summer to attempt to place the decision-making of provincial assets back into the hands of the people of the province. The group has launched a "Good Government Principles" campaign and will do a monthly "Report Card" on progress.

The group was formed on the heels of the "Coalition of New Brunswickers to Save NB Power" shortly after the collapse of the sale of NB Power Corporation to Quebec. The deal to sell failed largely due to the great pressure from the people of the province. Shortly after a monumental "Voice of the People" rally held in March, the announcement to scrap the notion to sell was made public. This spoke multitudes about the solidarity of New Brunswickers as they stood strong for a more open and transparent democratic process.

It has been a busy stretch for our union and we expect it to continue to be busy this fall.

NSGEU/NUPGE

Sister Dawn Ferris reported:

Women's Conference

The conference was titled "NSGEU Women do great things: Finding Strength through our Struggles". This was a union focused conference that inspired women on the importance of being unionized and featured dynamic women speaking about how they found their strength during their struggles. The goal was to engage our women and help them find the courage to get more active in the union. Our guest speakers were Joan Jessome, Carlotta Weymouth and Donna Hunt and they gave powerful talks that many participants were moved by. Others invited to educate our women were: the CCEP, the Community Coalition to End Poverty, which gave a clear picture of the poverty issues in NS and what could be achieved if legislation and the systems in place were changed. The WEE, the Women's Economic Equality Society, spoke on the importance of having more women working in the Trades and the program they have in place to have women trained and employment secured. Pharmacare representatives spoke to the women about the province-wide program and the benefits to families that this could have. A CPP representative educated the women on the CPP plan and there was so much important and relevant information given that the women had questions long past the allotted time. The committee has realized that if the session is scheduled again a ½ day session would most certainly be welcomed. There was also a session on "Women's Health" which was a surprise exercise class called Zumba. Had we advertised it was an exercise class the women might not have been so keen to attend, but the overall experience turned out to be one of the highlights of the evening sessions.

All in all, a lot was learned that will help our members go back into their workplaces, their homes, their communities and their locals armed with important information. A lot was shared and bonds were formed and many of the participants will become more engaged with the NSGEU. Lots of laughs were shared and even some tears were shed but it was a great experience.

Week Long Labour School

The annual school was held in at St. Francis Xavier University again this year from May 16th – 21st, 2010. The School is open to members of the National Union Atlantic components (NS, NB, PEI). Classes were held for Communications, Leadership and Advanced Steward. A special class was held that was more of a working committee with members from NSGEU's Political Action Committee, Women's Issues Committee and the Human Rights Committee to work on a plan for some very important resolutions that came out of our Convention in May 2009. There were participants from NB and PEI in this class as well and the relevance of the topics were important to all Components.

Staffing Issue

Our Education Officer, Margaret Ann McHugh, is still off recovering from her car accident which broke her back in February. She continues to recover and we are all hopeful that she will be well enough to return to work in the fall. Her role has been filled by Organizing Officer Lori Smith.

Bargaining

Talks between the Civil Service and their employer have broken down. We are very disappointed with the way negotiations have gone with the Civil Service as we had hoped for better dialogue with the new employer, the NDP. We are considering if we need to change our "lead table" with regards to this round of bargaining.

Also we've had a very small local, Local 60A, locked out – possibly even illegally. This is a new local of 13 members who have not yet negotiated their first contract with the employer. Locked out by the Pictou County Shared Service Authority since May 31, the group of building inspectors, water-treatment workers and administrative staff have been picketing long hours through often terrible weather. As of June 16th, even though a Conciliation Officer has called them back to the table to restart negotiations with their employer, the Pictou County Shared Services Authority has refused. Just prior to submitting this report, I have learned that talks have broken off yet again with our Local and their employer.

NAPE/NUPGE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported:

Highlights from NAPE's Women's Committee

Since our last advisory meeting, NAPE's Women's Issues Committee attended the NUPGE Women's Conference. The sisters were totally impressed with the quality and expertise of the speakers provided for the conference. They took advantage of the opportunity to talk and share ideas with other activists.

In early September the Women's Committee will be teaching a Leadership course for women at NAPE's annual Labour School.

Updates from NAPE – General Information

Bargaining Updates

In early April, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees reached a deal with three town councils. Each collective agreement offers significant wage increases and improvements in contract language.

A deal has also been reached with Caregivers, an agency that provides home and residential support services. Approximately 600 workers accepted a new collective agreement which included an increase in wages and improvements in contract language. The workers achieved a new leave package, an additional statutory holiday, meal provision for extended shifts, clothing provision, seniority recognition, paid vacations and first aid renewals. Another improvement in contract language includes an MOU committing the parties to finalize health insurance benefits. There are 16 other home support agencies currently in bargaining with NAPE.

Burin/Marystown Community Training and Employment Board

Striking workers with the Burin Marystown Employment Training Board who act as job coaches to persons with disabilities have become frustrated with the provincial government's lack of bargaining. They have stepped up their protests in front of the provincial legislature. The bargaining unit is comprised mainly of women who earn minimum wage rates. These women act as job coaches to persons with disabilities.

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. These workers are now into their seventh month on strike. Two other employment boards across the province have since taken a strike vote.

NAPE is running a series of TV and radio ads to highlight the issue.

Classification Plan Update

The provincial government has commenced the process of implementing a new Classification Plan which will cover public sector bargaining unit positions. The government is in the process of defining, designing, and implementing a job evaluation and classification system for 25,000 unionized employees in 1,200 classifications covering the following groups:

- Direct Government Departments
- Education sector including School Boards and Staff at College of the North Atlantic (excluding faculty)
- Health Care Sector
- Group Homes

- Selected government agencies (Newfoundland Liquor Corporation, Municipal Assessment Agency, Public Utilities Board, Pippy Park Commission, and Provincial Information and Library Resources Board)

A pilot project has been carried out to work out problems that may exist prior to commencing with the implementation of the new classification plan. The next phase of the project involves selecting and training candidates to fill out forms describing their jobs. The job profiles for each position will be created based on the information contained in the questionnaires.

It is important to note that this is a government controlled project and the Committees appointed to rate the positions will be comprised entirely of government representatives. The unions will not be represented or have input in how the jobs are rated. The new job evaluation plan will replace the current classification system. The total cost and timing of wage adjustments are to be included in negotiations to commence on the government's finalization of this new classification system.

Update on Highway Depot Closures

NAPE is once again calling on the Minister of Transportation and Works to reverse its decision to reduce highway staff and close highway depots for the summer season. The summer maintenance program is necessary to maintain the highways and roads. Provincial highway workers have been issued layoff notices as 13 highway depots are once again targeted for closure commencing in early May. In 2005 the union took this job action to arbitration and won; however, government appealed it. Government unsuccessfully took the Arbitration Award to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, Trial Division, where the Court upheld the arbitrator's decision in its entirety. Government then appealed to the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal (the province's highest court) and, in a recent ruling on June 2, the Court upheld the seniority rights of highway workers. The Court has directed the Newfoundland and Labrador government to attempt to reach an agreement on lost salary and benefits, and if no agreement is reached, the matter of lost salary and benefits will be remitted to the Board of Arbitration for resolution. Government has spent considerable money fighting something which the union believes is a win for the entire province.

CONVENTION

Sister Hildahl informed the Committee that the NEB Resolutions directly related to women's issues, Life/Work Balance: Quality of Women's Lives and A Universal Early Learning and Child Care Program, were contained in the meeting binder. The Committee members were encouraged to speak in support of the resolutions when the resolutions came to the Convention floor.

Discussion was held regarding the Women's Breakfast Caucus taking place on Saturday, June 19th. Sister Jones and Sister Sedlickas agreed to do the presentation at the Caucus of the PowerPoint entitled *Work-Life Balance: Realities for Working Women* which was developed for the Quality of Women's Lives Conference. Copies of the *Findings of the Quality of Women's Lives Survey* were distributed by the committee to the sisters attending the Caucus. The committee determined that the items donated by the Components would be used both as door prizes and for items in a silent auction.

The Committee agreed that the funds raised from the silent auction would be donated to the Walk4Justice.

QUALITY OF WOMEN'S LIVES PROJECT

Sister Hildahl informed the Committee that a copy of the NUPGE website story on the success of the Quality of Women's Lives Conference was included in the binder. As well, the latest newsletter from the Labor Project for Working Families was also included.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

The Committee was directed to Tab 6 of the meeting binder which contained a report from Stephanie Seaman on the Child Care Human Resource Sector Council.

F Y I

The Committee was directed to Tab 7 which contained a copy of the letter sent to the Coalition for Gun Control with a contribution of \$3,000 to assist the Coalition's efforts to ensure that the long-gun registry is not dismantled as is proposed in Bill C391. Also included in the meeting binder was the latest action newsletter from World March of Women.

A copy of the letter sent to the Native Women's Association of Canada with a \$1,500 contribution to the Sisters in Spirit Initiative was also contained in the binder. A discussion followed regarding the committee's participation in the Sisters in Spirit Ottawa Vigil which is being held October 4, 2010. The committee was informed that the next committee meeting will be held October 4 & 5, 2010 to coincide with the Vigil.

OTHER BUSINESS

A brief discussion was held regarding Bill C304 – National Housing Strategy. This private member's bill was introduced by NDP MP Libby Davies. The bill is intended to bring all levels of government together to enact a plan to increase safe, affordable housing across Canada. Sister Ferris agreed to circulate information to the Committee regarding the bill.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.