

**NUPGE Advisory Committee on
Women's Issues
March 17-18, 2011 – Ottawa, ON**



In attendance:

**BCGEU/NUPGE
HSABC/NUPGE
SGEU/NUPGE
MGEU/NUPGE**

**OPSEU/NUPGE
NBUPPE/NUPGE
NSGEU/NUPGE
PEIUPSE/NUPGE
NAPE/NUPGE**

National Union

Regrets:

HSAA/NUPGE

**Colleen Jones
Suzanne Bennett
Jackie Krasko
Jan Henley
Lee Edwards
Cindy Haynes
Barbara Doiron
Dawn Ferris
Dina DesRoches
Arlene Sedlickas**

**James Clancy
Brenda Hildahl
Lisa Bullée**

Mariana Burstyn

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Brenda Hildahl. Sister Hildahl welcomed the sisters and introductions were made around the table. Sister Hildahl welcomed Sister Jan Henley who will be replacing Sister Gawronski as the MGEU/NUPGE representative; Sister Barbara Doiron who will be replacing Sister Richardson as the NBUPPE/NUPGE representative and Sister Dina DesRoches who will be replacing Sister Brown-Wilt as the PEIUPSE/NUPGE representative.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Committee was asked to review the agenda. Sister Jones moved and Sister Sedlickas seconded that the agenda be adopted. Carried.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 4-5, 2010 MEETING

Sister Ferris moved and Sister Haynes seconded that the October 4-5, 2010 minutes be adopted. Carried.

COMPONENT REPORTS

BCGEU/NUPGE

Sister Colleen Jones reported:

It's very appropriate that I write my report to the NUPGE Women's Committee on March 8th — International Women's Day! As we celebrate 100 years of achievements that women before us fought for, we also have to celebrate their struggles and recognize that the work to improve our rights as women still has to continue!

Since our last committee meeting, the Provincial Executive Women's Committee held its regional conference in Richmond. Each year we plan two conferences, one in the spring and one in the fall. Our theme for this conference was Life/Work Balance. About 95 sisters registered for the conference with only eight of them ever having been to a women's conference before. The conference was about life/work balance at home and in the workplace. Some great discussions and ideas came out of the conference and we will use that information to develop resolutions to our constitutional convention and future conferences.

Christy Clark has been elected as our 35th premier-designate. She is only the second woman in our province's history to hold the position. BCGEU members have had a very vulnerable relationship with Premier Gordon Campbell and the Liberal government in the past years, with cuts to many programs and services that families depend on during these difficult economic times. Ms. Clark was deputy premier and helped institute many of these cuts. She has promised changes to make sure that families come first so we anxiously await to see what these changes look like.

My tour to Colombia was an absolutely amazing experience. We had the opportunity to visit the organizations that we support through our International Solidarity Committee on behalf of our members. We met with human rights organizations, community councilors, the Canadian embassy personnel, the Colombian Ministry of Interior and Justice and the Colombian lawyers collective. (Yessika Hoyos spoke at the NUPGE convention in June.) We travelled to places, once again, that absolutely left you with a heavy heart and a new awareness of the human spirit. People were so excited to see the Canadians and opened up their homes and arms to us! I am so grateful to have had this experience and look forward to sharing it with everyone.

We have some very busy months ahead of us here in BC. Our PE Women's Committee will have its spring conference the first week of April, the Canadian Labour Congress has its convention in May, and we have our constitutional convention in June. I have put my name forward for Vice President and look forward to representing our members in this capacity for another term. We have a good delegation of Sisters attending the International Women's Conference in Ottawa/Gatineau in July. I am looking forward to connecting with Sisters from all around the world.

HSABC/NUPGE

Sister Suzanne Bennett reported:

Health Sciences Association / Committee on Equality and Social Action

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

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 establishes a Women's Committee

I am proud to report that the union's board of directors this month approved a recommendation from the Committee on Equality and Social Action to establish a Women's Committee.

HSA's current Committee on Equality and Social Action was formed on a trial basis in 2000. This committee is an amalgam of two former committees; the Women's Committee and the Solidarity Committee.

Retirement

This is my last ACWI meeting, as I am retiring from HSA's board of directors. I am grateful for the camaraderie, expertise, solidarity and energy of the powerful women on this committee. Bread and roses!

SGEU/NUPGE

Sister Jackie Krasko reported:

The Women's Committee has been very busy since we last meet. On October 12 & 13, 2010 the committee met in Saskatoon. The main topics on the agenda were finalizing the SGEU Women's Conference that was held on November 18 & 19, 2010 in Saskatoon and International Woman's Day on March 8, 2011.

All the delegates who applied were accepted to attend the conference. The theme this year was "It's Our Time - Don't Push Us Around". Due to bad weather we only had approximately 35 delegates attend out of the 50 we expected. The opening speaker on Thursday afternoon was Reverend Carla Blakely and her topic was "Becoming Women Inside and Out". This session had a mix of history and education on women. Reverend Blakely is involved in social justice issues regarding racism, poverty, sexuality and global economics both locally and internationally. The evening session was a time for entertainment. Skin and Bones performed during the evening with a combination of African drumming, dancing and singing.

On Friday the following sessions were held:

- Laughing Out Loud
- Dealing with Stress with Humour
- Harassment and Assertiveness

Instead of selling 50/50 tickets we had Lorena Uriquza bring some quilts from Interval House in Saskatoon and we sold tickets on the quilts. We raised a total of \$140 from the raffle. We had very positive feed back from the evaluation forms on the agenda.

The committee partnered with the Uganda Canadian Association of Canada to host an International Women's Day Supper to raise money for AIDS organizations in Ghana, Uganda and Regina. The evening started with First Nation's drumming followed by the blessing by Elder Mike Pinay. Solidarity messages were given by various organizations with supper following. Next on the agenda were presentations, poetry and a performance by the Yaha Habibi Tribe group. The evening concluded with closing remarks.

SGEU's convention will be held in Regina from April 7th to April 9th, 2011. The Women's Committee will be having a caucus on April 7th during lunch. During the luncheon we will have a presentation on pensions and how it affects women.

The SFL women's committee has not met since our last meeting. However, the committee hosted a women's breakfast at the SFL convention in October. During the breakfast Marie Clarke-Walker from the CLC gave a presentation.

Prairie School for Union Women will once again be held at Waskesiu Lake, SK from June 12th to 16th, 2011. The school is open to all women across Canada. Applications and brochures are available online at sfl.sk.ca. This intensive four day school will help women develop personal and leadership skills and build solidarity amongst women workers.

The Saskatchewan Pubic Service Commission has introduced a new Attendance Support Policy. Managers and supervisors will now monitor employees' attendance and are expected to identify and address issues and then provide assistance to employees. If the employer notices sick leave exceeding the average of their peers or occurring in patterns, they may schedule a meeting with the employee. The meeting would address the attendance and explore solutions which may be reduced hours, leave of absence or help from the Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP). Meetings are to be confidential and not disciplinary. Access to sick leave is not to be limited. However, if attendance does not improve, more meetings may be scheduled and in rare cases over a length of time, if attendance does not improve the employment relationship will be legally terminated.

MGEU/NUPGE

Sister Jan Henley reported:

Since our last report in October of 2010, we held our 61st convention and elected our first woman President, Lois Wales. Sister Michelle Gawronsky was elected our 1st Vice-President and Brothers Steve Roznowsky and Darren Darvill were re-elected 2nd and 3rd Vice-President respectively. I was elected 4th Vice-President. More than 60% of the MGEU's membership is women so the current make up of officers better reflects the demographics of our fine union.

The Women's Committee has been extremely busy since convention. Half of the previous members were re-elected by their local Area Councils in early November and we welcomed 4 new members (5 including myself). We were fortunate to have Lee Edwards, Staff Representative, return to the Women's Committee as well. We attended and participated in the Manitoba Federation of Labour's (MFL) Woman's Conference which took place from November 18 – 20, 2010 and a luncheon held on December 6th in memory of the 14 women slain at Polytechnique.

The Committee participated in day long activities honouring International Woman's Day on March 8th beginning with the 2nd annual pancake breakfast held at the Union Centre. This was followed by a morning workshop (you could choose between the History of Women and the F word), a luncheon and then attendance at the alternate workshop in the afternoon. After the last workshop radical cheers were taught by FEMRAV, a young feminist co operative hosting their 2nd National Conference in Winnipeg in May. This was followed by powerful speakers: Mae Louise Campbell, Elder in Residence at Red River Community College; African Louise Simbandumne, Human Rights Activist with Amnesty International; Perla Javate, Filipino Community Liaison Officer with the Winnipeg 1 School Division and entertainer/activist Heather Bishop. There was a large turnout for the speeches and then all marched to the Manitoba Legislature chanting the cheers taught by FEMRAV as well as for the removal of Justice Dewar following his completely inappropriate and ignorant comments during sentencing of a sexual assault case from 2006. The sisters then attended the Grassroots Women's Dinner, in which 6 local women who have made a lasting contribution to equality, justice, liberation movements, class struggle and human rights are honoured annually on International Woman's Day.

We continue to work diligently on firming up plans for our Women's Conference to be held from May 5 – 7th. Registration will begin on the evening of the 5th with 4 different workshops being offered all day on the 8th: Live Safe, Live Free (Domestic Violence), Convention 101, Women's Health and Legal Issues facing Women. Saturday will kick off with a speech by former MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis and then a panel of 3 sisters well known for their lengthy commitment to activism: Joan Jessome, President of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union; Darlene Dziewit, former President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour and Jan Chaboyer, a member of the City of Brandon's City Council will follow. Joan has also graciously agreed to speak at our luncheon on Friday the 6th and then Heather Bishop, a local activist and entertainer, will perform early Friday evening.

General Information

- ♀ In the spring of 2010, the MGEU launched a campaign, *Your Province, Your Services* to remind Manitobans that public service jobs are a vital part of safe, healthy and prosperous communities. The campaign tool focuses on the government's positions that all civil service wages should be frozen to avoid lay-offs. As civil service bargaining began, the union launched a series of television ads and web stories profiling MGEU members who provide these vital and efficient services to Manitobans.

- ♀ After almost a year at the negotiating table, Manitoba's civil servants ratified a new contract on March 11, 2011. Unfortunately, the government would not budge from their position of 0% and 0% for the first 2 years, but there were some major gains made in this agreement. An understanding on Justice and Dignity sees workers continue to gather a paycheque while under investigation; a mileage formula sees workers adequately reimbursed when gas rates increase; the drop in mileage rate after driving 12,000 kms has been eliminated and finally you may use sick time for attendance at medical appointments. These issues were extremely important to the membership and had been brought to the bargaining table many times before.

- ♀ The writer and President Wales attended the Manitoba Legislature on March 8, 2011 to participate in the signing of a Proclamation announcing March 7 – 11 Social Worker Appreciation Week in the province of Manitoba.

OPSEU/NUPGE

Sister Cindy Haynes reported:

The Ontario government has spent the last two-and-a-half years developing their 10-year strategy for improving mental health. This has been against a backdrop of fiscal restraint that has resulted in cuts to front line jobs caring for Ontarians with mental illness. A postcard campaign is being initiated. The postcard contrasts the \$2.4 billion the government is spending on corporate tax cuts with the shortages faced by Ontarians with mental illness. It asks the premier to "walk your talk and keep your promise to Ontarians with mental illness". More and more mental health patients accused of criminal offences are finding themselves incarcerated in police jail cells and correctional facilities. Numerous steps have been taken in order for the Ontario government to meet its budget concerns. These include transferring beds, and patients out of their home communities, numerous staff layoffs and the cutting of programs and services. These affect the mentally ill, both adults and children's services, throughout Ontario.

OPSEU president Smokey Thomas wrote the premier a letter stating that the Minister of Training, Colleges and University has the legislative authority to order Colleges to count the ballots of part-time college workers, who voted more than two years ago to organize, and has not made the effort to ensure democratic rights for these members. More than 9,000 part-time academic and support staff signed membership cards and chose OPSEU as their union believing they would gain collective bargaining rights. The International Labour Organization, a respected agency of the United Nations, has taken notice. In a decision released three months ago, the ILO urged the Ontario government to meet with OPSEU and arrive at a solution that respects the democratic wishes of those who voted. Instead of taking action, the Ontario government continues to ignore the growing international condemnation over the denial of basic rights for part-time college workers. At the end of the day, the ILO decision is about allowing the votes to speak for themselves – in a democracy, our elected officials have a responsibility to make sure this happens. The premier has the authority to have the ballot boxes opened and those votes counted.

OPSEU Regional Elections will take place across the province on March 12. Our annual convention will take place April 6-9th. It is an election year for both our Board and our Committees.

OPSEU Women's Committee has committed to fundraising for Shannen's Dream this year. This supports the Ontario Federation of Labour's campaign, for decent educational facilities for young Aboriginal youth in Northern areas, who presently have sub-standard educational facilities, often portable trailers in remote locations. Shannen had to leave her family in order to go to high school, many hours from home. Months after she stepped forward, bringing awareness to the issue of poor educational schools, she was tragically killed in an auto accident. But her dreams live on, in the efforts to ensure Aboriginal youth may attend suitable, appropriate schools in their own community.

OPSEU has been publicly campaigning against corporate tax cuts since April 2010. Ontario consistently had the second-lowest program spending of any province in Canada. Real wages in the provincial public sector in Ontario only returned to 1992 levels in 2008. Meanwhile, the money saved through the wage freeze, which could run as high as \$1.8 billion a year when fully phased in, will go to pay for corporate income tax cuts. None of it will go to save jobs, protect services, or pay down the deficit. Tax cuts for wealthy corporations mean less money for urgent priorities including more long-term care beds, public services, and health care or childcare or colleges and universities or roads and transit. Or even to pay down the deficit! Ontario's Liberal government needs to focus now on the real needs of real people. It needs to build our economy and other public services from the bottom up. Inflating the bonuses of CEOs through more tax breaks won't do it.

Our Women's Committee Breakfast is open to all members on the Friday morning of convention. We welcome all participants and will be presenting our Regional Appreciation Awards, as well as our Bread and Roses Award.

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Sister Barbara Doiron reported:

The New Brunswick Union's Women's Committee hosted the New Brunswick Union's first ever Women's Conference on November 20 and 21, 2010. Needless to say, the event was deemed an overwhelming success. The whole session focused on preparing the women of the New Brunswick Union on speaking to resolutions. I am convinced that many more women now understand the process and rules of order during meetings; enough that they will now feel equipped with the tools that will help empower them and allow their voices to be heard at Convention and in other areas of importance.

As committees are struck during our Convention, which was held in October, our new committee will be attempting to call a first meeting in early spring so I will certainly have more to report at our next meeting.

Regarding bargaining in the public sector, three of our largest components are at the end of the bargaining process. Our two Health Care groups (Paramedical and

Specialized Health Care Professionals), as well as our Administrative Groups (Clerical & Regulatory and Administrative Assistants), total almost a third of our membership. These groups have been without a contract since December 31, 2009. They are currently attempting to have one final session with the employer before touring the province to gauge where their members are willing to go as well as inform the membership of the final offer at the table with recommendations to their respective groups. It is a difficult time with respect to negotiations as the government of the day has decided to continue with the 2 year wage freeze and the wage restraint policy that the previous government had initiated. The current pattern is 0 - 0 - 2 and 2 for a 4 year contract.

For the private sector bargaining, Brewery Workers Local 362, Moosehead, have been locked out of their workplace. The employer did so on Sunday, February 20, 2011. At issue are post retirement benefits. Today, March 15, we've been called back to the table as of tomorrow morning. This is an encouraging sign. An invitation is issued to join "Brewery Workers Local 362" FaceBook page for information and to provide support.

Five other components have begun exchanging proposals at the negotiating table: Engineering and Field, Highway Supervisors, Technical Inspection, Laboratory and Medical and the Woodstock Police Officers. They are certainly very interested in the outcome of the other groups.

On another note, our President, Susie Proulx-Daigle and our Executive Director, Tom Mann, have met with the Finance Minister on 6 different occasions. They are continuing to push the issue of revenue generation in order to ensure that members of parliament, as well as our members and members of the general public, have a balanced view on solutions to help deal with the province's fiscal situation. As the province only has two sources of income: transfer payments from the Federal Government and taxes, the solution is obvious - revenue generation. We don't have a spending problem; we have a revenue problem. They are providing factual solutions that would go a long way to helping eliminate the provincial debt.

Pension Plans in the public sector remain an ongoing battle in order to maintain the status quo of our plans. Unfunded liabilities and the average age of our workforce are keeping our battle swords drawn as this is an issue that members are keeping a close eye on. The government has put in place a task force to look at all the Private Pension Plans in the Province. They have stated that they will be setting up a task force to look at all the Public Sector Pension Plans in the province, including their own! They have stated that we would be involved in the process. However, it remains to be seen at what level our involvement will be.

NSGEU/NUPGE

Sister Dawn Ferris reported:

Sisters, this report includes topics of interest with regard to the NSGEU since our last gathering in Ottawa on October 4th & 5th.

NSGEU Events Update

The NSGEU had a busy month last October. The week after returning from our NUPGE ACWI meeting, our Occupational Health and Safety & Human Rights Conference took place October 15th – 17th. I was able to participate at this conference with the selection of the Human Rights focus. This major conference was a first for our union and was organized by our OH&S and Human Rights Committees. There were over 80 participants at this conference and feedback from them was overwhelmingly positive. The committees, however, decided that it was a very large undertaking and have made the recommendation that in the future the conference should be divided and hosted as separate events.

The NSGEU has been very busy with negotiations as the majority of our contracts have expired and the majority of the rest are about to expire. In the beginning of 2010 we were getting some fairly good wage offers, all things considered; some of our university staff were offered above 2%. But since the summer, we are seeing 1% across the board. We have a couple of strike vote mandates with locals going to conciliation and our Local 42 – Capital District Health Care Local has been the most recent local to take a strike vote.

My own Local 77 at Dalhousie University has made a motion for conciliation as the employer was dragging their feet so badly throughout bargaining that we were going nowhere.

NSGEU Women's Committee Event Update

The majority of our WIC members were participants in the OH&S / HR Conference on the 15-17 of October and we had a WIC meeting scheduled for October 17 & 18th. All of these women came straight home from the Conference to attend the WIC at the International Day to Eradicate Poverty event we participated in. The women also inspired a couple of passionate activists to join us at the event as well. The International Day to Eradicate Poverty event was a success and our display table incited a great deal of interest.

Pictured below is our display table for the *All Together Now!* Campaign which generated a few signings of the pledge and much discussion.



Our WIC has been very busy. On the heels of the October 17th event, we had a meeting in December to attend the Not So Silent Vigil on December 6th, the Day Against Violence Against Women. This was a really well done event at a local Music House / Bar called The Company House (The CoHo for short) and as our Political Action Committee was in town having a meeting at the same time, we invited them to participate with us and they were happy to attend.

The WIC also used the December meeting to create the agenda for our breakfast event we're hosting on March 8th, International Women's Day. Our committee decided to have a World Café Style discussion around poverty. We invited 15 women to attend who are first-voice women dealing with poverty. As well, we invited 15 women of prominence and influence in Nova Scotia to join in the discussion and hear the conversation. We created 6 questions for discussion at the World Café. The questions were:

- 1: What is needed in your community to help address poverty?
- 2: How would the services that are being offered be improved upon?
- 3: Because women dealing with poverty are not always treated with respect, what can be done to change this?
- 4: What is poverty?
- 5: What are we not seeing & what would it take to create change?
- 6: How do women living in poverty manage to care for their families and themselves?

These questions generated great discussion and our Committee will be able to produce a report with recommendations. We will present it to government, local officials, women's groups and any other provincial parties that we feel should see the results.

Our goal was to get women of influence to hear and perhaps become inspired to get engaged in the topic of poverty. Included in our list of invitees were the three big labour women in Nova Scotia; our Joan Jessome, President of NSGEU; Janet Hazelton, President of NSNU; and Alexis Allen, President of the NSTU. These three women alone have quite the circle of influence. Janet Hazelton was inspired to request that the complete Board of Directors of the NSNU and their Executive Director be allowed to attend as well (10 extra women) and we agreed to have them come. Also in attendance was the Premier's wife, Kelly Wilson, and Megan Leslie's assistant, Anne Marie Foote, as Megan was in Ottawa at the time and was disappointed to have missed it. I am proud to announce that the event was a great success.

Our annual Women's Conference is right around the corner and we have been actively pulling an agenda together for this. It will take place on April 15th, 16th and 17th. The theme for this conference is "Counting Women In" and our goal is to encourage women to become engaged and help them to find their voice to participate in their locals, their communities and their workplaces, etc. Our Saturday evening event will be a Mock Convention; this was a hit at the OH&S / HR Conference and I believe it will help women overcome any anxiety in speaking at the microphones during Convention being held May 26th – 28th. Also on the Conference Agenda is our Bully-Free Workshop presentation which will help women empower themselves; our World Café on Poverty; and a presentation from a representative from the Status of Women.

Our WIC, I am pleased to announce, has created a fund at the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre for the financial assistance to our members who are dealing with cancer - either themselves or their immediate loved ones. This will be called the NSGEU Cancer Support Fund and will not limit access to other resources but will help out with financial difficulties while dealing with a difficult time. The fund is available to any member in the province and offers up to \$200 to help deal with any financial hardship. This includes (but is not limited to) housing, electric, gas costs or travel costs associated with attending clinics, essentials such as groceries or medications and assistance with childcare or elder care. We have been able to donate \$2,300 so far and this will be our major fundraising focus for the duration of the term. It is being formally launched at our Women's Caucus at Convention. We have finally broken the Women's Breakfast mold and are hosting a Caucus at Convention during lunch. We hope that other NSGEU members will want to donate and we hope that locals at Convention will also donate. We have placed the fund within our Terms of Reference for the Committee in the NSGEU Policy Manual and hopefully future WIC terms will also assist with the growth of this fund. The ultimate goal is to have the fund reach a level of \$25,000 which will then make it endowed.

NAPE/NUPGE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported:

Highlights from NAPE's Women's Committee

1. Woman's Conference

Since the last advisory committee meeting NAPE's Provincial Women's Committee has been very active. In response to interest from participants who attended the women's conference in March 2010, NAPE hosted a second women's conference. The conference took place on October 22-24. The theme of the conference was *Women: One Voice-No Limits*.

The conference opened with a special and very moving tribute to Sister Sharon Power who had recently passed away after a courageous battle with ovarian cancer. Sister Power was a long time dedicated union activist and a strong advocate for women's rights.

On Saturday the conference provided participants with an opportunity to learn about such topics as:

- Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace
- Tips on Self-care
- Stress Reduction
- Physical and Emotional Stages of Development throughout a Woman's Life

The highlight of the conference included a presentation of NAPE's Athena Award to Sister Nancy Riche. Sister Riche is a retired NAPE member who earned a reputation as a staunch advocate for women during her early activism days when the struggle for women's rights was still in its infancy stage.

2. December 6-National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

The Women's 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's participation was spread throughout.

3. International Women's Day Celebrations

During International Women's Day celebrations on March 8, the Women's Committee purchased tables at various luncheons and dinners throughout the province. The 100th anniversary of IWD provided a great opportunity for women to come together and network with union and non-unionized women.

Updates from NAPE- General Information

1. Collective Bargaining

On December 8, 2010 NAPE reached a tentative agreement for the 15 striking workers on the Burin Peninsula. The workers (14 females) had been on strike for more than a year and had been asking for the same wage template that had been offered to other public sector workers.

On January 4, 2011 the locked out workers at Purity Factories headed back to work. The workers voted to accept an offer from their employer which included a wage increase and enhanced benefits. These workers had been locked out just prior to the Labour Day weekend. Throughout the entire ordeal, the workers continued to display their loyalty to the products and company they helped make a household name.

2. Labour School

NAPE's annual week long Labour School, which had to be rescheduled after Hurricane Igor, finally took place during the November 11th weekend. The Women's Committee provided a leadership course for 18 women activists. Other courses offered were:

- Advanced Steward
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Building an Effective Local

3. Province Wide Training of Local Officers

NAPE, through its education committee, has been busy providing province wide training to its local officers in the nine regions of the province. This training is intended to provide local officers with the basic tools necessary to effectively conduct and run local meetings.

4. Biennial Convention

NAPE'S Biennial Convention will take place June 16-18 at the Sheraton Newfoundland. All vice presidents, area and regional board members will be elected during this convention and their term of office will be for two years.

PEIUPSE/NUPGE

Sister Dina DesRoches reported:

This is my first report since I joined the women's committee. I read the last report from Eileen Brown Wilt and the reports from representatives from the other provinces to use as a guideline. I hope I cover some topics of interest.

Since the women's committee last met in October of 2010, there have been settlements of contracts by arbitration. The UPSE- Health Arbitrator's Award was decided in October of 2010 and the UPSE - Civil Arbitrator's Award was recently released. There are information sessions being held across the province for UPSE - Civil this week so members and representatives of the negotiating team can discuss the changes. The negotiating team for the UPSE - Civil group was very pleased with the arbitrator's award.

The annual convention for the Union of Public Sector Employees was held at the Delta Hotel in Charlottetown on November 13, 2010. Several resolutions were passed, elections of some of the executive were held and there were presentations including a presentation on the *All Together Now!* Campaign. A detailed report on this convention was published in the union publication, *The Advocate*.

One significant achievement of the union during the past year that deserves mention is the renovation and addition to the union's office building in Charlottetown. The condition of the building had deteriorated and the need for meeting and storage space had grown which necessitated this major construction work. In my opinion, the office building now reflects the progress made by the union.

To remember the victims of violence, including the women murdered in Montreal and women killed by men in Prince Edward Island, there was a ceremony at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown on December 6, 2010. Candles were lit by many community members as the name of each victim of violence was read aloud. Our UPSE President, Shelley Ward, lit a candle to remember a former member of our union who was one of the women murdered in Prince Edward Island. The key note speaker at this ceremony was Michael Kaufman from the White Ribbon Campaign. While in Prince Edward Island, Mr. Kaufman gave training sessions for provincial government and City of Charlottetown employees and front line service providers as well as a public presentation called "How to Raise Our Sons to be Good Men". There were also many other events across Prince Edward Island held to commemorate the 21st Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Family Violence Prevention Week was held from February 13 to 20, 2011 with activities and events such as information sessions and walks scheduled throughout the week to draw attention to how people can help prevent and respond to abuse within their families and communities. Many of the employees who participated are members of our union.

One of UPSE's publications called *The Accent* was sent out to members for International Women's Week from March 2 to March 12, 2011 focusing on the theme, "Girls' Rights Matter - the importance of equality and access to opportunity for all girls and women throughout their lives".

Days of Action to support more resources for Mental Health were held from February 28 to March 6, 2011. These Days of Action were organized by UPSE representatives as part of the *All Together Now!* Campaign for tax fairness. As a way to strike up a conversation about mental health, UPSE members worked at booths in malls in each of our three counties. People who live with a mental illness, those who are affected by a family member or friend's suffering, politicians and people who are interested in the topic stopped by to talk. Some of the stories were very moving and emotional to listen to and it was a chance to give information and show support. Two of the people who stopped at our booth were federal politicians Wayne Easter and Shawn Murphy.

Another event that was held as part of our Mental Health week was a town hall meeting on March 2, 2011 which was very successful even though it was hoped there would be more people in attendance. The guest speaker was Sandy Naiman, an award-winning former journalist, who is working as a mental health advocate, public speaker, writer and teacher. She set the tone for an open and honest discussion and she was followed by a panel of professionals and patients who spoke of their experiences. Groups such as the Schizophrenia Society and the Canadian Mental Health Association - PEI were also in attendance.

This report gives some information about the events in Prince Edward Island and I look forward to meeting all of the members of the committee and learning about and participating in your work.

CLC CONVENTION

The CLC Convention will be held May 9 to May 13, 2011 at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

The meeting binders included the NEB resolutions pertaining to women's issues including a resolution on life/work balance. Also contained in the binder were BCGEU's resolutions on murdered and missing women and on childcare sent to NUPGE for submission to the CLC.

NATIONAL UNION REPORT

President Clancy brought greetings to the meeting. Introductions were made around the table and he welcomed the new committee members.

President Clancy began the National Union Report by advising the committee that he had just returned from Madison, Wisconsin where he attended a rally of 100,000 people who were supporting 175,000 public service workers whose collective bargaining rights are being stripped by Governor Walker. Under the proposed legislation workers would no longer have a voice on key issues such as working conditions, health and safety, grievance procedures or equality provisions. President Clancy stated the possibility of such an attack on public sector workers in Canada is a real possibility.

President Clancy noted we need to know where we have come from in order to move forward. He stated the main reason for World War II was the “dirty 30s”. After the largest stock market crash in America’s history the economy went into a downfall that had a direct effect worldwide. Inflation was rampant and it was a time of extreme hardship for millions of working people. As a result many authoritarian regimes emerged, in particular the Third Reich in Germany.

During World War II, many workers were able to return to work in factories as part of the war production. After the war, a period of economic development began which saw the redistribution of wealth wherein common wealth was used for the public wealth. Unions were recognized as an important part of ensuring common good and common wealth. Here in Canada, as a result of the Canada Pension Plan, one million seniors were lifted out of poverty.

This period of common wealth ended in the 1980s. This decade was the start of cut-backs and closures as well as privatization and deregulation. Neo Liberalism became the economic philosophy and the gap between the rich and poor began to grow each year. Starting in this decade, unions had to fight closures and cutbacks and the constant pressure to dismantle workers’ rights.

Brother Clancy stressed that, since 1980, no major social programs have been initiated. As well, pre 1980, a family needed one income earner in the household; presently all able bodies must be working in order to meet the cost of living. Federal and provincial governments have passed 201 pieces of legislation that govern labour relations. Of these, 193 were intended to gut, deny, suspend or infringe on the rights of workers.

With the onset in 2008 of the economic recession, people are now working harder and longer for less. Once again federal and provincial governments are looking to cut the public sector in order to balance their budgets. As well income inequality is the single biggest issue facing people today. President Clancy stated that this is why the focus of the National Union’s 2010 Convention was to work to place the focus on who caused the recession and not on those who deliver public services. At Convention, NUPGE launched the *All Together Now!* Campaign which focuses on the value of public services and on fair taxation.

The campaign is the first that all of NUPGE’s Components have joined in. The campaign has been very successful with 100 Champions 4 Change delivering presentations about the value of public services and the need to fight for tax fairness. They have been extremely busy spreading the message worker-to-worker and community-to-community. More than 5,000 people have signed the campaign pledge and more than 60 letters to the editor have been published. NUPGE is going to host a town hall forum and now have Retirees 4 Change involved in the campaign. In June, the National Union will hold an *All Together Now!* Champions Conference where participants will hold a strategy session on what works and what doesn’t work in the campaign.

Brother Clancy stressed that we need to get the membership to talk about public services and why they work in the sector. By moving our membership to action we

have 340,000 people (2.5 million when you include their families) speaking on the issue of the value of public services and the need for tax fairness. President Clancy urged the members of the committee to immerse themselves in the national campaign.

President Clancy concluded his report by circulating the report “Breach of the Peace – G20 Summit: Accountability in Policing and Governance Public Hearings”. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association and NUPGE held three days of public hearings in November 2010 to examine policing activity during the G20 summit. Based on the issues identified at the hearings, the report offers an overview of the major civil liberties violations that took place and puts forward a series of recommendations.

President Clancy also informed the committee about the work the National Union is doing on the CST and CHT. The Canada Social Transfer (CST) and the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) are federal payment programs that support social services and health care systems of the provinces and territories. These transfers both expire in 2014. The National Union has written to Prime Minister Harper asking that his government either maintain or expand funding for the CST, maintain existing funding levels for the CHT and continue the 6% escalator and introduce national standards for how the money is spent. As well a draft letter has been sent to Component presidents to send to their Premiers encouraging them to develop a strong and united position on the CST and CHT.

As a new member on the committee, Sister Henley asked President Clancy about the history of the committee, the terms of reference for the committee and the determination of the chair. She also inquired as to whether or not the advisory committee is consulted about the policies and programs of the National Union. President Clancy responded that the committee can identify and make recommendations to the National Executive Board on issues concerning women; however, the committee (as with every NUPGE committee) is not directly consulted about the policies and programs of the National Union. He stated that such consultation would not be logistically possible.

He reconfirmed that the committee has a long history of great work on women’s issues. Regarding the structure of the women’s committee, he stated that it is set up in order to ensure that there is inclusiveness especially for the smaller Components who do not have the funds of the larger Components. The chair of the committee is a NUPGE staff person as the workload and funding for the committee is through NUPGE. The terms of reference and mandate of the committee are flexible to ensure that issues can be addressed as they develop. The National Union Constitution does not contain the terms of reference and mandates for any of its committees.

QUALITY OF WOMEN’S LIVES – LIFE/WORK BALANCE

Included in the binder was the outline of the educational that NUPGE is developing on the life/work project. It contains an overview of the issue and a course outline.

Also included in the tab were excerpts from the Vanier Institute’s latest publication *Families Count* which profiles Canada’s families. Jenni Tipper, who was a panelist at the Women’s Conference, worked on this publication. The publication is an excellent resource for the latest data on families, their composition and issues they are facing. The excerpts

contained in the binder were related to the issues that the ACWI have been discussing: childcare, elder care, and family-friendly work arrangements.

Sister Hildahl informed the committee that also included in the binder was the Vanier Institute's *Fascinating Families* issue on Canada's care force which contains statistics on family and friend caregiving in Canada. One of the statistics is the reality that 3.8 million Canadians over the age of 45 provide care to someone with a long-term health condition or disability.

A fact sheet was also included in this tab by Research on Aging, Policies and Practice which looks at gender differences in family/friend caregiving in Canada.

Chair Hildahl noted that much of the material that has been developed recently about caregiving includes family/friends as caregivers - as there is a growing number of caregivers caring for friends.

WOMEN'S WORLDS 2011 CONFERENCE

Sister Hildahl informed the committee this conference is an international conference being held in Ottawa/Gatineau and is the largest women's conference in Canadian history. The date for the conference is July 3-7, 2011. The theme of the conference is *Inclusions, Exclusions and Seclusions: Living in a Globalized Word*.

The National Union will be holding a women's committee meeting prior to the start of the conference on July 2, 2011 which will provide an opportunity for the members of the committee to attend the conference.

Plenary sessions will be held at the new Ottawa Convention Centre and there will be 60 working sessions per day at the University of Ottawa. During the lunch break each day, space has been set aside for action caucuses to meet around a variety of themes. A solidarity march will take place with the Native Women's Association of Canada during the conference.

A presentation from WW 2011 which provided details on the program and plenary speakers was included in the binder.

The National Union is supporting the conference by sponsoring an action caucus room. Additional information on the conference can be found at <http://www.womensworlds.ca/>

BILL C-304 - LEGISLATION FOR A NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Chair Hildahl introduced Sara Bergen who is the legislative assistant to Libby Davies, NDP MP for Vancouver East.

Sister Bergen thanked the committee for the opportunity to address them regarding *Bill C-304 – An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians*. Sister Bergen informed the committee that Libby Davies has worked on this bill for six to seven years during which the bill has evolved. When the bill was first introduced there were 150,000 homeless people in Canada and that number has now doubled. As

well the number of invisible homeless (those couch surfing) and the housing poor are estimated to be 300,000. Aboriginal housing, particularly urban, has a lack of funding.

Sister Bergen stressed there is no coordination on housing between the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Canada needs a stable, accessible, affordable housing strategy that includes dialogue between the levels of government. Ideally the housing strategy funding would be negotiated similar to the CST and CHT. Sister Bergen stressed the Conservative government has fought the bill at every stage.

Bill C-304 has currently passed second reading and is presently awaiting its turn in the lottery system. If the bill passes third reading it would then need to go through the Senate. The concern right now is there is a strong possibility that the government will be brought down by a non confidence vote. If this happens Parliament will be dissolved and all bills currently before Parliament will expire. Once a new government is formed, the bill would have to be resubmitted and begin the process again.

Sister Hildahl thanked Sister Bergen for her very informative presentation.

Sister Hildahl advised the committee that NUPGE has launched a website campaign to rally support for this bill. Information on the website campaign can be found by clicking on the green action button on the right hand side of the NUPGE website page. Campaign actions include writing to your MP, to the federal party leaders and to your mayor and municipal council. Sample letters are included on the website as well as a fact sheet and a petition.

WOMEN MOVING WOMEN

Chair Hildahl introduced Leigh Naturkach who is the campaign development manager from the Canadian Women's Foundation's Women Moving Women project.

Sister Naturkach began her presentation by giving a brief overview of the Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF). The CWF is Canada's only national public foundation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls. CWF researches, shares and funds the most promising approaches to ending violence against women, moving low-income women out of poverty and empowering girls with confidence, courage and critical thinking skills. CWF is one of the five largest women's foundations in the world and has raised over \$32 million and supported more than 900 programs across Canada.

Sister Naturach informed the committee that CWF receives no government funding; instead it relies on corporate partnerships. The foundation is run like a business with the heart of a woman.

The CWF has developed a project called Women Moving Women created to change the face of poverty in Canada. Sister Naturach informed the committee that the face of poverty in Canada is a woman's face. In fact one in seven women in Canada lives in poverty. Over 60% of Aboriginal women live in poverty and 35% of single mothers. The premise for Women Moving Women is for 2,500 women (and men) to donate \$2,500 each to move 2,500 women out of poverty in Canada in the next five years. This is done through funding women's participation in a life-changing economic development program that provides skill-

based training and supporting the women in other aspects of their lives such as confidence building, learning to network and securing child care. The CWF works with each woman for at least year.

Sister Naturach presented a very moving video featuring women who have been through the program and are succeeding in moving themselves and their children out of poverty. Sister Naturach advised the committee that the CWF estimates that by moving 2,500 women out of poverty \$1.3 million would be saved in social assistance.

She thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak to them regarding this project and gave a special thanks to Sister Colleen for BCGEU's \$25,000 donation.

Chair Hildahl thanked Sister Naturach for her presentation and advised her that the National Union will be pledging \$2,500 to the project.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC)

Included in the binder was a report by YWCA Canada entitled *Educated, Employed and Equal*. The report stresses that Canada needs early learning and child care services, not a social policy gap that is decades behind in reality. It points to the fact that by keeping women from fully participating in the workforce by not having an adequate childcare system, Canada's economy will suffer as given the current trends Canada's labour force will have significantly more women than men with university degrees.

Also included in the binder was a report by CCAAC and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC entitled *A Tale of Two Canadas*. It looks at how Canada is doing at protecting the rights of young children and to what extent Canadian public policy recognizes the social and economic changes and challenges facing Canadian families today. The report's key concerns are the level of child and family poverty – at almost 10% and the lack of access to early child care and learning programs. There are only regulated spaces for 20% of young children even though 70% of Canadian mothers are in the paid labour force. It stresses the government should invest 1% of GDP to ECEC.

Contained in the binder was an article by the Journal of Comparative Family Studies entitled *Hiding the Elephant*. It looks at the fact that the shortage of childcare has been an elephant in Canada's political living room for decades and the role that the press has had in helping to hide that elephant. It provides a good overview of the history of ECEC in Canada and looks at women's voting patterns. It notes that the way the media in general and newspapers in particular frame issues is of critical importance in shaping public attitudes and sentiments, perpetuating or dispelling gender myths and ideologies and shaping public/social policy and other related outcomes. There is no evidence of a steady or gradual increase in childcare coverage paralleling mothers' increased participation in the workforce.

FYI

Sisters in Spirit Initiative

Enclosed in the binder was a press release issued by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). NWAC has received funding (\$1,890,844 over three years) from Status of Women Canada for a project called "Evidence to Action II". The project's

activities will include increasing awareness of the issue of violence, promoting education measures to assist Aboriginal women and girls to remain safe and providing access to tools and supports for women and their communities that address violence. There is no mention of the database or the use of the Sisters in Spirit logo.

Also contained in the binder was a copy of the letter sent from NUPGE to Harper expressing our concern about the decision to not allow funding for any NWAC projects which used the name "Sisters in Spirit" or to upkeep the database.

Policy on Preventing Sexual and Gender-based Harassment

Included in the binder was the executive summary of the Policy on Preventing Sexual and Gender-based Harassment developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Sister Hildahl extended her thanks to Sister Haynes for providing the committee with this information.

World March of Women (WMW)

Contained in the binder was a copy of the World March of Women's IWD statement as well as an email from WMW regarding the current situation on the Ivory Coast. They have issued a statement calling on the African Union to accelerate the process of negotiation and lobby to stop the killing of innocents. On March 3rd seven women were killed and 100 wounded when Gbagbo forces opened fire on a peaceful demonstration organized by a women's group.

Bill would pay parties to meet quota on women in parliament

Included in the binders was an article on the bill proposed by a Liberal MP which gives parties additional money based on the percentage of women they get elected. Under Bill C-552 parties would get an extra 5 cents per vote if women account for between 20-29% of their elected members.

Also included in the binder was a great article by Sheila Gervais in the Ottawa Sun about women's (lack of) progress through the decades in Canada's electoral structure.

UN Women

Included in the binders was a press release issued by Executive Director Michelle Bachelet outlining the priorities for the UN Women for 2011. The UN Women will disburse 6 million dollars in the first 6 months of 2011. Bachelet plans for the agency to put a new focus on women's political and economic empowerment.

Also in the binder was a news article on Bachelet's IWD statement. In the statement Bachelet stressed that gender equality remains a distant goal because women still suffer widespread discrimination and lack of political and economic clout.

Coalition for Gun Control – Gun Registry

Included in the binder was a copy of the letter received from the Coalition for Gun Control requesting financial assistance for their continued effort to fight to protect gun control in Canada. The letter sent by NUPGE with a donation of \$3,000 was also included.

An article on the expectation that Harper will extend for another year the amnesty for long gun owners who don't register their weapons and a letter to the editor from a woman whose 14 year old daughter was killed by a young man with a long gun were included in the binders.

As well the Coalition for Gun Control's IWD statement was included in the binder. It includes the following quote from Harper "We haven't been able to pass what we want to pass. But that doesn't mean we have forgotten... we will get rid of that wasteful, ineffective long-gun registry."

Abortion Rights

Contained in the binder was a NUPGE website story on the defeat of Bill C-510 in December 2010. The bill was aimed to amend the Criminal Code and make it illegal to coerce a woman into having an abortion. This is the 34th attempt to draft a bill dealing with abortion since 1987.

An article was included from *The Nation* entitled *The War on Women's Futures* which looks at the aggressive anti-choice legislation coming from the new majority in the US including the elimination of Planned Parenthood and the South Dakota bill which justifies homicide in the case of imminent harm to a fetus which critics believe may, in effect, legalize the murder of abortion providers.

Also included were two articles from Care2 – one on Georgia's plan to require abortions to be performed in hospitals only (note they have now tabled the bill for further study) and one on Indiana where a bill would require doctors to inform women about the risks of abortion, including the possibility of increased risk of breast cancer.

Harper's Chipping Away at Gender Equality

Chair Hildahl distributed an article done by rabble.ca which does a great job of analyzing Harper's record at chipping away at gender equality.

CEDAW Online Training Course

Chair Hildahl informed the committee about a new online course on CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The course is mostly videos and reading material; however, it does provide a good view of all the aspects of CEDAW.

OTHER BUSINESS

The date of the next ACWI meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 2, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.