

**NUPGE Advisory Committee on
Women's Issues
October 4-5, 2010 – Ottawa, ON**



In attendance:

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

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

National Union

**Brenda Hildahl
Karen Hawley**

Regrets:

HSABC/NUPGE

Suzanne Bennett

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.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – JUNE 17, 2010 MEETING

Sister Burstyn moved and Sister Ferris seconded that the June 17, 2010 minutes be adopted. Carried.

SISTERS IN SPIRIT INITIATIVE

The committee was directed to the meeting binder which contained logistical information on the 5th Annual Sisters in Spirit Vigil. As well, a copy of the Joint Statement issued by the Native Women's Association of Canada was provided. Sister Hildahl informed the committee that the Joint Statement was signed by NUPGE. Also contained in the committee binder was the latest research findings from the Initiative entitled "What Their Stories Tell Us". Of sad note in the key findings is the fact that 88% of the missing and murdered women and girls left behind children and grandchildren.

The Committee attended the Sisters in Spirit Vigil which was held on Parliament Hill during the lunch hour. The Committee members were extremely moved by the Vigil and

the impact of the families' statements which shared how deeply their families have been affected by these tragedies.

COMPONENT REPORTS

BCGEU/NUPGE

Sister Colleen Jones reported:

“I am a warrior for women and we still have work to ensure the inclusion of women in the workplace and in our union. The struggles for women are multiple – too often within their families for independence, then in the workplace for rights and equal opportunity, in their unions for access and representation and then as union leaders. But the investment in and participation of women is not only a moral mandate it is an investment in democracy and a bulwark against fundamentalism and oppression. Organizing women is and must continue to be a priority for the ITUC.” [Sharan Burrow from her acceptance speech after her election as the first woman General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), June 25, 2010]

I saw the above quote from the International Trade Union Confederation's newly elected General Secretary and thought it really spoke to the work the NUPGE Women's Committee is doing and wanted to share it with the committee sisters.

Since our last meeting, the BCGEU Provincial Executive Women's committee has been very busy planning and organizing our next regional conference, which will be held in the lower mainland. We are very excited to report that over 95 women have registered for this conference and most of them have never been to a women's conference before! The theme of this conference is “Life/Work Balance” and I will be presenting the results of the NUPGE survey as part of our program. So many members have shown their support for the survey and the resolutions that followed at the NUPGE Convention. It proves that we really did have an impact and members are truly starting to be aware of how they balance their life and work priorities.

In one of our largest components, Component 4 – Health Services, membership has grown over the past years and is now approximately 16,900 members (mostly women). The Component 4 Executive is recommending that the Provincial Executive create a new component, comprised of the approximately 10,150 members who are in the Community Subsector.

The approximately 6,800 members who remain in Component 4, will join those members in the Facilities, Health Science Professionals.

There has been an update with regard to the B.C. Nurses Union's (BCNU) raid last year. The BCNU's raid application lacked the requisite support. They were barred, under section 19(2) of the Code, from filing another raid application for a period of 22 months from the date of the original application, November 30, 2009.

Component 3 – Community and Social Services – members have just gone back to the bargaining table after having the summer off as the employer was not interested in

bargaining during the summer months. This show of disrespect to our members has really complicated bargaining and the process is moving very slowly.

Some of the campaigns that we are working on include a campaign to address issues in seniors' care in B.C. The campaign addresses contracting out, privatization, staffing levels and other issues in seniors' care. We are also developing a campaign to raise public awareness about the impact of severe cuts to front-line workers in the Ministry of Forests.

The BCGEU is a member of the B.C. Poverty Reduction Plan Coalition. Staff attended coalition steering committee meetings and worked with councilors in Parkville, Vancouver and Victoria to pass council motions and submit UBCM resolutions, calling for a provincial poverty reduction plan.

Staff continues to work with members, community allies and other organizations as part of the union's efforts to oppose legal aid cuts, which effect mostly people living in poverty and women.

We will be having our Region 4 conference in Prince George, October 21-23. It is a great opportunity for our members in this region to meet the Provincial Executive and meet other members in their area.

HSA/NUPGE

Sister Mariana Burstyn reported:

Political Climate

Alberta is the only province in Canada that hasn't seen job growth since last summer, but the province is cutting employment training programs by more than \$20 million, affecting Aboriginals and youth the most.

Alberta Health Services has announced it will open 132 new acute care beds in three Calgary hospitals this fall to reduce the number of patients being treated in hallways and to deal with rising demand. The beds will open at the Foothills Medical Centre, the Peter Lougheed Centre and Rockyview General Hospital at a cost of \$15.7 million annually. Twenty of those new beds will be in a hospice at the Peter Lougheed Centre, providing care for dying clients. One hundred and fifty-three full and part-time nursing and care staff will also be hired to support the new beds.

There were approximately 1,900 beds in Calgary hospitals in 1994. As of July 2010 that number has only grown by 133 beds, despite the city's population growing by 327,000 people in that same time frame.

The Wild Rose Alliance has shown its true colours by supporting private health care and continuously attacking public services.

Municipal elections will be held in October.

The Alberta government has been aggressively advocating for tar sands development with an extensive and expensive advertising campaign. The Premier recently met with US House of Representatives speaker, Nancy Pelosi, to “set the record straight”.

Campaigns

Protecting Medicare – Health care critics staged a rally Friday, September 10, 2010 in front of the Health Resource Centre in Calgary in an attempt to convince the government to consider incorporating the troubled private health firm back into the public system.

Friends of Medicare executive director, Dave Eggen, said he wanted to see a cost analysis of making the centre public, as it would serve as a bulwark against the Conservatives' move towards more private health care facilities.

The centre is embroiled in a legal dispute with Alberta Health Services (AHS), which had to intervene to prevent the private health care provider from going bankrupt earlier this year

NUPGE “All Together Now!” Campaign – HSAA Champions have been selected and will be heading to Ottawa for training at the end of September. This campaign should dovetail nicely with the ongoing ‘Join Together Alberta’ campaign which is also supporting public services and appropriate (progressive) taxation policy.

Organizing and Collective Bargaining, Communications

Provincial Bargaining – Next round of negotiations for two major collective agreements with Alberta Health Services and Calgary Laboratory Services are set to commence in early 2011. Membership input will be sought using electronic surveys and demands finalized at bargaining conferences in early 2011.

Transition of EMS employees into the HSAA bargaining unit continues with ‘transition bargaining’. Agreements have been ratified in Camrose and Coaldale. Transition bargaining continues for the rest, including Edmonton and Calgary Metro and Edmonton Inter Facility Transfer. It is expected these will go to the Labour Relations Board for final determination as per the prescribed process. As a result of the transition, HSAA membership now hovers around 20,000.

The Alberta government is reviewing Alberta's health legislation, with the stated goal of combining numerous pieces of legislation into a single act. While the government claims the benign goal of rationalizing and modernizing the legislative framework, to “put patients’ needs first, and focus on safety, quality of care and accountability”, there is considerable concern that this is a disguised project to open the door to more privatization.

HSAA President Elisabeth Ballermann submitted HSAA’s Views Report & Recommendations to the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Health on July 7, 2010.

HSAA Labour Relations Conference will take place October 22-23, 2010 in Calgary. The theme for the LRC is Collective Bargaining, as 2011 is an HSAA bargaining year.

Regulation of Pharmacy Technicians has become a significant issue. The Alberta College of Pharmacists, which will be the regulatory body, has designed an onerous process for currently practicing technicians to achieve licensure. Unless graduated from an 'accredited' program, members would be expected to write two comprehensive examinations, and take four courses (of which three can be challenged by exam). The total cost would be about \$3,000 per person, and over 160 hours of instruction if all four courses have to be taken. Only 2 programs are accredited, and the first only since 2008, so the majority of members would have to go through the bridging. At a meeting on September 10, the Deputy Minister of Health was very receptive to the HSAA position that the process is unreasonably onerous and asked the ACP to review it. The ACP Council meets in October, so we do not expect to have further information about the process before then.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has told technicians they must be registered as a condition of employment. HSAA takes the perspective that therefore they are directing participation in whatever the bridging program will be, and consequently the employer is responsible for the cost and time. Not surprisingly, AHS disagrees. We will be filing group and individual grievances.

Domestic Violence in the Workplace Project – Official roll out of the project is planned for November which is Family Violence Prevention Month.

SGEU/NUPGE

Sister Jackie Krasko reported:

SGEU Women's Committee

The Women's Committee has not met since our last meeting in Vancouver. The committee will be meeting again on Oct 12 – 13, 2010. The focus of the meeting will be on resolutions to the SGEU 2011 convention, committee elections and finalizing our women's conference that will be held on November 18 – 19, 2010. The theme this year is "It's Our Time, Don't Push Us Around".

The women's committee members who were in attendance at the SGEU Equity Conference presented the Silent Witness project to the participants at the conference.

SFL Women's – Work/Life Balance Committee

The committee held a meeting on September 15, 2010 in Davidson. The committee will once again be holding a women's breakfast on Thursday, October 28, 2010 at 7:30 am to coincide with the SFL Convention. The guest speaker for the breakfast will be Marie Clarke-Walker from the Canadian Labour Congress. A limited number of breakfast tickets will be available for women to purchase at a cost of \$20.00 per ticket.

The SFL Women's committee worked on a number of resolutions that will be submitted to the SFL convention. The 55th SFL Convention will be held in Regina from October 27 – 30, 2010.

Health Providers Union Reaches an Agreement with SAHO

SGEU's 2,000 health providers have voted to accept a new collective agreement that provides for a 9.5% wage increase over the term of the four-year deal. Eighty-eight percent of the members voted in favor of the agreement. However, many of the members have been dissatisfied with the bargaining process. SGEU will continue to improve wages and working conditions in order to recruit and retain staff to meet the health care needs of Saskatchewan.

The SEIU-West Bargaining Committee advised that the tentative agreement between SEIU-West and SAHO has been ratified by 59% of the membership. SEIU represents 11,000 health care members.

The CUPE Health Care members voted to accept a tentative collective agreement with SAHO. CUPE represents 12,600 health care providers in five health regions. Ninety-five percent of CUPE health providers voted to accept the tentative agreement which was reached more than two years after their last agreement expired.

MGEU/NUPGE

Sister Michelle Gawronsky reported:

As you would expect the MGEU offices have been a flurry of activity, from the staff reps organizing the local meetings, support staff ensuring the recording of votes are correct, to the staff planning the upcoming convention being down to "crunch" time. Standing Committees are reviewing the members' resolutions for the impact they might have on the members and the union. Anyone walking into the building can feel both the excitement of the election coming and the trepidation of the changes to come. There will be a change in President, 1st Vice-President and the 4th Vice-President. Our union hasn't had this many elections at one convention for quite some time, longer than most can remember.

Committee Works:

Our Committee is no different than any other, we have brought forward some significant changes both to the Women's Forum at convention and the women's conference scheduled for May 2011. Through the guidance of our present 1st V.P. and ex-officio to our Committee, Lois Wales, and the agreement of our President, Peter Olfert, the Women's Forum will be hosting a luncheon rather than a breakfast. The committee has received a round of applause from sisters at every meeting I have had the pleasure of attending. The sisters very much appreciate the fact women's issues will be recognized through a luncheon. They very much appreciate the fact they will not have to get up at 6:00 a.m. to attend.

The report to convention is included in the convention binder so the committee has opted to only verbally report on highlights of the past two years. The committee has chosen to incorporate audience participation by doing the same survey done at the NUPGE Women's Conference last April. It will be interesting to see "who's" standing when the brothers are combined with the sisters.

We will also be manning display tables throughout the convention breaks – each of the committee members is bringing information on services provided in each of the 8 areas across the province. This will provide both brothers and sisters the opportunity to gather information they think would help anyone in their communities as well as workplaces.

We are once again giving the delegates the opportunity to recognize important women in their lives. We have a "Billboard" set up, we provide cards and pens and we ask delegates to write out the names of women important to them or one that has made an impact in their lives. We ask them to write out why this is so. These women can be anyone – not necessarily a member, staff or an activist. This is meant to recognize women's impact on our lives whether it's because they make the best chocolate chip cookies or are the women running for mayor. Two years ago this was a huge success and we anticipate the same this year.

The committee has been working through the summer completing the Women's Conference to be held May 2011. Elections for the Standing Committees in the MGEU are done in November after convention. As some of the present committee members are not seeking re-election at these meetings, they are completing as much of the conference as possible so the new committee doesn't feel overwhelmed when they take over.

The committee reviewed the requests from not only the last convention but also the last Women's Conference over the past two (2) years. The request is to increase the number of sisters accepted from the north to the Women's Conference. Our conference has always been done "rep by pop". The committee addressed the issue by having eight (8) sisters accepted from each of the eight (8) areas across the province. The remaining open spots will then be filled "rep by pop". This gives equal opportunity across the province as well as recognizes the more populated areas. The committee will review the success of this change after the conference.

Some events attended by as many committee members as possible through the summer are as follows:

In August – free concert "No Stone Unturned". This event was sponsored by a family of a missing, feared-dead woman from Manitoba and it was held to bring attention to the missing women and to educate for the need to stop violence against women.

In September – the annual walk "Take Back the Night" was very well attended. "No Stone Unturned" has also completed two "walks" to draw attention to the issue with one to be completed next week.

The committee will be attending a breakfast on October 15 for "LEAF" – Legal Education and Action Fund. This should be both interesting and informative.

Manitoba Federation of Labour Women's Committee:

The energy of the Committee has been concentrated on the Women's Conference they are hosting on November 18 – 20, 2010.

Bargaining Updates:

- Civil Service: bargaining is the slowest it has ever been with no end in sight; they have not even completed non-monetary items as yet. They have dates set for next week and the week after.
- Community Support: is in conciliation over the promised EFT (Equivalent to Full Time) guaranteed positions.
- New groups are now preparing to begin. Of course the tables will break for the MGEU Convention.

To everyone involved with the NUPGE Women's Advisory Committee, thank you for making me feel so incredibly welcome! This is the last meeting I will be attending as the Chair of the MGEU Women's Committee. My best to you all and please keep in touch.

OPSEU/NUPGE

Sister Cindy Haynes reported:

On June 26th a G-20 Labour March was held in Queens Park. Thousands of marchers attended from unions all over and began the day with a 3 km walk through downtown Toronto streets. James Clancy marched along with OPSEU members—many supporting the Green T-shirts for the FAIR ROBIN HOOD TAX. Unfortunately the news highlighted the few violent activities after the peaceful march had ended. We were proud of our labour members, and families who brightened the streets with all the colourful flags, signs and smiles!

Over the summer of 2010, the OPSEU women's committee participated in three Liberal Fundraiser pickets, which got media attention, including protesting the Liberal Women's Golf Tournament. OPSEU collected \$550 for the Mississauga Lunch Program.

OPSEU members had a float and members in Toronto's Caribana Parade.

Various regions have held summer union picnics which involve many members and their families.

On September 14th, our Equity Chairs held their Annual Joint Leadership meeting where we connect with the leaders of our unions and shared some of the work we have been doing. This year's theme is our Harassment & Discrimination Prevention Policy and the issues around accountability and liability for members in an activist role such as stewards, chairs, board members, etc.

From September to November, the Stephen Lewis Foundation will travel across Canada with African grandmothers and granddaughters orphaned by AIDS. OPSEU's Live and Let Live Fund supports the tremendous work of the Foundation and encourages all locals to get involved in the AfriGrand Caravan. There are a number of cities and stops throughout the province.

Region 1 Equity team is holding a one day educational on September 25th with the theme "Health is an EQUITY Issue". Speakers and a healthy lunch are planned.

Our Provincial Human Rights Committee is holding its first conference on November 12-14th. Input from all the equity groups will ensure this conference will be a success. “Get Up – Stand Up for your Rights” will look at the history of human rights work and fighting racism. Derek Fudge from NUPGE is one of the keynote speakers.

OPSEU’s census, which reached 27,000 members, will begin initial steps for Phase 2 now that the funding was approved at our convention in May. The second phase looks at both member and staff systems, and will identify potential barriers. It will involve interviews and focus groups, and will ultimately come up with workable recommendations for advancing full participation.

The Executive Board has called a special meeting for all Local Presidents, OPS MERC/CERC Chairs, BPS Sector Chairs and the Chairs of CAAT(A), CAAT(S) as well as the Equity Chairs regarding the government’s compensation restraint policy. In July 2010, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan invited unions and employers to a consultation on public service compensation. The government states, due to the economic climate, it is required to freeze compensation structures in the public sector to help manage the deficit and debt — claiming it will help sustain public services for the long term. Our present position is that the government has unfairly attacked our members’ wages and also created a crisis in service delivery which doesn’t add up to a stable economy. Duncan says the MPPs are leading the way by freezing their wages for 2 years but failed to remind everyone that prior to doing that – they voted themselves a 25% wage increase! The sectors agreed (with the exception of Corrections) to sit with the government and allow consultation to attempt to resolve the problems around zero/zero increase.

Our seven member provincial women’s committee is meeting October 1-3 in Barrie, Ont. On the agenda will be plans for our next convention, which is facing a change of venue as we have outgrown the one large hotel. Our biggest challenge will be conducting our women’s appreciation awards which used to be done at a breakfast but now we will be considering other options.

Next February, all regions will be holding elections for the 2011-2013 term. All board members, committees, and various affiliate conference attendees will be elected. Then our convention in April will be determining the new Executive Officers.

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Sister Linda Richardson reported:

New Brunswick Union has been busy preparing for our Convention in mid October during which our women’s committee will host a women’s breakfast for all of our NBUPPE members to attend.

Following our Convention in October our women’s committee will be gearing up for our first ever women’s conference following the fall activist session. We are so excited about the possibilities that this will bring for our New Brunswick women.

On the negotiation area we are still battling the wage freeze with 2 groups of health care workers, Paramedical and Specialized Health Care, trying to break through the two years of zeros. They are both passed the conciliation boards and waiting for reports. We feel the next step could be the strength of the members and some steps for preparation are starting in this regard.

Our Admin Support contract, which is our largest bargaining group, is currently going through bargaining and preparing for the conciliation process.

In regards to pensions for NB union workers, there have been funding issues around some of our pensions which are still unresolved and in the courts. We are waiting to hear some word on who has the right to increase contributions or cut benefits or a combination of both.

NSGEU/NUPGE

Sister Dawn Ferris reported:

Civil Service Bargaining

The Civil Service has a new contract. While the wage increase was 1% each year of the two year contract, very good language was achieved during this round of bargaining, which will be paramount as the NDP Government has “promised” a 10% reduction in the Civil Service. Language regarding internal job postings and transfers was obtained and retraining offers for those affected by the cuts were part of the list of great language. An information tour was held in the province and the Civil Service Bargaining Team went from area to area hosting sessions on the new contract; unfortunately these sessions were poorly attended and there was no way of knowing how the vote would go, even with the recommendation of acceptance from the Bargaining Team. Fortunately, over 3,000 civil servants did vote and the contract was accepted and ratified. There are 7,000 civil servants in the NSGEU and the turn out was higher than normal for voting.

Civil Service Campaign

The NSGEU Board of Directors made a decision to embark on an official campaign to protect our civil services as a result of the government’s program review announcement and the 10% cuts to the civil service. We hired Now Communications – a strategic communications company and they are guiding us through this campaign. View Points, a company out of Manitoba, was hired to do polling and hosted focus groups to ascertain both the feel of the people of Nova Scotia and our possible strengths and our hurdles. This had given us some very positive feedback and some interesting stats to use.

Concurrently we are launching an “internal” campaign for our membership; we want their engagement to report on vacancies and program changes. Hearing from our members when departments go from eight members to three will be valuable for us to know. If you’re interested our television commercials will begin airing November 1st which coincides with the house sitting.

Bully Free Launch

The NSGEU was proud to launch our new Bully Free Workshop Program to the province on September 8th. This program took almost two years to develop by 12 members, our OH&S Officer, Jeff Brett and our Education Officer, Margaret Ann McHugh. A handbook has also been created to assist with the facilitation of two versions of the workshop; a two hour session and a six hour interactive session. This program is being offered to all employers in Nova Scotia. Both of the sessions will help develop the skills necessary for any group of workers and managers to tackle bullying and move beyond its harmful effects. Bully free workplaces are more efficient, productive and stable and the NSGEU has been focused on addressing this major issue for our members.

Halifax Labour Day, September 2010

NSGEU participated again this year in the Labour Day parade and rally and a large turnout was had. This event was another success with the NS Federation of Labour sponsoring a BBQ, kid games, snow cones and cotton candy.

Local 60A Locked Out Workers – Back to Work

I had reported on the locked out workers of Local 60A to you in June. I want to bring you the good news that a Collective Agreement was reached and the members were back to work by the beginning of July. They did achieve a good wage settlement and were happy with the terms of their first contract.

NSGEU Women's Issues Committee

Our WIC has planned its next meeting around the October 17th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty so it can participate in the event being hosted in Halifax. As a side note, I am on the Adhoc Planning Committee organizing this event and the NSGEU has donated \$1,000 to help with the event.

I personally had a great summer; there were a lot of NSGEU social events organized that helped with solidarity and membership engagement.

NAPE/NUPGE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported:

Women's Committee Activities

Annual Women's Conference

NAPE's Women's Committee has been busy over the past several months organizing a fall conference. The conference will take place on October 22-24 at the Terra Nova Golf Resort. The theme for this year's conference is *Women: One Voice – No Limits*. Planning for the conference is well underway; however, many of the finer details are still being worked out.

It is the intention of the women's committee during the conference's banquet to again honour an activist with the newly introduced Athena Award. The award honours women in the labour movement who have provided outstanding leadership in the struggle for

women's equality and justice. This year's recipient, Nancy Riche, is no stranger to the labour movement.

Passing of Long time Activist

It is with deep sadness that I report on the passing of a long time NAPE activist and past member of the NUPGE Women's Advisory Committee – Sister Sharon Power. Since June 2007 Sister Power fought a courageous battle with Ovarian Cancer. Sharon touched the lives of so many people and those who had the opportunity to truly count her as a friend were indeed blessed. A long time dedicated union activist and a true friend, Sharon will be missed but never forgotten.

Take Back the Night

NAPE's women's committee also took part in the annual violence prevention initiative of Take Back the Night which takes place the third Friday in September. The March and candlelight vigil is designed to raise awareness of safety issues for women and children and to protest against harassment, assault and sexual abuse. As in previous years various regions of the province took part in this activity. Each year NAPE's women's committee encourages its members' participation in this event.

Updates from NAPE – Collective Bargaining

Purity Factories Ltd.

On August 23, negotiations with Purity Factories Ltd. broke off. NAPE conducted a strike vote which all 52 employees supported. Twenty-four of the employees have in excess of 30 years service to the company and another five have 20 years. The main issue is wages. On September 3, the day before the Labour Day weekend when many are celebrating, Purity Factories Ltd. locked its employees out. The moral of the workers is high and they are committed to staying out until the issue is resolved.

Burin/Marystown Community Training and Employment Board

After 10 months, the striking workers with the Burin Marystown Employment Training Board, who act as job coaches to persons with disabilities, are still off the job. On September 1, NAPE President Carol Furlong called on the Minister of Finance to settle all outstanding issues in the strike by binding arbitration. In recognition of the significant negative impact on the employees and the clients they serve, NAPE has suggested to government to arbitrate all outstanding issues and have the employees return to work. To date government has not responded to this request.

The bargaining group has asked for nothing more than the wage template offered to 40,000 other public sector workers. 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.

Musgrave Harbour Town Council

In August, NAPE members with the Musgrave Harbour Town Council voted in favour of a new collective agreement. The major improvements included an overall increase of \$4.15 over a three year period, increased paid sick leave benefits to 1.5 days a month, an increase in the clothing allowance and transportation expenses for recall. The agreement is for a two year term and expires December 31, 2012.

Home Care Agencies

In June, ten collective agreements for home care agencies were negotiated within ten days. The tentative agreements consist of wage increases, improvements in benefits and contract language. NAPE represents the majority of home care workers in Newfoundland and Labrador and is continuing in its attempts to organize the remaining home care agencies.

General Information

Labour School

Due to the wrath of Igor, NAPE's annual week-long Labour School, which was to take place on September 23, had to be cancelled one day before it was to commence. As all of the planning has been completed, the school will be rescheduled at a later date. The Labour School is part of the ongoing commitment to provide education to members and to equip them to be effective leaders within their union. It is a wonderful opportunity for up-and-coming activists to network with each other and to learn from long-time activists.

QUALITY OF WOMEN'S LIVES – LIFE/WORK BALANCE

The committee discussed the next steps for the life/work balance project. NUPGE will develop an educational module on life/work balance to aid in raising awareness of the results of the NUPGE survey on life/work balance among the Components. The educational will be presented by the members of the ACWI. The module will include the life/work video from the NUPGE 2010 Convention, a presentation binder based on the subject areas covered in the survey, suggested discussion questions and "Just Add Water" lobbying packages on the issues of early learning and child care and elder care.

The committee enthusiastically endorsed the educational module and held a lengthy discussion regarding the details and possible contents of the educational module.

In March 2010 the White House held a forum on Workplace Flexibility attended by approximately 100 business leaders, government officials, policy advocates, union representatives and researchers. President Obama noted that flex is the right thing to do, the smart thing to do. Companies with flexible work arrangements have lower absenteeism, higher productivity and healthier employees. A copy of the policy paper presented at the forum entitled "Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility" was included in the binder.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal recently decided that employers must promote work-life balance. The complaint was filed by a woman who works for the Canada Border Services Agency. Upon returning from maternity leave she asked her employer for a more stable schedule to care for her new child. The employer refused and suggested she take a part-time position. She did resign herself to work part-time at reduced wages with no access to the CBSA benefits. She did, however, file a complaint alleging her employer engaged in a discriminatory practice on the prohibited ground of family status. The Tribunal concluded that employers cannot discriminate against their employees should they choose to become parents. An article about the ruling was included in the binder.

The Canadian Index for Well Being has released a report entitled “Caught in the Time Crunch: Time Use, Leisure and Culture in Canada”. In the report they note that gender is strongly connected to wellbeing. The report found a higher proportion of women – nearly 20% more than men – feel caught in a time crunch. One reason is that more women provide unpaid care to seniors and for more hours per week. Employed women with children experience greater time pressure, reduced work-life balance and a decreased sense of emotional wellbeing compared to employed women without children. The situation is worst among those working women who also shoulder most of the domestic and caregiving duties in the home. Women aged 25 to 54 years continue to do 1.7 times the unpaid work compared to men the same age. A copy of the report was included in the binder.

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation that Nora Spinks gave at the National Union’s 2010 Leadership School was included in the binder.

Three news items were included in the binder about caring for ill relatives, the sandwich generation caring for elders and children and not enough support for our aging population.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DECEMBER 6TH ACTIONS

NUPGE is developing a poster for December 6th focusing on a woman working in a transition house. This is a tie in to the NUPGE campaign for public services – without such supports as transition houses, women who are subjected to domestic abuse have literally no place to turn.

NUPGE would also like the committee members to send in activities their women’s committees are holding for December 6th. This information will be posted on the NUPGE website.

Included in the binder was a *Globe and Mail* article by Gerald Caplan, one of the founding members of the White Ribbon Campaign. This is a well written article on the continued epidemic on violence against women. In the article he notes that more women are killed on average each year, often with no public attention at all, than the total of soldiers killed since Canada joined the Afghan war. Why has our government not declared war against the enemy at home who continues to murder so many women? He notes that the Harper government is surely the most anti-women government in modern times. “Harper refuses to support terrific programs at home or abroad that promote women’s equality. Charity from above for the less-fortunate, sure; solidarity with equals, not a chance.”

Also contained in the binders was a release on the meeting of the FPT Members responsible for the Status of Women who met in Toronto from June 15 to 17, 2010. Of note is their mention of the Sisters in Spirit Initiative and their tenacity in raising awareness of the issue of murdered and missing Aboriginal women. However, once again there is no mention of funding for the initiative. They are planning to update the Statistical Trends Report on violence against women.

ALL TOGETHER NOW! CAMPAIGN

Chair Hildahl introduced Mike Luff who is the Director of Communications and Research at the National Union. Brother Luff gave a presentation on NUPGE's "All Together Now!" Campaign. He also demonstrated the campaign website alltogethernow.ca. He encouraged the members of the committee to stay up-to-date on the campaign through the website and by joining the Facebook page set up for the campaign.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Sister Hildahl advised the committee that a copy of the National Union's Poster for Women's History Month was contained in the binder. The committee was encouraged to order additional copies for their committees and worksites.

Chair Hildahl noted that a good site to access for women in Canadian history is www.heroines.ca. Last year they posted the NUPGE Women's History Month Poster on their site.

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS UPDATE

At the National Union's women's conference "Building Sisterhood Around the World" a \$3,000 contribution was made to four projects: Sisters in Spirit Initiative, Masai for Africa Campaign, TWCAA Micro Lending Program for Women and Casa de la Mujer House of the Woman of the Union. At the National Union 2007 Convention, a resolution was passed to continue funding of these four projects for an additional three years. The mandate for this resolution has now been met. As noted at the June 2010 ACWI meeting, the National Union provided an additional \$1,500 to the Sisters in Spirit Initiative this year.

The National Union's Social Justice Solidarity Fund has contributed \$56,000 to date this year with the bulk of the contributions going to Haiti earthquake disaster relief – \$25,000, the Pakistan Flood disaster relief – \$15,000 and \$10,000 to KAIROS Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. As well, an emergency resolution was passed at the NUPGE Convention in June to provide solidarity funding to the Colombian labour lawyers collective (CCAJAR) in the annual amount of \$30,000 for the next two years.

Chair Hildahl informed the committee that the National Union does have a supply of Bracelets of Hope – if committee members are interested in raising funds for the Masai for Africa Campaign.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Contained in the binders was the latest report from Stephanie Seaman regarding the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

Included in the binders was a copy of the letter to the president of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care in support of the 10th Annual Child Care Worker & Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.

FYI

World March of Women

The World March of Women has planned the third International Action from March 8th to October 17th, 2010. This marks the 10th Anniversary of the March. The WMW has created four action areas: violence against women, peace and demilitarization, women's work (for women's economic autonomy) and the common good and public services.

The first movement was from March 8th to 18th across the world. Events were held in Quebec and also in Winnipeg. Included in the binder was the release of the Winnipeg Demands for 2010. Of note is the demand for the rights of Aboriginal women which includes demanding funding for the Sisters in Spirit Initiative and the issue of the unsolved cases of homicide involving women. The second movement will be held from October 7 to 17th which will include marches and actions in countries across the world. More information can be found on the World March of Women website at <http://www.mmm2010.info>. The binder also contained the WMW August 2010 newsletter.

United Nations Creation of Agency for Women

Former Chilean President, Dr. Michelle Bachelet, has been appointed to head the United Nations' first full-fledged agency for women. The newly formed "UN Women" will open its doors in January 2011.

UN Women is the merger of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW).

Included in the binders were two news items – one was the UN announcement of Bachelet's appointment and one provided a profile of Bachelet.

Bill C-391 – Gun Registry

On September 22, 2010 Bill C-391, legislation which would have dismantled the long-gun registry and destroyed nearly 8 million firearm records, was defeated by a narrow margin of 153 to 151 votes. Contained in the binder was a copy of the NUPGE website story encouraging members and Canadians to contact their MPs to defeat the bill.

As well, a press release from the Coalition for Gun Control was contained in the binder. This release contains quotes from doctors, police and Wendy Cukier who states "We can debate statistics all you want but at the end of the day we know for sure, the firearms registry never killed anyone. While getting rid of it might."

Bill C-304 – An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians

This was an information request by Dawn Ferris.

Bill C-304 is legislation that would bring all levels of government, Aboriginal communities and civil society together to develop a national housing strategy. Canada hasn't had a national housing plan since the 1990s. This bill proposed by Libby Davies was passed on 1st and 2nd reading with the support of the NDP, Liberal, Bloc and one Conservative MP. It is scheduled to go back to the Commons for the start of the third and final reading debate on October 20.

The federal government currently estimates the number of people who experience homelessness ranges from 150,000 to 300,000. The federal government estimates another 705,165 households are living in overcrowded housing (sometimes called "couch-surfing"). Other estimates put the number of "hidden" homeless at 450,000 to 900,000.

Information on the legislation was included in the binder.

Two Upcoming Conferences in Canada in 2011

Women's Worlds 2011 – Inclusions, Exclusions, and Seclusions: Living in a Globalized World

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. An overview of the conference was provided in the binders. Delegate registration fee is \$475 and registration will be available online in November.

Information on the conference can be found at <http://www.womensworlds.ca/>

All Our Sisters National Conference on Women and Homelessness

The National Conference on Women and Homelessness is to be held on 9-12 May 2011 at the Convention Center, London, Ontario. The conference will be co-hosted by WMHAARC, My Sister's Place and WOTCH.

OTHER BUSINESS

The date of the next ACWI meeting was tentatively scheduled for March 17-18, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.