

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues

**June 21, 2007
Fredericton, New Brunswick**

In attendance:

National Union	Brenda Hildahl Marie Bean
BCGEU	Colleen Jones
HSAA	Louise Yarrow
MGEU	Kelly-Ann Ivory
OPSEU	Cindy Haynes
NBUPPE	Shelley Coulombe
NSGEU	Martha Brown
NAPE	Arlene Sedlickas
PEIUPSE	Nancy Reeves



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Chair Brenda Hildahl. Sister Hildahl welcomed the sisters and introductions were made around the table. A special welcome was extended to Sister Louise Yarrow of HSAA/NUPGE, Sister Arlene Sedlickas of NAPE/NUPGE and Sister Nancy Reeves of PEIUPSE/NUPGE who are new ACWI committee members. As well, a welcome was extended to Sister Shelley Coulombe of NBUPPE/NUPGE who attended as an alternate for Sister Susie Proulx-Daigle.

Chair Hildahl advised the committee that the focus of the pre-convention abbreviated meeting was to outline various resolutions pertaining to women that will be submitted to Convention and to prepare for the Women's Breakfast Caucus scheduled for Saturday, June 23rd at 7:30 am.

The contact information contained in the binder was reviewed and the committee members were asked to advise Sister Hildahl of any changes via e-mail. The mandate of the Committee and the Harassment-Free Policy were contained in the binders for information.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The committee was asked to review the agenda. The agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of Minutes – February 19 & 20, 2007

Sister Jones moved and Sister Brown seconded that the February 19 & 20, 2007 minutes be adopted.

Carried

The committee was advised that the minutes will be posted to the NUPGE website under Women's Issues. Sister Hildahl also advised that Sister Ivory is the liaison person assisting the Chair in obtaining Component reports and other follow-ups.

3. Convention

Resolutions

Chair Hildahl directed the committee's attention to the resolutions contained in the binder which pertain to women's issues. The resolutions are:

Resolution G39 – Support for Women's projects in Canada and Internationally

Resolution G44 – Harper Government's Attack on Women's Equality Programs

Resolution G45, G46 and G47 – Status of Women Canada Funding

The committee was informed that G44 which is a NEB resolution which will be combined with resolutions G45, G46 and G47 submitted by the Components to become Composite Resolution G7 – Harper Government's Attack on Women's Equality and Programs and Status of Women Canada

Resolution G48 – UN Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

Resolution G49 – Violence Against Women

The committee was made aware that Resolutions G7, G48 and G49 will be dealt with on Saturday morning at approximately 11:00 am. Speaker Anne-Marie Zajdlik will speak at 2:00 pm after which Resolution G39 will come to the convention floor. The committee discussed who would speak on the various resolutions.

Women's Breakfast Caucus

Sister Hildahl advised the committee that the ACWI members need to be at the Fredericton Inn by 7:00 am to set up tables for publications, pins and gifts. The time will be very compact and in addition to advising the Caucus of the resolutions being presented, Sister Anne-Marie Zajdlik will also be giving a brief speech to the Caucus. Arrangements have also been made throughout the NBUPPE/NUPGE to have nine Silent Witness Silhouettes present at the Caucus. Chair Hildahl thanked the committee for its hard work in obtaining prizes for the Women's Breakfast Caucus.

4. Component Reports

BCGEU

Sister Colleen Jones reported:

BCGEU Women's Conference

The BCGEU Women's Committee held its own regional Women's Conference on March 2 & 3 in Vancouver. The title of the conference was Sisters Across Borders: Solidarity with Migrant Workers. Several community women were invited to attend along with the sisters within the union and it was a huge success. The conference consisted of workshops and panel discussions on some very important issues such as: Healthcare workers, migrant workers, sweatshops, globalization, and privatization.

Campaigns and Bargaining

Bargaining for our highways is currently at a standstill. Many of our brothers and sisters are out on strike in most of the locations around the province. The employers have proposed a seven-year term contract with a .27% increase in the first year. Major issues in dispute are wages, auxiliary recall, medical benefits, contract duration, and contracting out.

Since my last report our joint Childcare Campaign has been very busy. Bridging Communities – eight communities across the province joined communities across the country in this national event to pressure the provincial and federal governments to restore funding for childcare. In Vancouver, childcare activists and community supporters marched across the Burrard Street Bridge with a police escort.

Global Warming – The BCGEU has been very active in promoting the effects of global warming. Presentations have been given to many of our standing committees, union conferences and school boards. The Global Warming Campaign was also included in our BCGEU Labour Institute held in the spring. Participants of the school put together a plan to stop global warming that involves the membership.

Shop Public – Shop Government Liquor stores. The BCGEU is in the beginning stages of developing a campaign to promote the importance of shopping "public". The campaign promotes the value of shopping at government liquor stores. It will focus on the value of saving social services and the jobs of our members who work in stores.

Our next meeting of the Provincial Women's Committee will be held in September. Many items are on the agenda and I am sure it will be a very full meeting.

MGEU

Sister Kelly-Ann Ivory reported:

Activities of the MGEU Women's Committee

The MGEU Women's Committee has only had the opportunity to meet twice since our last Advisory Committee meeting. As noted in the last report, the Committee celebrated International Women's Day (March 8) by attending a fundraising event hosted by Grassroots Women (MB) with proceeds going to support international missions in the Philippines. It is the Committee's intent to produce MGEU merchandise recognizing International Women's Day and other merchandise recognizing the Women's Committee; this is being investigated. Earlier on March 8, the Chairperson of the MGEU Committee, together with other Sisters from the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) Women's Committee, participated in a lobbying effort through meeting with the Manitoba Member of Legislative Assembly (MLAs). They presented the resolutions that were passed in the MFL convention in the fall of 2006 requesting that the MFL lobby the provincial government regarding the elimination of violence against women and the provision of accessible childcare.

The current focus of the Committee's efforts is on the planning and development of the MGEU Women's Conference, which is scheduled for May 2008. The theme will be "A Woman's Place is in her Union" using the Rosie the Riveter logo and possibly producing merchandise with the same theme. The Committee is steadfastly working on the development of various workshops and activities for this conference and this will be the focal point of our upcoming meetings.

Two Sisters from the MGEU Women's Committee will be attending the SFL (Saskatchewan Federation of Labour) Prairie School for Union Women 2007 at Waskesiu Lake, Saskatchewan June 17 – 21.

Summary of Events from the MGEU

Bargaining

- The Civil Service Corrections sub-component will be proceeding to arbitration.
- Community colleges have ratified their collective agreements.
- Two locals were forced to take strike votes (Westman Lab and Manitoba Housing) but quick settlements were achieved and accepted by the respective locals.

Other news

- The recent provincial election saw Premier Garry Doer (former president of MGEU) elected for the third time. A record number of women were elected to the Manitoba legislature in this election. Women now hold a historic high of 18 seats. This is

nearly a third of the legislature's 57-seat total. Thirteen women are members of the NDP caucus, while five hold office under the Conservative banner.

- MGEU is building new rural office buildings. The official opening of the new office in Portage La Prairie was held in mid-April. A new office is being built in Dauphin and another office will be coming soon in the Brandon area.

OPSEU

Sister Cindy Haynes reported:

Ontario Public Service Employees Union

A newly elected Provincial Women's Committee was elected in February 2007. They held their first meeting May 14 & 15, 2007. There are seven members, one from each region. Elected were:

- Region 1 Cindy Haynes
- Region 2 Deb Tungatt
- Region 3 Dora Robinson
- Region 4 Peggy Ashick
- Region 5 Gloria David
- Region 6 Elizabeth Anich
- Region 7 Mary Cory

The Committee has begun work on the Women's Conference which is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2007. There will be an international theme, with activities, and workshops bringing global issues to the forefront for women. It will take place in Toronto Nov 2 – 4, 2007.

At our convention, Leah Cassleman stepped down, and elections were held. Smokey Thomas was elected as our new president. Patti Rout, is now the 1st vice-president / treasurer. Our Women's Breakfast was a great success, with the Sisters in Spirit campaign as its focus. Paddy Musson received OPSEU's Bread and Roses award for her long-time activism, and work in women's issues.

A new course has been developed by OPSEU's Training and Development Unit called "Women in Unions: Strengthening Leadership". This was piloted in the London educational held in October, and another women's course focusing on young women in OPSEU.

LONDON – Over 1,000 workers at four southwestern Ontario associations for community living could be on strike as early as June 21 if the McGuinty government refuses to fund their wage demands, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union says.

Talks have broken off and conciliation has failed to produce a settlement at four agencies that support people with developmental disabilities: Community Living

Chatham-Kent, Community Living London, the Elgin Association for Community Living (St. Thomas), and Middlesex Community Living (Strathroy), the union said. Many of these workers are women with lower incomes, who may be out on the picket line towards the end of June.

June is designated as Pride Month. We celebrate our history, diversity and pride. We celebrate all those Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersexed, Queer, Questioning and Two-Spirited (LGBTTIQQ2S). We march for the transgendered kid who sits alone in his room too afraid to go to school for fear of violence and rejection. We send a message that an inclusive world should accept everyone regardless of their sexuality and should have no tolerance for hate crimes. We challenge the stereotypes, defamation and discrimination faced by all.

Poor working conditions and low pay for part-time professors is affecting education quality at Ontario colleges. Ontario community college students are being ripped off because of a growing number of part-time professors, also known as sessionals, who are not given the resources to do their jobs effectively. Students are paying the price. OPSECAAT says that because of poor pay, many part-time college professors are forced to take other jobs, which takes away from their ability to be available to students. A number of upcoming events will include:

- Community activities over the summer in key ridings
- Welcome back activities at the college, such as BBQs, and orientation sessions in late August and the first weeks of September
- Participation in local labour day parades and picnics
- Attending and participating in all candidates' meetings
- An OPSECAAT phone bank the week before the election

NBUPPE

Sister Proulx-Daigle reported:

General Information

Our Government is now promoting their quest to self-sufficiency. NBUnion feels that this issue requires full and open debate – and this is simply not happening. Without public debate, contradictory statements like 'public sector solely need to increase pay 20%, and cut the public service by 33 1/3% to support the increase' go without rebuttal.

When you advocate for smaller government, you're talking about having fewer lab techs, fewer health inspectors, fewer commercial vehicle enforcement officers... When you advocate for smaller government, you need to understand the consequences for all

NBers; to decrease access to vital public services and increase public risk. If self-sufficiency is truly about boosting economic development and new thinking, then we are questioning what happened to Public Auto Insurance with its projected \$275M per year (2004 dollars) in profit? The self sufficiency task force makes no mention of this potential revenue stream. Yet, the Liberals promised to implement the public auto insurance program if elected...

Since our last meeting in February 2007, our organization continues to focus on the transition of moving to a Biennial format which will help restore balance wherein one year the focus is on component annual meetings, and the next year on the Convention. This year we are focusing on the component annuals. On May 26th, three components, Educational Instructional, Highway Supervisors and Administrative Assistants took care of their annual business. A lot of positive feedback was heard as there was in fact more time spent on specific component issues.

We also continue to promote and build on the development of local structures (union representatives at the work place level) to facilitate better service and communication with our membership on important workplace issues. Service New Brunswick centers, the Hospitals and the Community Colleges are the first to test and implement.

New Brunswick Union also continues to focus on training for activists, which continues to be a priority. Over 60 members participated in the spring training session for level I activists, which was held in Fredericton and offered six courses.

Negotiations

As for the negotiating process within NB Union, we are currently in the negotiation process for two sets of negotiations: Community College Instructors and the Woodstock Police Association. All other contracts have been completed.

Women's Committee

Since our last meeting, the committee has met once in March. We do have a tentative meeting scheduled for June 13th. At the March meeting we looked at the Child Care Policy. We're proposing a name change: Child Care / Elder Care Policy. The trial policy has worked very well and proven not to be very costly. At our next meeting we will be finalizing and recommending to the board that it become a standing policy. We also reviewed and updated our Terms of References.

A lengthy discussion took place on Pay Equity versus Pay Parity. The President of the Coalition will be invited to our next meeting to make a presentation. We also had a lengthy discussion on the International Women's Conference. This conference proved to be quite a success. The participants felt very fortunate to have taken part in the event. We will be investigating the cost of having Dr. Anne-Marie Zajdlik from Guelph, Ontario, to speak at our convention. At this point, the Women's Committee would like to launch the \$10.00 campaign.

I also attended a Provincial Women's Forum, put on by the Minister of Family and Community Services and her Deputy Minister. The subject at hand was 'Pay Equity'. I participated in the debate and found it to be informative, however a bit discouraging, as it seems like this government will not be moving forward as promised in their platform. I've also been asked to sit on the Provincial Child Care Coalition. The coalition has yet to meet, but a meeting is being planned for the near future.

NSGEU

Sister Martha Brown reports:

Following are some of the highlights of NSGEU'S activities since our last meeting.

General Issues

Biennial Convention:

NSGEU's Biennial Convention held May 9 – 12, 2007. The convention theme was "Quality of Work & Life". All incumbent officers were successful in being re-elected for another term. President – Joan Jessome; 1st Vice President – Martha Brown; 2nd Vice President – Larry Stewart; 3rd Vice President – Jason MacLean and Secretary/Treasurer – Darren McPhee.

Keynote speaker was Peter Corbyn. Peter who is an Al Gore trained "Global Warming Messenger" addressed the convention on Global Warming and Climate Change. I invite you to visit his website www.petercorbyn.com

Human Rights Panel – a six-person panel spoke passionately about human rights in the LGBT community, the Aboriginal community, the Afro-Nova Scotian community, the stigma and myths associated with mental disability and the challenges and rewards of raising a child with disabilities.

50th Anniversary:

Plans are underway to celebrate NSGEU's 50th Anniversary – April 18 & 19, 2008.

Striking IWK Local 22 Workers:

Health Care workers at the IWK walked off the job on April 30, 2007 over one of their main outstanding issues – benefits for retirees. The strike ended after one day when both sides agreed to binding mediation to resolve outstanding issues, including benefits for retired members. With the assistance of a mediator the two sides arrived at identical bargaining positions on all contentious issues and – in the end – "both sides instructed the arbitrator to choose the employer's final offer".

Coalition of Health and Community Care Workers Care:

Premier Rodney MacDonald has announced that the Nova Scotia government is considering legislation in the fall – to take away the “Right to Strike” for Health and Community Care workers. This will affect approximately 20,000 of our membership. NSGEU, along with the NSFL, has formed a coalition with other unions in Nova Scotia who represent Health and Community Care workers (NSNU, CAW, CUPE, SEIU, OE) to come together as a united front to defend the democratic rights of workers.

Week Long Labour School – Digby Pines, NS:

This year’s week-long labour school for the National Union Atlantic components (NS, PEI & NB) is scheduled to be held at the Digby Pines Resort, October 23 – 28, 2007.

NSGEU’S Website:

Be sure to check it out at www.nsgeu.ca

Bargaining Issues/Updates

Bargaining:

We are in the process of negotiating over 40 Collective Agreements.

Women’s Issues

8th Annual NSGEU Women’s Conference:

NSGEU Women’s Committee held a very successful conference March 30 – April 1, 2007 at the Debert Hospitality Centre. Due to the tremendous response of last year’s conference our theme again was “Women & Violence—Still on Guard...One Step Closer to Freedom”.

Various speakers addressed the following topics:

- Violence in the Workplace and Workers Rights in Respect to the NS OH&S Act
- Safety for Women: at home, in your vehicle, when walking, when traveling
- Self defense for Women
- Nova Scotia Silent Witness Project (progress to date)

Convention 2007:

Once again at convention the Women’s Committee headed up the food drive and the Shampoos for Shelters.

Women's Breakfast:

Our Women's Committee held a very successful breakfast gathering during our convention. Our emphasis was on AIDS in Africa. We viewed the DVD "Unsung Heroes - The Grandmothers of Africa". The women who attended the breakfast were very moved by the video.

Masai Centre:

At Convention our Women's Committee submitted a resolution for NSGEU to donate ten (10¢) per member to the Masai for Africa campaign and that a donation be also considered during the 2008 budget deliberations. The resolution was passed unanimously by the convention delegates.

Silent Witness Project:

NSGEU continues to work with other women's organizations in the province on the Silent Witness Nova Scotia Project.

Silent Witness Nova Scotia held their first AGM on June 14, 2007. To date Silent Witness Nova Scotia has A very impressive list of accomplishments – a more detailed written report to be provided.

Martha Brown, NSGEU 1st Vice President, was appointed to their Board of Directors.

Future Plans

- New Committee will be established in September 2007
- NSGEU will be selling the red & white Bracelets for Hope (supplied by the Masai Centre) in an effort to raise both funds and awareness of the plight of Aids in Africa.

NAPE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported:

Since the last advisory committee meeting, NAPE has gone through another province-wide election for the two top leadership positions of President and Secretary-Treasurer. Carol Ann Furlong has been reelected to the President's position and Bert Blundon is the newly elected Secretary-Treasurer.

On June 4, 5, & 6 NAPE held its biennial convention which resulted in some changes to the Provincial Board of Directors. The convention also elected a new Women's

Committee with a new chair. This committee will be meeting in the fall to plan for the next two years.

In March 2007 I was selected as Nape's representative to sit on the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour's Women's Committee.

Proposed Activities for the two-year Term

Some initiatives the committee will begin working on in the fall include:

- Planning and delivering education to the membership on women's issues
- Assisting in the vote in our health care sector between NAPE, CUPE, and Allied Health Professional
- Researching current collective agreements to tighten up and improve existing language on family leave, maternity/paternity leave
- Participating in the NLFL (Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour) Women's Conference in October 2007
- Lobbying for recognition for home care workers with a view to improving wages and benefits
- Lobbying for regulated, accessible, community-based, not-for-profit childcare
- Creating a web link on NAPE's website highlighting women's health concerns
- Planning a provincial women's conference in 2008
- Updating the women's committee brochure

Other News

- NAPE continues the process of the payout implementation of the Ex-Gratia payment of \$24 million. NAPE challenged the decision of the Well's Government on the pay equity provisions in the 1988 health care collective agreements all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. At the end of the day, the Courts ruled against our application and all avenues of appeal were closed. Despite this setback NAPE was successful in obtaining a one time payment of \$24 million from the provincial government for health care workers.
- NAPE has negotiated first time collective agreements for several home care groups but is continuing to reinforce its position that government must provide salaries and benefits to home care workers that reflect their work and the contribution they make. Home care workers are predominately female workers doing what has normally

been work carried out by women caring for their parents. They have few benefits and very low wages. NAPE continues to challenge the Government to improve the plight of our home care workers. Their work continues to be undervalued and underappreciated by Government. As we become a society where we find the aging population increasing, we will find a greater reliance on the services of home care workers.

- The silent witness program is still ongoing. A resolution was past at our biennial convention in 2005 to ensure that these silhouettes would be present at all NAPE functions. We have had some inquires from the communities and various affiliates about starting their own silent witness program. The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour's Women's committee has used our silhouettes at their Women's Networking Evenings to further promote this initiate in other sectors.
- NAPE is currently in negotiations to achieve a first-time collective agreement for newly organized workers at the Multi-Stewardship Board.
- NAPE will be holding component conventions in the fall to determine resolutions for the upcoming round of negotiations with the provincial government.
- NAPE has called on Government to increase pension benefits for retired public sector employees. Retired public employees were forced during their working lives to suffer wage cuts, rollbacks, wage freezes, wage controls, and pension contribution holidays. These unilateral actions by governments have resulted in a serious reduction in the purchasing power of retirees. Retired public employees should now be recognized during times of prosperity. It is not a legal argument – it is about doing the right thing.
- NAPE will continue to hold an annual retreat for women.
- Lobbying against privatization is a challenge NAPE will face in the next few years.

PEI UPSE

Sister Nancy Reeves reported:

Greetings from PEI UPSE. As the newest representative from our Equality committee and union to sit on the NUPGE's Women's Committee I would like to say that I am extremely pleased to be once again involved in this committee and to thank Sister LeClair for her dedication.

Our UPSE Equality Committee has a new chair in Trudy Barry and I am looking forward to Sister Barry's leadership as she has been a long-time union activist.

The Silent Witness project that Sister LeClair spearheaded with the UPSE's support is now being researched for other sources of funding as the requests for presentations has exceeded our committee's expectations and budget.

Recently the government changed to Liberal with Robert Ghiz as the newest and youngest Canadian premier. We look forward to dealing with the new government in all areas but certainly with ongoing and upcoming contract negotiations.

5. Status of Women

Sister Hildahl informed the committee that the binders contain a section of updates on the cuts to the Status of Women including a report from the Standing Committee on the Status of Women on the impacts of funding and program changes at Status of Women Canada. The report highlights the significant impact that Minister Oda's recommendations on the Status of Women Canada have had to the organizations it has supported. A discussion was held regarding the real need for grassroots support for these organizations.

6. Other Business

A tentative date for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues was set for November 5 and 6, 2007.

Chair Hildahl advised that there was material included in the binder on NUPGE's continued support of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), on LabourStart's new website section on Working Women, the latest World March of Women Newsletter (which includes an article on the recent attacks to women's equality in Canada) and the most recent e-newsletter Pay Equity Now.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.