

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues

October 19, 2003 – Wakefield, Quebec

In Attendance:

NUPGE	Marie Bean
NAPE	Sheila Beaton
NSGEU	Martha Brown
NBPEA	Lydia Jaillet
PEIUPSE	Eileen Leclair
OPSEU	Helen Riehl
BGPWU	Marg Ducie
MGEU	Kelly-Ann Ivory
SGEU	Linda Anweiler
BCGEU	Catherine Bell
	Wendi Lawrence

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Marie Bean. Sister Brenda Hildahl could not be in attendance due to other commitments associated with the upcoming Women's Leadership Development Forum.

A warm welcome was given to Sister Sheila Beaton from Newfoundland and Labrador who is replacing Sister Cynthia Burke. Sister Burke has recently been elected as Secretary-Treasurer of NAPE/NUPGE. A warm welcome was also extended to Sister Wendi Lawrence from British Columbia who was in attendance with Sister Catherine Bell. This NUPGE meeting was the last one for Sister Bell as the representative of BCGEU/NUPGE as the position has now been transferred to Sister Lawrence. The committee members wished Sister Bell all the best. Introductions were made around the table.

Contact information sheets were circulated for any changes and these will be sent out with the minutes for the information of committee members.

For the benefit of the new members, Sister Bean outlined what should be included in the agenda item 'component reports'– which is negotiation details, major campaigns, other significant initiatives, and the work of component women's committees. Also, as these reports are contained within the minutes of the meeting, these reports are to be provided in written format at the meeting (or post meeting if not readily available).

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

No amendments or additions were presented to the distributed agenda.

3. **Adoption of Minutes – March 20/21, 2003**

The minutes of the March 20/21, 2003 meeting were reviewed and adopted.

4. **Component Reports**

NBPEA

Sister Lydia Jaillet reported:

General News

AGM

NBPEA held its 33rd Annual General Meeting on the weekend of September 5th - 7th, 2003 in Fredericton. It was the first year NBPEA held a convention which held its Annual General Meeting in conjunction with the components Annual Meetings, thus allowing for greater membership participation.

NBPEA made history when its union members voted to join the National Labour Movement (CLC). Up to now, NBPEA has been in a 3 year trial association with NUPGE. James Clancy was present and congratulated the NBPEA delegates on their decision. Debbie Lacelle, NBPEA President was re elected to serve her 3rd two year term.

Motions passed: changes to NBPEA's structure and governance. These changes were made to direct how new groups join NBPEA.

- term limits on the elected officials was deleted to allow the membership to decide when it is time for change.
- NBPEA was mandated to only purchasing goods and services that are not produced in third-world sweat shops.

Pension Plan Improvement:

NBPEA has members in three different Pension Plans, one of which 2 of our components belong to (SHCP & Paramed); this Pension Plan is in the process of implementing its latest improvement called the "Phased-In Retirement Program" which allows plan members over 55 to reduce their hours to 40-60% of Full time while earning 85% of their salary and continue to earn Full Time pension credits for those years (max 5 years).

Other Activities:

NBPEA continues its growth and is sought to speak out on several government issues. We have been heavily involved in the fight:

- 1) to promote Public no Fault Insurance with public awareness campaigns;
- 2) to continue the struggle with our many partners against privatization in health care and in other Public Sectors.

Update On Negotiations

The last two groups up for bargaining this cycle have completed their negotiations.

- 1) Technical Group have achieved a 9% increase over 3-1/2 years plus no rollbacks of previously held language or benefits.
- 2) Education Instructional Group is now on a ratification tour to be completed on October 17, 2003. The basis of the agreement would extend to a 5 year agreement with a 12.5% increase over the term of the contract.

Women's Committee Activities

2003 Annual General Meeting & Convention

The Women's Committee wanted to be very involved with the AGM and Convention this year, and planned many events to do so. The events included:

MEET & GREET / Welcoming

The Women's Committee table was available with information throughout the weekend and Committee members were available to greet arriving members, answer questions and direct members to the meet and greet and registration areas. It provided us the opportunity to be visible to our members as well as assist with the opening events.

50/50 Draw

The Women's Committee again held a 50/50 draw, which has become standard at union gatherings with the proceeds going to worthy causes. For this draw the Women's Committee selected "Healing Hands For Haiti" several NBPEA's members will be traveling to Haiti in January 2004 to participate in this project. Throughout the weekend at the Women's Committee table, members were able to view information on "Healing Hands" and a brief description of the project was presented at the Women's Breakfast. If you would like more information on this project, visit www.healinghandsforhaiti.org

Women's Breakfast

The Second Annual Women's Committee Breakfast was held on the final morning of the Convention. Approximately 100 sisters and brothers participated. We started the morning by reading the story of one of the women from the silent witness project. We then viewed and discussed a video regarding women in unions and how to become more involved. We also had the pleasure of being entertained by one of our talented sisters, Lin Richardson who sang for us! The committee and those in attendance were very pleased with this event.

Shampoos for Shelters

In each registration package, "Shampoos for Shelters" bags were included so members could easily collect the toiletries in the rooms that they were not using. Several boxes of toiletries were collected and distributed throughout the province. A significant number of members brought in items on their own and many worksites have placed boxes in the workplace for ongoing collections. This is a very simple yet important project. The shelters greatly appreciate the donations as many women arrive at the shelters with nothing. The women's committee is hopeful that more workplaces will start their own collections for the shelters in their area.

Silent Witness Program

One of the main events for the Women's Committee during the past year was to become involved with the Muriel McQueen Ferguson foundation's Silent Witness Program. The Committee sponsored the creation of two silhouettes for the program. The program is a display of silhouettes representing New Brunswick Women who have been murdered as a result of domestic violence. During the opening remarks, the program was introduced to members and the two new silhouettes were unveiled. The entire collection of silhouettes remained on display throughout the convention. Many of our members stated that they were very moved by the project and very proud that NBPEA was a part of this opportunity to remember the women and educate our communities.

Overall the convention was a huge success and the Women's Committee members were very pleased with the events.

upcoming events... ..

Union Activist Training

The Women's Committee has planned that at all union activist trainings there will be sessions that specifically focus on women's issues. At the next union activist training the session is titled "*Women's Issues and Negotiations*". It is anticipated that the participants will review and develop family friendly collective bargaining provisions for the next round of negotiations. It will be an excellent opportunity for participants to explore what type of language they want to see in their contracts such as provisions for family leave. Committee members look forward to seeing new language in the contracts.

Membership Survey

The Women's has developed a survey for the membership that will help direct some of our future activities. It will be sent out in the near future.

Committee Pamphlet

The Committee is developing a new pamphlet, outlining our purposes and goals. This will also be distributed to the members along with our survey.

OPSEU

Sister Helen Riehl reported: Well the good news, the Tory's are out. I don't know how good though as the Liberals are in. Unfortunately with the fall of the Tory's, many bought the liberal line "You need the voice of government in your home town to get anything done". This resulted in the NDP losing official party status, as they were one seat short of the 8 needed to do so. The Liberal's have said that they will allow the NDP to ask questions in question period but will not allow them research money. Although the NDP lost seats they did show an increase in percentage support up to 15%. The chances are that there will be a by-election, which will give the NDP a chance to regain Party Status. I am keeping my fingers crossed.

OPSEU played an active roll in the elections there were members who were booked *off* full time to work for candidates. OPSEU activists called almost every OPSEU member during the election to encourage our members to vote. Basically it was all hands on deck to elect our boss. Our women's committee published a document which included questions and answers to issues of importance to us. Members were encouraged to use this document when attending candidates meetings, talking to members, friends and neighbors. The Ontario Federation of Labour also created a Women's Vote document this was widely distributed during the election.

We are now in a hold position as the Liberal's get to the job of governing. They have already said it is going to take longer then they thought to implement their plan as the financial situation is worse then anticipated.

Bargaining in the Colleges Collective Agreement is ongoing. Both the Support Staff and the Academic Staff agreements expired in August. The support group members rejected the employer's offer by 95.5 per cent. The team is looking forward to getting back to the table knowing they have a tremendous amount of support behind them. The key issues are job security, parity with other employee groups in the colleges for benefits vacation and workload.

OPSEU leaders will be meeting this week to continue to develop OPSEU's equity framework. This project is a working plan to build equity into every thing we do. This working session will see the equity chairs that being the chairs of the following equity caucuses, Human Rights Committee, Women's Committee, Rainbow Alliance, Disability Rights Caucus, Aboriginal Caucus, Youth Caucus and the Workers of Color Caucus.

These leaders will meet with many other leaders of OPSEU to discuss barriers and inequities that exist in OPSEU with a plan to eliminate and

accommodate these barriers making OPSEU inclusive to all.

OPSEU continues to educate their members and staff at many different educational levels. Currently there is a large effort taking place to ensure that staff have the skills to provide education using the popular education method. To date there has also been three Train the Trainer sessions held with a mixture of staff and members. The intent is to create a group of well trained educators in OPSEU.

In June approximately 15 OPSEU women attended the CLC women's Conference in Ottawa. The conference was very well received and has encouraged more women to become involved in women's issues.

In November of this year Our Women's Committee will plan, organize and deliver our Bi-annual Women's conference. For this conference we targeted women from diverse backgrounds. We will base our workshops on the book 'Starting With Women's Lives' by Bev Burke and Suzanne Dorge using the Popular education method gathering information from the experiences of the women participating. The objective is to make links between our homes workplaces and communities. We plan to have an international bazaar where various groups have been invited to sell their wares such as fair trade coffee and aboriginal women's crafts.

This year at the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention plans are in the works for the OPSEU Women's Committee to host a soup kitchen with our sisters from Steel. It is meant to be a fundraiser aimed at the delegates at the convention as well as bringing awareness to the issues of increasing poverty. We will hold it outside so the public will see it, hopefully some media will pick it up as well.

OPSEU has a large charitable campaign under way. It is called the Live and Let Live Fund. This project is a fundraiser for HIV / AIDS, and we are working with Steven Lewis. There are challenges at various OPSEU events to raise money. Locals are being encouraged to participate and donate a per capita amount. OPSEU centrally is matching funds raised. At our Women's Conference we have a hair dyeing fund- raiser planned.

We continue to organize new members and reorganize our members affected by mergers. Many of these mergers have resulted in fewer services being available to the citizens of Ontario. OPSEU is currently organizing a campaign aimed at re building Public Services.

Our next immediate challenges are the Municipal elections they take place on November 10 2003 and of course the Federal elections sometime within the next few months.

NSGEU

Sister Martha Brown reported: Since we last met the members of NSGEU has experienced a Biennial Convention, a provincial election, and the longest strike in the history of our union and finally Hurricane Juan.

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

GENERAL ISSUES:

NSGEU Biennial Convention:

NSGEU held a very positive and productive Biennial Convention May 7-10, 2003. The theme of this year's convention was "NSGEU: On Your Side", a reflection of the Union's commitment to our membership. Three of the table officers were elected by acclamation, namely President, Joan Jessome; 1st Vice President, Ken Conrod and myself Martha Brown as 2nd Vice President. Other officers elected for the first time were 3rd . Vice President, Larry Stewart and Secretary Treasurer, Darren McPhee.

Provincial Election:

August of 2003 saw Premier John Hamm and the Tories return to power - but with a minority government. We will now play the "wait and see" game to determine if that is a good thing or a bad one for the labour movement in the province. As a result of the concerted efforts by the striking Local 66 members 4 of John Hamm's cabinet ministers went down to defeat.

Local 66 Strike:

Members of NSGEU local 66 ended their 11-week strike on June 25, 2003 by voting to ratify a collective agreement, on the condition that wages and the term of the contract would be sent to "binding mediation" for resolution. In handing down his decision, the arbitrator, Bruce Outhouse moved away from the Province's insistence on wage increases of two per cent. He offered the employees a two per cent increase retroactive to April 1, 2002. He then combined economic and special adjustments, which total 3.8 per cent, 3.75 and 3 per cent in a four-year contract ending March 31, 2006.

In addition, employees will receive a lump sum payment of \$1,375. While the members were a bit disappointed in the settlement compared to what they were asking, the mediator's decision was much better than the employer's last offer. We are currently in the process of producing a documentary to capture the events of this "the longest strike" in the union's history.

Hurricane Juan:

In the aftermath of devastation caused by hurricane Juan, NSGEU was

shocked and saddened to learn of the tragic death of paramedic John Rossiter when a tree uprooted by the hurricane fell on his ambulance. John a member of Local 42 was a dedicated trade unionist.

Staffing:

Linda Power, former Health Care Co-ordinator was appointed as Executive Director.

Anne Barrett, former Employees Relations Officer was appointed as Health Care Co-ordinator.

Dawn Shives, former Director Financial and Administrative Services resigned to pursue another career opportunity. We are presently in the process of filling her position.

Shawn Fuller, Research Officer is temporarily on staff covering for a one-year's leave of absence.

Labour Resource Centre:

Plans are well on the way to have the Labour Resource Centre up and running as of April 2004. Representatives from MGEU will be making a presentation to our new Board of Director's meeting in November.

Health Care:

In June 2003, the union made a request to the Nova Scotia Labour Relations Board to immediately withdraw its application to merge the nursing bargaining units at the Capital District Health Authority (CDHA). The move followed a Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) ruling that the application violated the CLC constitution. Although disappointed with the ruling and believe that at the time the application was made we were not in violation of the CLC constitution, NSGEU has complied with the decision of the CLC Umpire, Vic Pathe.

Bill 68 Video:

NSGEU released the video "No Surrender: The Rise and Fall of Bill 68" in July 2003. This 30-minute video documentary depicts the Union's victory in fighting the Hamm government for attempting to erode the full and free collective bargaining rights in the summer of 2001. A copy of this video has been sent to all our National Union affiliates.

NSGEU'S Website:

NSGEU launched its redesigned website in September. Be sure to check it out at www.nsgeu.ns.ca

BARGAINING ISSUES/UPDATES:

Bargaining:

Although many of our Bargaining Teams are in preparation for upcoming bargaining, others have been successful in ratifying new collective agreements.

- Local 66 (Regional Residential Services Society) - detailed above
- Local 86 (Mountain Lea Lodge) - reached via conciliation. Wage parity with other nursing home staff across the province, a \$300.00 lump sum payment and a wage increase of 2% in each year of a three year contract.
- Local 43 (Canadian Blood Services) - voted 89% in favour of a 2 year agreement. Wage parity with employees in the CDHA and significant improvements for part time employees.
- Local 41 (Duncan MacMillan Nursing home) - Local (Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech). New 2 year agreement

BUNC Convention:

Very successful Civil Services Bargaining Convention was held in September 2003.

Classification Review(s):

The members of the Civil Service as well as our members of the Capital District Health Authority are STILL waiting for the results and implementation of their respective Classification Review processes.

WOMEN'S ISSUES:

A new Women's Committee was established following our Biennial Convention. Our first meeting is scheduled for November 7-8, 2003.

CLC Women's Conference:

Two women from NSGEU's Women's committee attended this conference held in Ottawa, June 2003

FemJepp:

Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy (FemJEPP) Women's Election Committee partnered with non-government organizations and other labour groups, during the recent provincial election. The Women's Election Committee mapped out a campaign to encourage women to vote based on the party's stand on women and family issues. Copies of the pamphlet are available in both English and French.

Annual Women's Conference:

This year's NSGEU Women's Conference was held October 3-5, in Debert, NS. The conference participants built "The Wall". This visual exercise explores the many and varied roles of women in their home, community, workplaces and union and how we as women and our roles are impacted by the many changes in the society around us. From the evaluations forms the knowledge they received as well as the sharing of each other's experiences stimulated the women who attended.

Transition Houses:

Our committee financially supported the striking workers of the Autumn

House Women's Shelter, Amherst, and NS. Ten women, all members of CUPE Local 4326, have been on strike since August 11, 2003. A candlelight vigil in support of these women was held in Amherst last night.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

Our committee supported this cause by holding a successful raffle. The money raised through the raffle was forwarded to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation - Atlantic Chapter.

National Day of Remembrance and Action against Violence:

Once again this year our committee will be distributing purple ribbons embossed with the NSGEU Women's Committee logo to all locals and board members with a letter encouraging donations be made to the Purple Ribbon Campaign in Nova Scotia.

NUPGE Women's Leadership Development Forum:

NSGEU is fortunate is having three members attending this forum in Wakefield, Quebec - October 2003.

FUTURE PLANS:

- International Women's Day 2004 Event

SGEU

Sister Linda Anweiler reported: Within SGEU the following has taken place since the last NUPGE Women's Committee meeting on March 20, 2003:

A Provincial election has been called for November 5th. SGEU is urging all members to take an active role in the election. They are asking members to send a strong, clear message to all political parties in the upcoming campaign. The message is that the public sector workers provide vital services to families and communities and that we help fuel the Saskatchewan economy. The union is providing members with the tools to determine where candidates stand on crucial issues. An Election Guide for SGEU members was distributed that provides information on key issues and suggest questions to ask candidates to determine where they stand.

1. COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR

On October 1, 2003 the Community Service Workers and their supports had a noon hour rally sending the message "We're Worth More and We Vote!" The message was to Premier Calvert in front of the Cabinet Minister Office in Saskatoon. In February 2001, Premier Lorne Calvert promised to increase wages for community based workers and work with the CBO to develop a long term plan for achieving parity. This years 3% raise was the lowest increase in several years. It appears the government

is renegeing on its promise to address the pay inequities. The CBO campaign is organized by SEIU, CUPE and SGEU.

2. HEALTH SECTOR

A wage equity agreement has been reached between the province's health service providers and SABO. Thousands of health care workers will receive increases as a result of job evaluation process. The agreement means that 13.3 % of payroll will be allocated towards achieving pay equity. The health care workers are members of CUPE, SEIU, and SGEU.

3. PUBLIC SERVICES

The SGEU Public Service showed it's support for the provinces beef industry by sponsoring a fundraiser in Swift Current on September 18th. A beef on a bun dinner was held in the Center Court Mall and approximately \$3000.00 was raised which was donated to the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. The PSGE Collective Agreement expired September 30, 2003 and we are now in the process of bargaining a new agreement. Talks are now on hold pending the Provincial election.

4. RETAIL REGULATORY SECTOR

The Retail Regulatory is in the mist of a campaign "#Good Reasons to Support Public Liquor Stores." They include:

Liquor prices are generally lower in Saskatchewan than in Alberta.

Public liquor stores promote the socially responsible sale of alcohol

Public liquor stores offer excellent product selection

Public liquor stores provide good jobs with decent wages.

5. ADULT EDUCATION

SGEU has filed and unfair labour practice against SIAST. The education institute's negotiators are refusing to provide adequate time to bargain its two SGEU Collective Agreements which expired June 30th 2003.

SGEU WOMEN'S COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The SGEU Women's Committee has had two meetings since the last NUPGE Women's Committee meeting in March 2003.

On May 12th our committee met where we reviewed:

- The Prairie School for Union Women's participant's reports which were all very positive.
- The SGEU Women's Committee budget where we were reinstated by the Finance Committee \$8000.00 to our budget.
- The CLC Women's Conference where 2 of our committee members will attend.
- The NUPGE Women's Leadership Forum where 2 members will attend.
- The 2003 SGEU Convention and our resolutions that did not pass at

convention. WE have looked at an action plan for submitting our 2004 resolutions to convention and how we can be more successful.

- We discussed the FLOW Campaign and advertised for members from the six sectors to sit on the committee. They are to review our union to find out why FLOW are not adequately represented in the union.
- The Youth Campaign, the committee has decided to do a youth poster. The focus was on internal campaign and how positive it is for a young person to become actively involved.
- International Women's Day posters. We looked at many of the other province's posters and came up with some suggestions ie 90 Years of History, We Can Do It- based on the camp poster, 90 Years of Progress where we come, where we need to go, and attach years of each success-list of accomplishments and what we still want.
- The 2004 SGEU Women's Conference. We discussed the survey results from the 2003 Convention which we will continue at our next meeting.

On September 15, at our last SGEU Women's committee meeting:

- A request was made that each of the 6 sectors submit a report on their sector activity prior to each Women's Committee Meeting.
- We reviewed the 12th Biennial National CLC Women's Conference report. Some concern was expressed about the format and content for example too many speakers and not enough time to interact with other members.
- Front Line Office Workers we received a report on the FLOW structure Review Committee. The goal of the review is to determine whether FLOW members are in decision-making positions within SGEU. The project is to essentially create a map to show us where we are at and what needs to be done. The Women's committee members and the FLOW members are being asked to observe union meeting and fill out a check list. The Flow video has been shown in several locations. We need to keep track of the number of video presentations, number of women in attendance and who they are and if the FLOWS who participate in the video workshop have become more active.
- The Youth Campaign, we have drafted a version of a youth orientation kit. A ULD 5 Youth/New Member Orientation Course has now been designed.
- International Women's Day Poster- we discussed concepts for the poster. We have decided to make it useful for multiple events and occasions. We are also asking members to submit design ideas. Also looking into using the BCGEU "Rosie the Riveter" graphic.
- We discussed Convention Resolutions and discussed the ones that we will resubmit to 2004 convention and the new ones that we are submitting.
- The 2004 SGEU Women's budget was reviewed and submitted.
- The 2004 Women's Conference we decided on the theme "A Woman'

Place is in Her Union". We discussed workshop ideas ie Pay Equity, Balancing Work and Family, Childcare, and Leadership. We also discussed potential speakers on organizing women.

- Women's Jackets we are looking into fleece jackets and having our women's logo design on them for sale at our next convention.
- Our next meeting will be held December 8, 2003.

PEIUPSE

Sister Eileen Leclair reported: Following are some highlights of the PEIUPSE Equality Committee:

- U.P.S.E. Equality Committee celebrated International Women's Day by attending a breakfast to support the five striking C.U.P.E. members (women) Group Home Workers who had been out for eight months. U.P.S.E., the largest union on P.E.I. wanted our Binns' Government to know that we stand united with all unions and all union members. This strike was settled after eleven months.
- A very successful spring conference co-sponsored by the Education Committee, Equality Committee and the Stewards Council was held with workshops on pre-retirement and pensions, pay equity, the classification process and the legalities for stewards.
- Pamphlets on "Moving On" dealing with starting life over alone - early warning signs for future abuse) types of abuse and why women stay were distributed throughout the workplaces on P .E.I.
- Our committee participated in a Medicare rally in Charlottetown during the 44th Annual Premier's Conference.
- Members of our Committee participated in the C.I.B.C. Run for The Cure Walk and we also made a monetary donation.
- U.P.S.E.'s Annual Convention will be held on October 24 and 25th with a resolution submitted by our committee to lobby our employers and Government recognize Licenced Practical Nurses, Resident Care Workers and Home Care Workers education and duties that reflect the incumbents scope of practice.
- We have purchased ribbons and lapel pins with our logo and will be encouraging women to wear them on December 6th - National Day of Mourning.
- Tentative plans for a one day course on "Dealing with Sexual Harassment" is being scheduled for February, 2004.

NAPE

Sister Sheila Beaton reported:

Election of union office

This year once again NAPE went to the members to elect their President and Secretary-Treasurer. Leo Puddister, a long time member activist and staff person, was elected by mail-in ballot. Cynthia Burke, who was the chair of the Women's Issues Committee is now our Secretary-Treasurer.

Biennial Convention

NAPE's Biennial Convention took place this year in June. We had a great turnout to this Convention and debates were both informative and at times heated. A new Women's Issues Committee was elected at the Biennial with myself as Chair, Susan Skinner for Central Region, Fran Cumby for Eastern Region and Arlene Sedlickas for Western Region.

NAPE News that affects women

Pay Equity

The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to hear an appeal by NAPE, of a December 6, 2002 decision by the Newfoundland Court of Appeal. The Newfoundland Court of Appeal decision was related to NAPE's long-standing dispute about implementation of pay equity by the provincial government.

In 1995 NAPE went to arbitration looking to have the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's 1991 decision to delay implementing pay equity adjustments overturned. Members covered by the Hospital Support Staff, Waterford Hospital, Laboratory and X-Ray, Victorian Order of Nurses (St. John's), Central Laundry, and Group Homes Collective Agreements had seen their pay equity adjustments delayed under the 1991 Public Sector Restraint Act. At arbitration, NAPE argued that government's action discriminated against women, contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

NAPE won the arbitration, and the Board ordered government to pay the NAPE members affected in excess of \$80 million. This decision was then appealed to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland by the provincial government. The Supreme Court of Newfoundland issued a decision that favored the provincial government, which was in turn appealed by NAPE to the Newfoundland Court of Appeal in 1998.

On December 6, 2000, the Newfoundland Court of Appeal delivered its decision. The Newfoundland Court of Appeal found the arbitration board had the right to find the provincial government's actions discriminatory; however, the Newfoundland Court of Appeal also found it acceptable for the provincial government to violate the equality rights, if, in the Court of

Appeal's view, the violation was justified under the charter. This resulted in a story on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* because in delivering this decision, Justice William Marshall amended the test of justification, which was established by the Supreme Court of Canada.

This whole issue is now before the Supreme Court of Canada and scheduled for March 23, 2004.

WISE

NAPE has applied for conciliation under the provincial Labour Relations Act on behalf of nine members employed by the Women Interested in Successful Employment Corporation (WISE). NAPE has been in negotiations with WISE since November of 2002. The employer walked away from the table in the midst of negotiations on Friday, July 4, 2003. Outstanding issues include maternity leave provisions, harassment provisions, sick leave, wages, discrimination and job security.

NAPE members employed by WISE provide counseling services to women who are seeking to enter or re-enter the labour force or decide career paths. It is ironic that an organization that exists to help women should refuse to offer its employees adequate provisions for maternity leave, harassment and discrimination.

Home Care Workers

In Newfoundland and Labrador there are between 5,000 and 6,000 home care workers, most of which are women. These individuals go into private homes to provide health care and homemaking services to senior citizens and to people with disabilities. NAPE is proud to say more than 2,900 of these home care workers have signed cards to date.

Their work allows our loved ones to remain at home, out of institutions. Their work also allows people to be discharged from hospital early, reducing the burden and costs on our health care system.

These workers are woefully underpaid. They have few if any benefits. Many of them still do not have access to Workers' Compensation, despite the physically demanding nature of their work. Often they work in the most difficult of conditions. Often they are treated unfairly.

This is why in the fall of 2002 NAPE began the process of organizing this province's home care workers. We are the province's largest union, and we already represent more health care workers than any other union.

NAPE has already publicly stated how it intends to negotiate on behalf of home care workers in this province. Once NAPE is certified to act as bargaining agent for a majority of the home care workers employed by private and not-for profit agencies, we will begin negotiating with all of the agencies at one time. We have already suggested to the agencies where we have been

certified that they elect an employers' council to bargain with NAPE. On August 13, 2003, we asked the provincial minister of health and community services, Gerald Smith, to discuss giving NAPE voluntary recognition for the roughly two thousand home care workers employed by private individuals who have signed NAPE cards.

This approach to negotiating first contracts will ensure that no agency is singled out and that all agencies are required to pay adequate wages, provide appropriate benefits, and treat their workers fairly. We believe this is the key to negotiating the very best deal for home care workers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Wage Increase Claw Back

NAPE believes a recent ruling by Newfoundland Supreme Court Justice Gerald Lang should have implications for thousands of its members who work for the provincial government. In his ruling, Justice Lang says that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador did not have the right to reduce a recommended 30.5 per cent wage increase for Provincial Court judges to 20.8 per cent. The provincial government had argued it did not have the money. According to Lang, "This reason is not adequate, is unsupported, and does not meet the test of simple rationality laid down by the Supreme Court of Canada. There is no evidence to support this statement: 'There is no money.'"

The provincial Liberal government of Clyde Wells had argued there was no money when it passed The Public Sector Restraint Act in 1991. This Act was used to freeze the wages of provincial government workers, including eliminating 15 per cent of a 22 per cent wage increase that was part of a signed three-year contract.

The media has also reported Justice Lang as saying: "The highest court in the land has also ruled that just because a report from a tribunal is not binding, does not mean the executive and legislature can ignore it."

NAPE president, Leo Puddister, is arguing that a negotiated signed contract must carry at least as much weight as a report from a tribunal. Leo has made contact with the current Liberal premier, Roger Grimes, to do the fair thing and give our members the 15 per cent wage increase that they were denied by his Liberal predecessor, Clyde Wells." The grievance relating to this issue have been reactivated.

Petition Drive for Nursing Home

On Saturday, September 27, 2003, NAPE volunteers across the province occupied tables at major shopping centres and grocery stores, and asked members of the public to sign a petition calling for increased funding for public nursing homes in Newfoundland and Labrador. The petition indicates this funding should be directed to prevent cuts to front-line staff

and allow rehiring of front-line staff who have been laid off. The event has been organized by NAPE's provincial women's committee.

This province's system of publicly funded, publicly administered, publicly delivered nursing homes is in desperate need of defense. Cuts to front-line staff have had a negative affect on the quality of life of some of our most vulnerable citizens, including many of our elderly. The Women's Issues Committee felt it was time for all of us to speak out and tell the provincial government to provide adequate funding to public nursing homes.

Provincial government election

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador will vote on October 21, 2003 in a provincial election. Some of the concerns are job cut backs, out migration and public-private partnering.

For the women of NAPE, as well as other women in Newfoundland and Labrador, gender continues to be an election issue. The number of women in leadership and decision making roles still lags behind that of men. If this lack of women's leadership continues, issues important to women will continue to be of minor importance and successive governments will provide little resourcing to promote issues of gender equality.

The provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women provided a Newfoundland and Labrador Women's election guide. This guide provided information to women on issues such as: equality, women and justice, economic security and independence, women and health, education and the environment. The Women's Issues Committee provided 500 copies of the guide to the Advisory Council and distributed more to the women of NAPE.

Future Plans of the Committee

Sexual and physical harassment in the workplace appears to be on the rise in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is the intention of the Women's Committee to go out into the communities and provide a one day workshop on this issue. The Committee will visit both urban and rural Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure we reach as many people as possible. Our first workshops will be in the isolated communities in Labrador. These workshops are planned for November 22 and 23. It is the Committee's hope to have the island completed by the end of March. This will be no small task.

The Women's Committee is also committed to developing a new mandate with goals and activities which will mirror the needs and concerns voiced by the women of NAPE. The Committee has planned a weekend long

meeting to start this process. We are hoping that this weekend will spark some wonderful new ideas.

BCGEU

Sister Wendi Lawrence reported - It's an honour for me to be appointed to the NUPGE Women's Committee and I look forward to continuing the wonderful work that Sister Catherine Bell and others before us have done on behalf of the "Women of the Union".

BCGEU Women's Committee

Our last meeting was held April 25th this year. The primary issues revolved around the effects of Liberal Government cuts on services to women, and the impact on our members in their workplaces:

- the majority of cuts in direct government service have affected Administrative Service members, 95% of whom are women;
- health care cuts and the legislated slashing of agreements has primarily impacted women, both in the services provided and those who provide them;
- the threat of Liquor Distribution privatization will affect a now female-dominated workforce, many of whom are single parents or young workers;
- Community Social Service cuts and Ministry of Child and Family Services proposed devolution to community, while slashing it's budget will have severe impact on women, children and families across the province, as well as elimination of jobs done primarily by women. 450 more jobs are slated to be eliminated in the ministry as this is being written.

As depressing as this is, our fightback strategy has included positive campaigns on restoring services to women through posters, radio adds, position papers, news releases, and resolutions to conventions, including the Union of BC Municipalities, putting pressure on local and municipal councils. We've also raised awareness of the value of women's work and services through events like celebrating Admin. Services Day throughout government and producing our TV video, '*Cut to the Heart*'. Our next aim is to involve women in a campaign similar to Women's Vote in Ontario, as we approach the next provincial election. The BCGEU Women's Committee also has it's own website now. Check it out at www.bcgeu.ca, click on 'Committees'. Our next meeting will be held December 12, 2003.

Summer Institute for Union Women

This year's institute was a combined effort with AFL CIO affiliates from the Western USA - "Women's World Order" was held at the University of Victoria (*July 9 - 13, 2003*). Even during the toughest times, it's inspiring

and exhilarating when women get together to learn and share. This event was no exception, particularly for the BCGEU, as we made up almost 1/3 of the delegation, including many young workers and new activists.

Bargaining

- Our Government Service Master Bargaining group just negotiated a tentative settlement, well ahead of the agreement expiry date, as the Provincial Government proposed trying to reach an early agreement on an extension of the existing one until 2006. Not only does the settlement reached extend the agreement with no loss of benefits, although no increase in wages, it hinges on keeping our Liquor Distribution system in government, and keeps the government stores open and our members at work, as well as providing increased job security provisions - THIS IS A HUGE WIN for the union and our members. Ratification will take place by early November.
- Community Social Services started bargaining October 6th at a master table including 13 unions covering about 15,000 members. It's hoped a Master Agreement can be reached for this group, which unfortunately doesn't include child care workers this round, due to new legislation, and faces huge pressure given budget reductions of 70 million in the ministry that funds them.
- Health care is a nightmare with health care workers facing either roll back agreements or contracting out. In many areas, workers are decertifying from their union, rather than face job loss, and interim agreements are being negotiated on a case by case basis that see roll backs of wages and benefits. The alternative is job loss, with scab contracts being let, and the existing workers, primarily women, out on the street.

NDP Leadership Race

We do have a hope in BC, and our next provincial election provides some of that hope. At present the candidates for the Provincial NDP Leadership race are presenting their views around the province, and the BCGEU Executive has pledged support to the only women in the race, Carole James, who has a strong background in public service, education, and First Nations issues. This year's November Leadership Convention will see the BCNDP Women's Rights Committee sponsor a first ever Women's Conference in conjunction with that convention.

Our hope also comes from our members, and our communities, who are working so hard in our struggle against the capitalist machine that is the Liberal Government. At rally after rally, council meeting after council meeting, forum after forum, people are speaking out and fighting back. We head into our mid-term policy convention themed "*Organizing to Win*"

(October 24 26, 2003) knowing we must continue the struggle, but take time to celebrate the victories, and we will overcome.

BGPWU

Sister Marg Ducie gave a brief verbal report that there was nothing too new on the BGPWU front.

MGEU

Sister Kelly-Ann Ivory reported:

Bargaining

Many of our locals are immersed in the bargaining process; some have been able to bring the bargaining process to a ratification end. Unfortunately, the largest contract The Master Collective Agreement for all Civil Service Employees remains unresolved. They have been in bargaining since early April, and to date, there have been over 30 sessions. Sister Wales (MGEU 1st Vice-president / NEB Board member) has been extensively involved in these negotiations. It is "suggested" that a resolve / conclusion may be sooner versus later. Many of our locals have been offered the "standard Manitoba public sector offer" of 3%, 3%, and 3%. Many professional technical / healthcare components are struggling at their various bargaining tables. Lengthy and prolonged bargaining is the main obstacle. Despite in the spring, the Provincial budget reflected the largest funding increases were in Health Care along with Education and Justice. Many components upon conclusion of their bargaining are now in the process of Wage standardization.

After a three-year fight, Community Support Workers finally see justice over 12 hour shifts. The Regional Health Authorities have been mailing out over \$6 million in compensation to hundreds of Provincial Community Support Workers. The payouts ranged from \$200 to \$40,000 per worker. This arbitration went as far as the Court of Queen's Bench. For a workforce that is primarily women, many are single parents, who earn on average \$20,000 annually. This unexpected cheque has been life changing.

Resource Centre

The MGEU Board of Directors has approved that the MGEU Resource Centre will be a permanent service for our membership following an 18-month trial period. Many other NUPGE components have visited the MGEU Resource Centre - BCGEU, OPSEU, NSGEU and NUPGE Executive Board all have received presentations regarding the implementation and effectiveness of our Resource Centre. The Resource Centre has proved to be a valuable training opportunity for those who are interested in staff representative positions. A Resource Centre poll conducted resulted in very favourable responses from our membership.

Organizing

MGEU continues to grow with new certifications with Ambulance attendants, teaching assistants, group homes, and many others in the social service industry. We continue to organize childcare agencies. Currently, we now have 60 locals that have applied for certification. In the near future, we will be approaching the Government to develop a central table and/or associations of child care worksites for collective bargaining.

Staffing

It is with regret that we had to say good-bye to our Arbitration Specialist, Mr. Colin Robinson, who had accepted the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Manitoba labour Board. The MGEU is pleased to announce and welcome Ms Helen Krahn as our new Arbitration Specialist.

With the departure of Brother Ken Hildahl last fall; the MGEU successfully hired Brother Bob Dewar as the Director of Policy, Planning and Administration. Brother Dewar, had formerly been on staff with the MGEU, but was on an extended leave of absence to serve as the Premier's Chief of Staff.

In the spring, Sister Cathy Woods was hired as the MGEU Aboriginal Liaison Officer. The MGEU shall endeavor to educate Aboriginal Manitobans about what Unions can mean for them, in addition, increase our understanding of the unique perspectives Aboriginal Manitobans bring to the work environment. The MGEU is now accepting applications for the Membership Training and Development Program - hiring an active member as a staff representative for a 6-8 month trial period.

Women's Committee

Focusing the majority of our efforts in the development of the MGEU's Women's Conference to be held on February 20 to 22, 2004. See attached "First Announcement" of the Women's Conference. This conference shall be a completely different format versus the standard format of small workshops and break out times etc. We have secured our guest speaker, Ms Judy Wasylycia-leis, MP, NDP Winnipeg North Centre.

Committees and more committees

The MGEU has developed a Youth Committee. This committee has toured the Province over the spring and summer months. We are anticipating their report, which will provide their recommendations for continued and sustained Youth involvement within the MGEU.

The MGEU has also developed an Equity Committee. This special working committee has been given the responsibility to review our policies regarding Equity issues and shall be providing recommendations to our next convention to be held in the fall of 2004.

Comings, Goings, and Events at the MGEU

- On June 2, 2003, the residents of Manitoba re-elected the MGEU's former President, Gary Doer. With a stronger majority than before, and even more women are now in the Legislature.
- The MFL convention was held on September 18th to 21st, 2003. The MGEU held a Women's Caucus meeting the evening prior to the opening of the convention and allowing MGEU Women activist to identify themselves to new / first time delegates.
- On October 7, 2003, the MFL is calling for a boycott of Terra Footwear, which sells Protective Boots. The company's billboard ads depict women in lingerie in suggestive positions while wearing work boots (see attached story). At the time of writing this document, it has been reported in the media that the advertisements/billboards will be removed. These ads have been removed from the Terra Footwear Web page.
- Winnipeg has become a non-smoking city "no smoking in any public places". Manitoba may be the first Province to implement this "no smoking in public places" Province wide. We shall be monitoring how this will affect our members, both in their workplaces, such as Casinos and personally.
- MGEU Website. New changes are pending and an updated and improved site is anticipated. The MGEU will be developing this as an "in-house" adventure and it is anticipated that we will be able to maintain an up-to-date "current to the moment" Web page.
- Currently, the MGEU is developing an updated history book - looking back at the past 10 years, and the struggles we faced.

4. National Union Report

Sister Bean reported that since the March 20/21, 2003 meeting of the committee, the National Union has been involved in a host of activities. There have been several component conventions - SGEU, OPSEU, HSABC, NSGEU, OLBEU, NAPE, NBPEA - with the attendant activities/reports associated with conventions.

Of note is the fact that the New Brunswick Public Employees Association became a full affiliate of the National Union this year - and - the Health Sciences Association of Alberta also came on board as an affiliate. This now brings the membership of the National Union to 337,000.

Some of the meetings the National Union held since March include:

- Second Meeting of the Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat
- National Union Finance Committee Meeting
- National Executive Board Meetings (April and September)
- Component Liquor Board Representatives Meeting

- Correctional Officers & Youth Facility Workers Working Group Meeting
- National Police and Peace Officers Memorial Day (with participation from our Correctional Officer working group)

NUPGE held an **Equality Leadership School**, June 21-25, in Merrickville, Ontario. A series of sessions, led by a wide variety of spokespersons, was held during the school to focus attention on the challenges faced by various equality-seeking communities. This resulted in the development of a series of eight Equality Fact Sheets.

A series of six educational modules on equality and human rights issues has also just been released by the National Union. The modules were developed in consultation with the **National Union's Equality Committee on Human Rights and International Solidarity** (ECHRIS). The modules are designed to create a greater awareness among National Union members on broad human rights and equality issues as well as the specific issues of concern to members from equality-seeking communities.

The National Union held its **Fifth Annual Leadership Development School**, August 23-29, in Keene, Ontario. For each of the past five years, a group of approximately 20 senior elected officers and staff from our Components have attended the school. The aim is to help our activists develop keener analytical, administrative and problem solving skills, with a focus on bringing these tools to bear on effectively managing change and introducing innovation in their Components.

The National Union also held its **Third Annual Staff Negotiators Leadership School**, October 5-10, in Keene, Ontario. The program is most suited to staff negotiators who have some bargaining experience. The focus is on strategic thinking and planning for negotiations rather than the basic technical aspects of bargaining.

And as of today, the National Union is holding a **Women's Leadership Development Forum**, October 19-21, in Wakefield, Quebec.

The **NUPGE website** (www.nupge.ca) is informative on a host of issues - on a daily basis - plus on a sector basis. Select the 'sector' link and it will take you to the Women's page; Equality and Human Rights; Economics and Pensions; Social Services; Education and Training; Corrections and Criminal Justice, and Leadership Development.

5. **CLC Women's Committee Report**

Sister Bean, who sits on the CLC Women's Committee as the NUPGE representative, provided an overview report which was contained in all participants' kits.

6. **Women's World March 2005**

On March 8, 2005, the Women's Global Charter for Humanity will be launched in every participating country. On the same day, the World Relay of the Women's Global Charter will also be launched. The idea of collectively creating a Women's Global Charter for Humanity springs from the urgent need for economic, political, social and cultural alternatives to make another world possible. Women want to tell the whole world that it is possible to make another world founded on gender equality, equality of all human beings and peoples, and the respect of our planet's environment. The text will draw on the 17 world demands of the March for the formulation of alternative proposals - with the creation of a proclamation of universal principles, rather than a list of demands.

7. **Other Business**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, March 1st and 2nd, 2004 in Ottawa.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. on October 19th, 2003.