

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues

April 7 & 8, 2008
Ottawa, Ontario



In attendance:

National Union	Brenda Hildahl Lisa Bullee
BCGEU	Colleen Jones
SGEU	Marina Matlock
HSAA	Louise Yarrow
MGEU	Gay Pagan
OPSEU	Beth Anich
NBUPPE	Susie Proulx-Daigle
NSGEU	Martha Brown
NAPE	Arlene Sedlickas

Regrets:

MGEU	Michelle Gawronsky
PEIUPSE	Nancy Reeves

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:25 a.m. by Chair Brenda Hildahl. Sister Hildahl welcomed the sisters and introductions were made around the table. A special welcome was extended to new Committee member Sister Marina Matlock (SGEU/NUPGE) and to Sister Beth Anich (OPSEU/NUPGE) who has temporarily replaced Sister Cindy Haynes. Sister Nancy Reeves forwarded her regrets to the sisters. A contact sheet was circulated to the sisters to update any information. The Mandate of the Committee / Terms of Reference was contained in the binders for information.

Adoption of Agenda

The Committee was asked to review the agenda. Speaker Heather Menzies rescheduled her presentation to the following morning at 9:30 a.m. Sister Brown moved and Sister Jones seconded that the agenda be adopted with the change. Carried.

Adoption of Minutes – November 5 & 6, 2007

Chair Hildahl asked the committee to review the report of the November 5 & 6, 2007 meeting. Sister Proulx-Daigle moved and Sister Jones seconded that the November 5 & 6, 2007 minutes be adopted. Carried. Sister Hildahl stated that the minutes were posted on the NUPGE website as well.

National Union Report

National President James Clancy addressed the sisters. Introductions were made around the table and he welcomed the new sisters to the committee.

Brother Clancy informed the committee that a Labour Rights are Human Rights International Symposium will be held November 19 to 21, 2008 in Ottawa. The Conference will feature a series of international speakers. The symposium is being co-hosted by NUPGE, United Food and Commercial Workers Canada (UFCW Canada), the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) and the Canadian Police Association (CPA). New material will be developed for the symposium including a book entitled "Unions for Dummies", which will be useful for high schools and organizing drives.

Brother Clancy informed the sisters that NUPGE continues to work on its Medicare campaign. Two new pamphlets have been developed entitled "Create a National Pharmacare Program" and "Better Nursing Home Care for Elderly". He also informed the committee that NUPGE has made a donation to the Canadian Medical Association who are running a campaign for Medicare under the supervision of Dr. Brian Day. NUPGE has also been working with a group of doctors called Canadian Doctors for Medicare.

President Clancy then addressed the committee regarding NUPGE's continued work in the sector of community-based social services. He stated that public policy is really lacking in the area of funding for community-based social services and that social services are often the poor cousins compared to health care and education. Brother Clancy stated that NUPGE is developing a Community-Based Social Service Workers' Appreciation Day to bring attention to the insufficient wages and difficult working conditions workers encounter in this sector.

Brother Clancy informed the committee that NUPGE has several pamphlets available on Climate Change including the latest entitled "Confronting Climate Change: A just transition to green jobs". He stressed that governments need to strategize now to ensure a just transition for workers who become displaced due to the growing urgency to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from industry and the public sector. Preparations now will avoid crisis management as green jobs emerge and 'dirty' industry is forced to make sweeping changes.

Brother Clancy then spoke about child care and the Private Member's Bill before the House, Bill C-303 "*Early Learning and Childhood Act*", tabled by Denise Savoie, NDP member for Victoria, B.C., in May 2006. The Bill addresses funding in child care. NUPGE has a new pamphlet coming out on this issue, which will be forwarded to committee members.

President Clancy informed the committee that NUPGE continues to work on the issue of net neutrality and digital democracy. NUPGE has recently released another pamphlet on the issue entitled "Net Neutrality and Digital Democracy: Equal Treatment for All". Brother Clancy stated that NUPGE is currently the only union involved in this issue. He

advised that the National Union has received good media attention from the stories that have been posted to the NUPGE website.

Component Reports

BCGEU/NUPGE

Sister Colleen Jones reported:

Our BCGEU Provincial Executive Women's Committee held its first Regional Conference of the year on March 7 & 8, 2008. It was held at our new area office in Langley, British Columbia. The conference was on the same weekend as International Women's Day and was a huge success. On the Friday evening we had a panel of women from different levels of elected public offices present to us on the importance of women getting involved in the political process. It's not just about voting – it's also about encouraging and supporting women candidates. In order for women to achieve full equality we must sit on all the seats of power. We must be represented on school boards, parks boards, municipal councils, and in the provincial legislature. Women in politics make a difference because we care about different issues. We need better child care, elder care, health care and also just as important are income support. The panelists that shared their experiences with us were:

Sue Hammell – the MLA for Surrey-Green Timbers and the Assistant Deputy Speaker of the Legislature. She has served in a number of cabinet positions in the BC NDP government, including Housing, Recreation and Consumer Services, Minister Responsible for Co-operatives, Multiculturalism and Women's Equality.

Joan Bech – is a school trustee for the Langley District. Sister Bech holds a number of other positions including a member of the Langley District Aboriginal Advisory Board, school board representative to the Langley District Youth Commission and a member of the Trading Up Committee promoting trades training for young people. Joan has been very active in her community, providing support and leadership in many capacities.

Andrea Reimer – President of the Canadian Women Voters Congress and host organizer for the Women's Campaign School. Sister Reimer has been a vocal advocate for the electoral reforms that remove barriers to fair representation for women.

The tote bags that we were able to provide to the sisters of the conference were handmade by the Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment or WEAVE, an organization that supports women in the refugee camps along the Thai / Burma border to become more self-sufficient and independent. It was great that our Women's Conference could support other women in other countries as we celebrated International Women's Day.

Our panelists on the second day included Dr. Karen Parmar who has maintained a family practice specializing in the area of fertility and women's health and pediatrics.

She has a doctorate in naturopathic medicine. It was a great opportunity for the delegates to speak to her about a number of women's health issues.

Judy Duncan – head organizer for ACORN Canada – the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, shared her experience and knowledge on how their organization will go into a community and choose an issue to work on, such as homelessness, poor housing, child care, and make sure that the issues are brought to the city councils, school boards, etc.

Workshops included:

1. Putting an end to violence against women
2. Hot topics in women's health
3. Seeking justice for poor and struggling families
4. Greening your home and workplace

Kathy Wutke – works for a credit union where she provides financial literacy workshop for unions and community groups and helps people gain the skills and knowledge they need to achieve economic self-reliance.

BCGEU Convention 2008

The 2008 BCGEU Constitutional Convention will be held from June 6 – 8, 2008. Our President, George Heyman, has announced that he will not be seeking re-election this year. Many candidates have put forward their names to run for this position, and I am one of them. This would be the first time for a woman to either run for the position or, hopefully, be elected into the position since the BCGEU was an association in 1972. I am excited about the direction our union is going in and look forward to a respectful campaign.

Other Business - Bill 29

Just a quick note on the exciting news from our Community Health sector about the Supreme Court decision regarding the unconstitutionality of certain aspects of Bill 29. That decision was just the beginning of a fairly arduous process of negotiation with the government and the HEABC, in hopes of achieving some sort of redress for those members who were adversely affected by the implementation of Bill 29. The Unions were more successful than even they imagined and a fairly substantial amount of cash was awarded.

HSAANUPGE

Sister Louise Yarrow reported:

With the Progressive Conservatives winning an unprecedented 11th consecutive majority government in the March 3 provincial election, Alberta stuck with the tried and true. Voter turnout was the worst in Alberta history, with just 40% of the voting public casting ballots. The coalition between the Alberta Federation of Labour and the Alberta Building Trades Council for Political Action / Albertans for Change touched a few nerves with their television ads criticizing the Premier. Premier Stelmach reacted and presented rebuttals in the Progressive Conservative's own ads. Whether in agreement with the TV ads or not, the campaign successfully created conversation amongst members of the public.

Due to the efforts of the Labour Relations Officer servicing the area, HSAA has had recruitment success in the David Thompson region, with the signing of approximately 200 new paramedical technical and paramedical professional members. HSAA continues to increase its membership each month.

To make planning easier in subsequent years, the AFL Women's committee has been active in putting an events calendar together. The following events represent the balance of the 2008 year:

- April 25 & 26 – AFL Mid-term Forum – Silent Witness Silhouettes will be present. The theme is to promote more awareness on domestic violence.
- April 28 – International day of Mourning at Edmonton City Hall
- May Day (Calgary) – rally with Postal Workers
- May Day (Edmonton) – parade
- September – the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters will host the 1st World Conference of Women's Shelters entitled "Discovering the Common Core"
- October 16 – Women's committee meeting in Calgary
- October 17 – National Poverty Day (in cooperation with CUPS for an anti-poverty luncheon)
- November – Prevention of Family Violence – possible round table on Domestic Violence
- December 6 – Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) is organizing the 1st World Women's Shelters Conference "Discovering our Common Core". It is hoped that this conference will bring together shelter workers from around the world and so far appears to be receiving great interest from both attendees and potential presenters.

The AFL Women's committee hopes to sponsor some of the delegates, and made a proposal for funding to the AFL Executive Council. Information on their response was not available as of March 24.

The AFL Women's committee hopes to sponsor some of the delegates, and made a proposal for funding to the AFL Executive Council. Information on their response was not available as of March 24.

As previously reported, HSAA's sponsorship to ACWS is being used to develop a toolkit for dealing with family violence as a workplace issue, in all types of workplaces. From recognition to awareness of resources, from support for co-workers to protecting others in the workplace, this toolkit is intended to address this disturbing problem.

As well, since November is Prevention of Family Violence month, the AFL is hoping to hold a round table discussion on Domestic Violence.

Also of note, the HSAA Human Rights and Equality Committee have developed three position papers that encompass Women's issues: Family Violence and the Workplace; Temporary Foreign Workers; and Sustainable Environment al Ethical Purchasing Policies. All three will be submitted for approval at HSAA's Annual General Meeting in May.

Provincial Bargaining Update – The HSAA Provincial Bargaining committee has met with employer representatives, and negotiations are ongoing. Updates are provided to members on a regular basis through the HSAA website. Also other smaller groups are preparing for their negotiations, making it a very busy time.

HSAA has hired Scott Pattison as its new Communications Officer. David Kirkham took an early retirement, and we wish him well.

SGEU/NUPGE

Sister Marina Matlock reported:

The activities of the Women's Committee, like all committees of SGEU, have had their activities curtailed by the CEP 481 strike. However, a sub-committee did meet to prepare draft resolutions for the Women's Committee to peruse prior to the expected 2008 convention. Most of the draft resolutions were required to meet recommendations from The Stewards Task Force.

With the strike over, we are looking forward to meeting in April and getting on with the work of the committee. We are happy to welcome back Kelly Diebel as the staff assigned to the committee. Kelly has worked with us before and been an asset to the committee.

SGEU Convention 2008

The 2008 SGEU Convention which originally was scheduled for April 8-10 was postponed due to the labour difficulties. Subsequently, a difficult decision was made by Provincial Council, with the advice of legal counsel, not to hold a convention in 2008. Convention will go ahead in 2009 at the regular time. Provincial Council is meeting April 7 & 8 to iron out the issues of elections, etc.

SGEU Staff Strike

We are happy to report that the CEP 481 strike has been resolved. It was a long and difficult time for all and we are looking forward to putting it behind us and getting on with the business of SGEU and the labour movement in general.

Provincial Budget 2008

The provincial budget was tabled March 19th. Highlights include \$1 billion in infrastructure: health \$200 million, school repair \$160 million, \$400 million for highways, \$140 million for municipalities, \$98 million for forest fires and provincial parks. There is some property tax relief promised and a tuition freeze. There is also some good news for the nursing profession – \$20 million for recruitment and 120 spaces in nursing programs.

Unfortunately, despite a \$1.3 billion surplus and increases in capital and operating budgets in many areas, the Saskatchewan Party government chose to abolish 83 positions in front line departments. A total of 24 positions were cut in the Ministry of Education, in what appears to be the elimination of the Technology Supported Learning unit. The loss of the distance learning services will put an additional strain on already over-stretched resources in small rural schools. Twenty-three (23) positions were abolished in Advanced Education, Employment and Labour and seven positions in First Nations and Metis Relations. Sixteen employees from Vital Statistics in the Ministry of Health were transferred to the Information Services Corporation (ISC). There is a concern that this move poses a potential security risk to Saskatchewan citizens.

There was an increase in funding to community-based organizations but even with this modest increase many CBO workers will continue to earn poverty level wages.

MGEU/NUPGE

Sister Michelle Gawronsky reported:

- In January of 2008 the Board of Directors elected the new 4th Vice President, Michelle Gawronsky, to chair the MGEU Women's Committee.
- Our Committee has had two meetings since November 6, 2007 – December 17 (via Conference Call) and February 26 & 27, 2008. The meetings centred on the upcoming MGEU Women's Conference in May; we had 156 applications at deadline with late ones continuing to come in daily. The Committee spent the better part of the February meeting separating the applicants into the eight provincial areas of the MGEU, ensuring the applicants met criteria set and entering the names into the workshops of choice. The Conference has 108 successful applicants and we are looking forward to a very informative two days.
- To celebrate International Women's Day "Inspiring Women", the Minister responsible for the status of Women in Manitoba, the Honourable Nancy Allan hosted a luncheon at the Legislative building on March 7. A number of community-based organizations had displays and very valuable information on advancing women's equality in Manitoba. On March 8, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the Winnipeg Labour Council (WLC) and the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) Women's Committee sponsored "An Afternoon of Solidarity at the Park Theatre & Movie Café". Sisters attending were able to learn about the Steelworkers Campaign "get the LEAD out – stop toxic imports" and the CLC National Campaign on Women's Economy Equality. Donations of new adult and children's pajamas were accepted and distributed to women's shelters in the community. Some Committee members were also able to attend the 2nd Annual Awards Dinner Celebration of International Women's Day held that evening. Grassroots Women Manitoba sponsored the dinner at the Kum Koon Garden Restaurant, honouring "Women whose lives are Lived in the Best of Struggles".
- Sister Pam Narynski was elected as the Representative for the MFL Women's Committee and Nicole Garripy agreed to stand as alternate.

- Our sister who attended the Prairie Women's School, Shamila Khan, reported that this school was a great experience; she really enjoyed it and recommends it to everyone. She stated, "It was a different cultural experience".

Updates from the MGEU

- MGEU was successful in winning an "intermingling" vote in the Parkland Regional Health Authority. This campaign began in the middle of November, ending at the end of January. MGEU began the campaign with 57 members and at the completion of the two votes; our numbers grew by approximately 740 members. The Health Care Support Services Component now represents over 4,500 health workers in hospitals and personal care homes throughout Manitoba.
- The MGEU held the Grand Opening of a new office in Dauphin on March 19. This is the second new office in less than a year, the new Portage la Prairie office opened in April. The Dauphin office features space for the Employee Assistance Program (a service which members and their families deal with problems that affect their home or work) as well as TARAS Vision (a non-profit group which provides counselling services for those who have experienced childhood abuse or trauma).
- The MGEU's Equity and Human Rights Committee is accepting nominations for the 2008 Humanitarian Award. This award is given every two years to everyday activists, either a former or current member, who has worked to better the lives of Manitobans through a single event or over many years.

Bargaining

- Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) contracts are now complete and were mailed out; the demonstration held at the Manitoba Legislature was successful for the membership.
- Dates for Bargaining have been set for the Health Care Support Services Component.
- The Corrections Component (Civil Service) was unable to attain a Collective Agreement and held their first day of arbitration on February 4, 2008 and will continue in the near future.
- At least 12 MGEU Collective Agreements are proceeding to Bargaining very shortly.

OPSEU/NUPGE

Sister Beth Anich reported:

Women's Conference Nov. 2 – 4, 2007

More than 150 women from across Ontario and different sectors of the union attended "Beyond Borders: An International Perspective" from November 2 - 4, 2007. The OPSEU Biennial Women's Conference was a weekend full of inspiration, education and debate about the impact of globalization on our sisters around the world.

The conference provided participants an opportunity to learn about issues affecting women in the South and to develop a shared commitment toward taking action on pressing issues such as poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS in Africa. OPSEU women also explored the conflicting relationship between foreign aid and debt in developing countries and the critical need to work in solidarity with our international sisters to push for social justice and public policy change.

Reaching out to Women in Every Region

The Provincial Women's Committee advocates for and on behalf of all women and working families. We have continued to work with the other equity-seeking groups in our regions to build active networks of OPSEU members.

PWC representatives in the regions were involved in highlighting women's and other equity issues at OPSEU events. Several first-time efforts brought large participation from members – equity evening sessions, equity breakfasts, speaking at educationals and highlighting the MMP referendum.

The Regions are hopping with activity as PWC members attend events all over the province, advancing Equity issues at every opportunity! Whether we are speaking at a local membership meeting, distributing information at a community fair, talking to our members at Equity breakfasts, evening gatherings, area councils or plenary sessions, we actively seek chances to share the Equity message with our members and build networks across the province. We are excited about the opportunities we now have to co-facilitate Equity courses in our Regions, thrilled that these courses are in high demand by the members whom we serve. We are equally excited about the connections that we are able to make in our communities as we collectively confront the issues of poverty, homelessness, violence against women, anti-racism / anti-oppression, pay equity, affordable housing, pushing hard for public services in the delivery of our health care and child care and raising our voices in the fight for social justice for all people. We are proud to do this vitally important work beside our sisters and brothers of the PHRC, PYWC, Aboriginal Circle, Rainbow Alliance, Workers of Colour, and Disability Rights Caucus.

Annual Women's Breakfast – Convention 2008

Planning is underway for this year's annual Women's Breakfast with this year's theme focusing on Fair Trade and poverty issues.

Ongoing Projects

- Working in OPSEU and NUPGE to highlight international issues affecting women and their families;
- Developing a global perspective;
- Working with the other Equity Committees and caucuses to involve members;
- Annual Bread & Roses Award;
- Recognition of Achievement Award (Regional);
- Ongoing fundraising for The Live and Let Live Fund;
- Promoting pay equity education; and

- Advocating for the decriminalization of the sex-trade.

OPSEU Leader Smokey Thomas to Tour South Africa, Malawi in Support of AIDS projects

The President of OPSEU will embark on a tour of southern Africa AIDS/HIV projects, trade unions and community organizations. Warren (Smokey) Thomas will visit projects in South Africa and Malawi funded by the Stephen Lewis Foundation which OPSEU supports through the union's charitable fund. Thomas will also deliver OPSEU-donated solar-powered lights to a rural village in need of electricity. Thomas will also meet with a number of South African union leaders and tour a Worker's College in Durban.

OPSEU asks for Recognition for Part-time College Workers

The Ontario Public Service Union is calling for the 24 community colleges to recognize OPSEU as the union for 12,500 part-time workers. OPSEU now represents full-time faculty and support staff at the colleges. In the largest organizing drive in Ontario history, the part-time and sessional employees are now seeking to join OPSEU. Most part-time employees have so far been excluded from bargaining by the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act but the McGuinty government has signaled that this could soon change.

The PWC would like to acknowledge the wonderful work of our sister, Cindy Haynes. As many of you may know, Cindy was involved in a house fire just before Christmas and has been hospitalized ever since. As Chair of the PWC, Cindy brought many skills and a great passion for the work. The committee feels the loss of her presence and hopes that she will soon be well enough to return to her role as Chair of the PWC. Fundraising for Cindy has been very successful and is ongoing. The PWC committee will be selling tickets at our annual convention in April for a Quilt made by sisters in Thunder Bay with second and third prizes with monies going to assist Cindy and her family.

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Sister Susie Proulx-Daigle reports:

Current Issues – General Information

NBU has been hard at work on two issues. One remains Health Care and the other is Pensions. Not surprising. Last month, the Minister of Health brought major changes to the structure of our public health system. These changes were never discussed with the public, who are the taxpayers and the users of our system. Last fall the Health Coalition requested a full public discussion on reform. Instead of initiating a real debate, the Minister sent a delegation to three countries that are heavily involved in privatization of their health system: United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Next, the Minister organized a Health Summit which was by invitation only. He also published a flyer that was sent to all households and took full page ads and radio ads to promote the new Health Care Plan. All these activities had significant costs to New Brunswickers. We don't agree with the way the proposed changes were brought before the provincial Legislature. We also don't agree with the abolition of elected representatives on the Regional Health Authorities. We don't agree with the appointments from the private

sector of the Presidents or Chairs to all the new structures. These positions have a major impact on the direction that our public health care system will take in the future and the fact that they are all from the private sector will certainly influence where they want our public health system to go. We believe this is a way to promote the intrusion of the private sector into the future delivery of our public health services. If we are to have a Health Council, we need people who have experience in the public administration and public participation.

Another major problem within the health care issue is the cost of the retirees' health plan. It's a major issue and we have put forth two viable options to the government. One is to have a blended rate with the active participants and the other would be to have the government cost share the rate of the plan. The government has received a report on a study they have done on the issue but they are not sharing the results. Our pensioned members are now lobbying their MLA's for change.

As for pensions, we're also gearing up for major lobbying. The issue remains the same as in my previous report. The PSSA is the main pension plan of the Province and includes most management and non-bargaining employees as well as the majority of union members. The PSSA is controlled entirely by the government with little or no input from the members of the plan. The N.B. Investment Management Corporation (NBIMC), which was created by the Legislative Assembly and as such, reports only to the cabinet, handles all pension investments for this plan. The NBIMC is also the established trustee of the plan. This creates a very obvious conflict of interest. Normally in a trusteed pension plan, the trustees are responsible for selecting the investment manager(s). Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to review and supervise the actions and investment directions of the managers. The NBIMC has been established as both the trustee of the plan and as the investment manager of the plan. Although the PSSA has established an advisory committee to the plan, this committee plays an extremely limited role. Some of the changes we are looking for are age / service index, shared trusteeship, no reduction at age 65.

Another Union Activist Training Session will be held this weekend (April 4 - 6). This session is set for Level I's which are our newer Activists.

As for Pay Equity in our province, it doesn't seem to be going anywhere. I have attended several meetings of the Pay Equity Coalition and we're working on meeting with Government officials in order to gain insight on what their plans are. Statements are made that Government is talking with the unions on the Pay Equity Issue; however when the Unions sit around the table, no one knows anything about it. We would like to meet with the Government in order to clear this issue as the gap is growing.

Negotiations

Our bargaining cycle is about to begin all over. We are planning a session for all bargaining committees in order to review our process and gain more insight on what we're doing right and where our challenges lie.

Women's Committee

Our committee has not met since my last report. A meeting has been set for May.

The Committee will be looking at planning Convention activities such as the Breakfast. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Anne-Marie Zajdlik from Guelph, Ontario as a speaker this year. At this time we are preparing for the launch of the \$10.00 bracelet campaign.

PEIUPSE/NUPGE

Sister Nancy Reeves reported:

The Equality Committee's new chair, Nancy Keough-Baglolo, works within the social services and senior department. I look forward to working with her during her term. At our meeting in January, we discussed many of the issues that cover the mandate of both our own committee as well as the mandate of the NUPGE Women's Advisory Committee. We were energized by the work and projects ahead that will help our membership.

The updated Harassment policy's education sessions by the public service goes well and continues to bring a higher level of understanding to all members and the role of management, supervisors and members in bringing this policy to the workplace. It is always empowering to see the understanding and reaction within the members as they realize they have the policy and education behind them in this area.

Civil Service

Negotiations between the UPSE Civil Service Bargaining Team and the Government of PEI came to an impasse on Saturday, March 15, 2008. Although progress was achieved in some areas, the teams were unable to reach an agreement. The last offer from the Employer was unacceptable, and the team unanimously agreed that it could not be brought back to the members for ratification. The next step in the dispute process is binding arbitration.

The UPSE Civil Service Bargaining Team asks once again for your patience. The Bargaining Team's main objective is to ensure the best deal possible is achieved for all members of the bargaining unit.

Early Childhood Educators

There are currently eight (8) centres at the table, four (4) have agreed to all non-monetary articles and are ready to begin negotiations on wages and benefits. The other four (4) centres have met and exchanged proposals and have their next meeting scheduled for April.

Public, Private Initiatives (P3s)

A coalition of concerned unions including: UPSE, PEI Nurses Union, IUOE, PEI Teacher's Federation, CUPE Health (provincial and national chapters) have agreed that we need to educate the public about the impact Public Private Partnerships can have on the quality of public services. There are hundreds of documented cases proving that

not only do these partnerships regularly result in increased costs, they far too often result in sub-standard facilities and a reduction in the quality of services provided.

Each member of the coalition has agreed to submit the names of two activists to take part in a joint training program. These activists will then take on the role of educating the members within their Unions and the public in general. This effort is the first phase of a comprehensive campaign to proactively tackle the P3 issue.

UPSE Member of the Year Award

A new award was presented at the 2007 convention to recognize UPSE members who have contributed to UPSE by being union activists, participating in UPSE functions and Committees, and volunteering time in general contributing to the union movement.

No to the Harmonized Sales Tax

After many months of mixed messages, Premier Ghiz has said no to the harmonized tax and has stopped discussion on this matter with the federal government.

Silent Witness Program

The Silent Witness Program has received funding up to \$5,000 each year for the next three years from UPSE.

NAPE/NUPGE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported:

Since our last meeting, NAPE's Women's Issues Committee has had one formal meeting and attended several planned events throughout the province. On November 24, 2007, the Women's Committee met to review its mandate and discuss ways to involve women in the union. The one day meeting focused on the role and makeup of the committee.

The women's committee has been very busy with events that have taken place surrounding women and our partnerships with other unions. On November 30, the committee took part in a "think tank" hosted by the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour Women's Committee. The two-day workshop was comprised of all of the affiliated women's committees in the province. The workshop focused on a fight back campaign against the Harper Government's attack on women's equality. Despite a fierce blizzard on Sunday, December 2, the committee attended the Labour Women's Network evening where activists were treated to a relaxing evening of food, drink, and gifts provided by all unionized workers in the province.

The committee also took part in the National Day of Mourning held on December 6 to commemorate the women who were murdered at L'ecole Polytechnique. A number of vigils were held across the province and the committee participation was spread throughout.

During February, NAPE's Women's Committee was kept busy selecting three female activists from each of the nine regions of the province to attend the Newfoundland and

Labrador Federation of Labour Women's Conference and Teach-in. The Women's Committee sponsored 27 women to attend the conference. The event took place on February 29, March 1 & 2, 2008. The theme for the conference was "Women Unite-Equality is our Right. The conference began with a teach-in sponsored by the Canadian Labour of Congress. This initiative by the CLC will be a year-long campaign to tell Canadians about the wage gaps which still exist between men and women and how to change it. The conference focused mainly on skills building in the areas of campaigns, lobbying, communications, and the media. Over 100 women from across the province were in attendance.

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

Over the next few months the Women's Committee will be focused on planning a provincial women's conference for early September 2008. The committee is in the early stages of planning the event and the bulk of the work will be done over the next three months.

Highlights of NAPE's Activities since our last Meeting

Public Sector Bargaining

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees has once again entered into Public Sector Bargaining. Approximately 15,000 public sector workers have begun to exchange proposals for collective bargaining. The bargaining groups represent Hospital Support Staff, Laboratory and X-Ray, Health Professionals, Maintenance and Operational Services, School Boards, General Service, Air Services, College of the North Atlantic Support Staff, and the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation all have contracts that expire as of March 31, 2008. Several other bargaining units will enter negotiations over the coming months as their contracts expire.

Reclassification

After a lengthy process, NAPE was finally successful in having the matter of the reclassification of utility workers finalized through the Classification Appeals Board. NAPE aggressively pursued the matter, taking steps beyond the normal process, on behalf of utility workers in the health care system after the original request for reclassification was denied and then appealed. When the Classification Appeals Board determined they did not have the jurisdiction to deal with the matter, in an unprecedented move, NAPE took the matter to the courts. NAPE was successful in having the reclassification appeal reheard. The decision of the appeal will provide members with retroactive pay effective to April 1, 2001.

Ex Gratia Payment Update

Progress is continuing toward the distribution of the ex gratia funds. In late January, the five public sector unions (NAPE, NLNU, AAHP, IBEW, and CUPE) met with Beothuk Data Systems, the consultants who are developing a database to assist in the final payment, to review the model they are developing for distribution of funds. They are experiencing difficulty in verifying some of the data received for about 20% of the

claims. During this time, the unions are in the initial stages of developing an appeals process and model for payment, which will have to be approved by the Courts. The goal is to finalize payment as quickly as possible while ensuring all claims are processed in an accurate and justifiable manner, acceptable to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador and to the members.

International Sisterhood Projects

At the last NUPGE Convention, it was agreed to continue to support the four following projects: Sisters in Spirit, TESDA Micro Lending Program, Masai for Africa and Casa de la Mujer (House of the Women). Chair Hildahl provided an update on the four projects.

Sisters in Spirit

Sister Hildahl directed the sisters to the update on the Sisters in Spirit project which was included in the binders. She distributed pins and magnets. She also showed the sisters the sample T-shirt, tote bag and community education tool kit. These are available to order from the Sisters in Spirit; an order form was also included in the binders.

TESDA Micro Lending Program

Sister Hildahl pointed out that a letter from TESDA to President Clancy acknowledging receipt of the 2007 \$3,000 grant and thanking NUPGE for the continued support was included in the binder. Also included was the court decision regarding the embezzlement of public funds at the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) by TESDA officials. Sister Annie Geron, who spoke at the International Sisterhood Conference, was one of the unionists who lodged the complaint.

Casa de la Mujer

Sister Hildahl brought to the sisters attention a synopsis of a report received from the House of Women Workers Project. NUPGE's funding is being administered along with other Canadian funds through a combined "Ottawa Fund" which focuses on the Caribbean region of Colombia.

Masai Centre and Bracelets of Hope

Since the NUPGE Convention, 5,368 Bracelets of Hope have been sold which totals \$26,842.00 raised to date. The Masai for Africa will hold its Red Ribbon Gala on May 3. As of March 14, the funds raised totalled \$827,840.15. Andy McDougall sent an e-mail appealing for additional donations to enable the Masai for Africa campaign to reach the \$1 million mark before the Red Ribbon Gala. This e-mail was included in the NEB binder and President Clancy urged the members of the NEB to help if possible.

Status of Women Canada (SWC)

A brief update from the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) was enclosed in the binders. NAWL was forced to move its national office and lay off paid staff in September 2007 due to funding cutbacks brought on by the changes in the mandate of Status of Women. They have held regular conference calls looking at how NAWL can revitalize itself in order to continue to work effectively to advance women's equality issues.

Sister Hildahl drew the committee's attention to the Status of Women Canada Funding Guidelines for 2007-2008 included in the binder. She advised the committee that in March 2007, the Women's Program was redesigned to offer two new components: the Women's Community Fund and the Women's Partnership fund. The newly revised mandate now includes the word "*equality*", i.e. "to advance the *equality* of women across Canada through the improvement of their economic and social conditions and their participation in democratic life".

The priorities for 2007-2008 are:

- Women's economic security and prosperity
- Women's health (non medical / clinical)
- Women's safety
- Eliminating violence and discrimination against girls and women.

Ineligible activities continue to include domestic advocacy activities and lobbying of federal, provincial and municipal governments.

Also included in the binder were several news releases from the SWC announcing funding to numerous community groups. The news releases were released during the International Women's Week and the SWC theme for IWD was "Strong Women, Strong World".

The Status of Women Canada 2006-2007 Departmental Performance Report was included in the binder. Chair Hildahl noted that overall the report reflects the SWC's move to funding at the community level (direct impact) but continues to miss the fact that federal policies (which involve lobbying) such as pay equity legislation, a universal early development and child care program would make the biggest difference to Canadian women. It is also interesting to note that the Report admits that Canadian women continue to earn only 71¢ for every dollar earned by Canadian men.

Equality Once and for all!

Sister Hildahl brought the attention of the sisters to the CLC campaign material in the binder on women's economic equality entitled "Equality once and for all". The material includes a resource document and several fact sheets. The campaign was launched on March 8th – International Women's Day (IWD) – and included teach-ins across the country. The campaign will run until the 2009 IWD.

Heather Menzies

Quality of Women's Lives

Chair Hildahl introduced and welcomed Sister Heather Menzies who is an award winning, Ottawa-based writer and scholar. She has authored several books, including "No time: Stress and the Crisis of Modern Life". She has given lecture series and taught courses in women's studies, Canadian studies and communications at a number of Canadian universities.

Menzies began her address to the committee with the image of pop singer Madonna sleeping with her blackberry under her pillow because she is a 24/7 kind of woman. She noted that women are still having trouble being agents of their own identity and their

own agenda, not someone else's agenda coming at them through a blackberry, cell phone in their purse, laptop in their briefcase or computer in the kitchen.

She stressed that the technological environment of today's world has left people feeling fragmented and disembodied; a trend she sees happening in our social institutions. The move to computer driven reports, assessment plans, etc. removes workers from human contact with those they are caring for in hospitals, schools and social services.

The constant distractions and pressures associated with the technological age has led to individuals feeling constantly distracted, with a loss of meaningful presence and engagement and an increasing sense of isolation. She argues that this not only affects quality of work performance but also other key issues such as family life with children and caring for ageing and dying parents. In fact, children and elders may become "blackberry orphans".

Menzies noted that in a recent study of academics, it was found, in addition to regular statistics that frame the story of work-family life imbalance and work-related stress (work week rising to 60 hours, supplementary work done at home, and time spent upgrading knowledge), women were more affected than men by increased workload, increased expectations of how much should be accomplished and faster decision-making rates.

The result is that women are reporting higher rates than men of all the stress indicators such as sleep loss, short-term memory loss and problems concentrating. Menzies stated that women are paying a high price personally in not being able to stay centred within themselves and their own agenda and priorities. They are stuck in reaction mode and not able to be fully present and engaged with the people and activities which matter to them: children, friends, parents and union activities. She termed this state as "presenteeism" – a variation of absenteeism.

Menzies likened the issue of stress as a social equivalent to the issue of climate change in that it was only when the cost of continuing with the status quo was shown to be more expensive than the cost of doing something that the causes of global warming and climate change finally gained official status. Stress is also a social justice issue. People have a right not to be bullied, harassed or overworked in the workplace.

In conclusion she stated that "most of what I have said so far is aimed at convincing union members this is an urgent issue affecting them in all the important parts of their lives, and treating it collectively as a social environment issue is the only appropriate response."

Other Business

Sister Hildahl informed the committee that NUPGE will be updating the Collective Bargaining Series for Women over the next few months. A section in each leaflet may be included tying into the Quality of Women's Life Project by indicating how good bargaining language helps women to balance work commitments with home commitments.

NUPGE has updated the Early Childhood Development and Care leaflet, “As Simple as 1, 2, 3”. A new leaflet entitled, “Our Real Deal: the basis for a National Early Learning and Child Care Program” has been developed. It is currently being formatted and will be distributed after completion.

Sister Hildahl pointed out to the sisters the new NUPGE leaflets: “No Sweat Shop: Changing Our Clothes to Change Lives”, “Create a National Pharmacare Program” and “Better Nursing Home Care for the Elderly”. She informed the committee that new leaflets are being produced on pandemic planning, dental care and mental health.

Child Care

Sister Gay Pagan introduced herself to the sisters as the Child Care Worker Organizer for MGEU/NUPGE on the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) Board of Directors. CCHRSC includes a number of sector councils in Canada that bring together stakeholders. It works on human resources issues and is funded by the federal government (HRSDC). CCHRSC cannot be political and is kept at arm’s length from the federal government. The role of the 19 sector councils is to generate new knowledge. There are six directors at large, including ex-officio Kathy Reid, Director, Manitoba Child Care Program, Representative of the Provincial/Territorial Directors of ECEC.

The CCHRSC is focused on developing a strategy that identifies ways to promote early childhood education (ECE) as a career path to attract new entrants to the sector.

The anticipated outcomes are:

- Database of employers;
- Information and understanding of HR issues / challenges facing employers;
- Employer profiles (who they are / their needs)
- Complete mapping of needs associated with different settings / governance structures; and
- Established priorities and a strategy for addressing them.

The strategy is to promote child care as a professional endeavour and promote ECE designation as an important and meaningful designation.

Sister Pagan stated ECE workers are on average 50 years old therefore there is a need to focus on recruitment and retention of ECE workers. The Council is working on the redevelopment of occupational standards. There is a problem with employers allowing workers in child care who do not have licensing requirements.

Conference on the Quality of Women’s Lives

Sister Hildahl stated that NUPGE is moving ahead with a Conference on the Quality of Women’s Lives tentatively scheduled for 2010. The conference will focus on identifying the issues and raising awareness of the stress suffered by women in struggling to achieve work/live balance.

Ottawa Grandmothers

An article regarding Ottawa grandmothers who visited Africa to help ease the AIDS plight was pointed out to the sisters. Sister Colleen Jones suggested NUPGE try to engage one of the grandmothers to speak at the next meeting.

Cindy Haynes Fund

The sisters were saddened to learn that Sister Cindy Haynes is hospitalized in the Critical Care Trauma Centre of the Victoria Hospital in London, Ontario as a result of a house fire that occurred just before Christmas. It was noted that NUPGE sent two cheques of \$1,000 each from the NEB and ACWI payable to the Cindy Haynes Fund. It was also noted that a raffle of homemade quilts was being organized for the Cindy Haynes Fund.

Canadians for Choice

Sister Hildahl brought the sisters' attention to a letter of thank you from Canadians for Choice to NUPGE for a \$1,000 donation used for transportation costs for their 20th anniversary gala to celebrate the decriminalization of abortion in Canada.

Chair Hildahl informed the committee about a private member's Bill called The "Unborn Victims of Crime Act" (C-484) which passed Second Reading in Parliament on March 5. This bill would amend the Criminal Code to allow separate homicide charges to be laid in the death of a fetus when a pregnant woman is murdered. There is growing concern that if this Bill is passed it could lead to the re-criminalization of abortion. It could also lead to pregnant women being charged for behaviours perceived to be harmful to their fetuses.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date was tentatively scheduled for October 9 & 10, 2008. It was suggested that at the next meeting, the first day could be devoted to covering all the information and on the second day, devote the time to the Conference on the Quality of Women's Lives.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.