

# CONVENTION NEWS

OCTOBER 27, 2010



## Lively speeches, debate mark second day of HEU convention

THE SECOND DAY OF HEU'S 27<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CONVENTION got off to a lively start when Jim Sinclair, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, addressed the union's 609 delegates and guests about solidarity, living wages, pensions, and hope.



"Yesterday, a sister from Victoria said what workers need is hope," said Sinclair. "I want to tell you that when I look at all of you, I feel a great deal of hope. Why? Because you are fighting every day not only for respect for health care workers, but for the right of every citizen to equal access to health care... Your work to defend public health care is the best in the country. You should be proud of that."

Sinclair also spoke against BCNU's raid on HEU. "Let me say loudly today – the Federation of Labour stands squarely with the HEU, and continues our call to the BCNU to cease all raiding activities and join with us to fight the real battles – organizing new workers and building a strong, public health care system for all."

### Darcy energizes delegates with passionate speech

Delegates continued an open-discussion forum on sections of the union's Strategic Directions paper, debated more constitutional amendments and resolutions, and received the report of HEU's secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

Darcy covered a wide range of issues affecting HEU members and British Columbians as a whole, including the privatization of public services, the deteriorating conditions in seniors' care, health and safety challenges, human rights, and the environment.



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On seniors, Darcy says that the Liberals just don't get it.



“They don’t understand the family atmosphere that our members work so hard to maintain and that for some residents, our members are the only family they have,” said Darcy. “They don’t understand the disruption and confusion for residents that results when contracting out breaks up this family.

“They’ve been so busy turning long-term care into a cash cow for their friends, they’ve forgotten about the residents and their families.

“But our members don’t forget. We won’t forget our parents and grandparents who built this country – who fought for a fair and just society, for Medicare, unemployment insurance, pensions, and other rights that we sometimes take for granted.”

## **President encourages union activism**

In his report, president Ken Robinson thanked delegates for stepping up to the plate and taking on leadership roles as activists.

“I’m looking around this hall and I’m feeling great admiration for you, the leadership of HEU today, because you represent a great union and the bright future that lies ahead of us,” he said.

Robinson welcomed members from newly organized locals, and spoke about local building, regional meetings, and encouraged members to be more politically active to make the change British Columbians desperately need.

“We’ll work hard... as we take on the task of getting our members involved in the political process – and continue all of our coalition work with seniors, students and labour – to ensure that a progressive, social democratic government is elected in 2013.



“Our union is changing. There’s no doubt about it. And the P.E. will continue their work on making our locals stronger and HEU members will be involved in that process.”

When the afternoon plenary adjourned, delegates gathered outside the Westin Bayshore for a massive rally with hundreds of hotel workers from UNITE HERE! Local 40. Speakers included HEU president Ken Robinson, secretary-business manager Judy Darcy, B.C. Fed president Jim Sinclair, NDP health critic Adrian Dix, Jim Pearson (president, Local 40), and HEU activist Cora Mojica.

That was followed by the union’s equity night Mardi-Gras celebrations hosted by HEU’s five equity standing committees – Ethnic Diversity, Pink Triangle, Women’s, First Nations and People with disAbilities.