

# CONVENTION NEWS

OCTOBER 28, 2010



## Robinson and Bernardo re-elected by convention delegates

ON DAY THREE OF HEU's 27<sup>th</sup> BIENNIAL CONVENTION, delegates re-elected president Ken Robinson (Kelowna local) to a second term and acclaimed financial secretary Donisa Bernardo (Kamloops local) to a third term, as well as electing a number of other positions to the Provincial Executive (P.E.).

Victor Elkins (PHSA Amalgamated) was re-elected as HEU's 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president. Louella Vincent (WHR Lower Mainland) was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president and Carolyn Unsworth (Queens Park) as 3<sup>rd</sup> vice-president. Winston Clarke (Surrey) was elected to a four-year term as senior trustee-elect, and Carol Kenzie (Kelowna) as trustee. Jacqueline Zilkie (Kaslo) continues on the P.E. as senior trustee. And Judy Darcy was ratified as secretary-business manager, a position she's held since 2005.

Elections for regional vice-presidents and alternates take place Thursday.

### SOLIDARITY GREETINGS FROM CUPE BC

CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill brought greetings from his union's 85,000 members. "We work side-by-side with you, and for you, in public services across the province... We care about what we do; it's not just a paycheque. We're the recipients of the very services we all provide."



O'Neill stressed the importance of preserving public services like education and health care, encouraging young workers, advocating for living wages and safer working conditions, and making governments – particularly at the local level – more accountable to community taxpayers.

"There's been a vicious attack on workers and workers' right throughout the province for about 11 years now," said O'Neill. "It's time for government to be accountable. And we need to make sure that we're not negotiating things that we've already got at the federal-provincial levels."

### HEALTH CARE'S LINK TO WATER

Described by Judy Darcy as a tireless leader and "a great friend to public services and a great friend to public service workers," Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians' national chairperson, delivered a well-received, informative speech on water, human rights and health care.

"We've been fighting the ravages and threat to health care together for a long time," said Barlow, "and I pledge to continue to work together to preserve our wonderful health care system."

She spoke about "private greed" and how privatization impacts public



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services, such as health care, education and water. “There is a water crisis coming to a community near you... In this country, we have a myth of abundance.

“Water is a health care issue because lack of access to clean water is the single biggest killer of children in third world countries... If you care about health, you have to care about water. We call ourselves ‘water warriors’.”

CUPE National president Paul Moist received a warm welcome as he congratulated HEU members for their work on several campaigns, namely the union’s Living Wage and Stand UP for Seniors’ Care campaigns, and condemned the “cannibalism and contract-flipping” in B.C.’s long-term care system that “means less care for seniors and more attacks on workers’ wages and benefits.”



He also pressed home the importance of expanding Canada Pension Plan benefits. “Canadians are entitled to dignity in retirement,” he said. “We want action. We are demanding fair pensions for all Canadians.”

Referencing CUPE National’s Year of the Steward, Moist told convention activists, “You are the bedrock of your union. There’s no CUPE, there’s no HEU without the people on the shop floor who stand up to the boss.”

## WOMEN’S GATHERING SHINES LIGHT ON EQUALITY ISSUES

About 300 women assembled for convention’s traditional women’s gathering early in the morning to share breakfast, conversation, and hear from two guest speakers.

Adrienne Montani, provincial coordinator of First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, spoke about how structural inequality in Canada keeps women and their children living in poverty.

She said that sixty per cent of minimum-wage earners in Canada are women, and women are concentrated in low-wage occupations.

Daisy Kler, from Vancouver Rape Relief and Women’s Shelter, reminded her audience that a woman is raped in Canada every 17 minutes.

“Although the battle is long and hard,” she said, “there are constant victories. Every woman who leaves an abusive man is a small victory and an example to many others.”

On behalf of the union, HEU financial secretary Donisa Bernardo thanked guests, and applauded Lower Mainland musical act The Shirleys for opening and closing the event with their inspirational lyrics and awesomely flawless harmonies.

## DELEGATES UNANIMOUS IN THEIR SUPPORT FOR UPDATED BARGAINING STRUCTURE

In an evening session, delegates passed a sweeping constitutional amendment that modernizes the union’s bargaining structure. The changes reflect the fact that one in four HEU members now works under an agreement outside the facilities contract.

The amendment provides a process for holding bargaining conferences and choosing bargaining committees for all HEU sectors.