



HEU held its most recent Equity Conference in Richmond, B.C. on April 3 and 4, 2007. Twenty-five First Nations HEU members attended from across the province. We would like to thank all those who attended. Elections were held and the following members were elected:

TRUDY SPILLER, Chairperson
(Gitksan) South Vancouver Island

SHELLEY SMITH
(Métis) North Vancouver Island

VALERIE SAILER, Vice-Chairperson
(Kwakiutl) Kootenay

NANCY LUIS
(Métis) Fraser Valley

MARTIN MACKENZIE
(T'it'q'et) Vancouver Coastal

DELLA FELLHAUER
(Whispering Pines) Member-at-large

LINDA MCNAMARA
(Métis) Interior

SHELDON AGECOUTY
Member-at-large

AMIE WILLIAMS
(Wet'suwet'en) North

KONI MARRINGTON
First Nations Staff Advisor

First Nations Standing Committee
c/o Hospital Employees' Union
5000 North Fraser Way, Burnaby B.C. V5J 5M3
1-800-663-5813 ext. 7192 or 604-456-7192

If you are **Métis, First Nations** or **Inuit** and want to be on our First Nations caucus list, please contact **Melissa O'Sullivan**, HEU equity officer, at 604-456-7062 or 1-800-663-5813 (ext. 7062). Alternatively, you can email her at <mosullivan@heu.org>.

You do not have to have a status card, live on-reserve or off-reserve to be a part of our caucus. If you believe in your heart that you are of Aboriginal ancestry, please feel free to contact our committee.



Hospital Employees' Union
Summer 2008

www.heu.org

FIRST NATIONS



newsletter

SUMMER 2008

HEU First Nations Standing Committee



To raise awareness of the uniqueness of First Nations culture in order to improve equality within HEU and the community-at-large.

HEU brings Buffy Ste-Marie to women's conference

The Hospital Employees' Union held its first-ever Women's Conference at the Provincial Office on May 14 and 15. About 80 women from HEU's



First Nations Standing Committee members presented Buffy Ste-Marie (centre) with a Seven Directions Spirit Catcher.

membership attended the conference, which included workshops on building new skills, standing up for yourself and others, creating networks, understanding how the union works, finding balance, developing campaigns that inspire, and many other sessions aimed at building leadership within our membership.

Seven members of the First Nations Standing Committee attended the conference, and were inspired by keynote speaker Buffy Ste-Marie, a well-known Cree Nation entertainer and social activist.

After her keynote address, Buffy met with the members of the First Nations Standing Committee for about 30 minutes. The committee and Buffy engaged in conversation on how to improve the status of First Nations people and how to involve our communities in becoming more socially aware. Buffy graciously agreed to have her picture taken with the committee members at this meeting.

The First Nations Standing Committee would like to commend HEU and the Women's Committee for their hard work in organizing such a fantastic event!

Committee Report

At our last First Nations Standing Committee meeting on May 12 and 13, Dr. Jeanne Paul delivered a short presentation on traditional healing and medicines. Dr. Paul is a semi-retired family practitioner, ethno-botanical researcher, traditional wild and hand-crafter of medicine, keynote speaker, herbal medicine teacher, and First Nations consultant on native issues and health topics. For more information about Dr. Jeanne Paul, please visit her website at <www.redshawl.com>.

Please watch for our soon-to-be-released First Nations handbook *One Union, Many Nations* and the First Nations Standing Committee *Book of Traditional Recipes*.

HEU convention approaching

Seven resolutions for the Hospital Employees' Union Biennial Convention in November 2008 were submitted by the First Nations Standing Committee. They cover:

- Expediting the Treaty Process
- Clean Water Policy
- Victims of Residential Schools
- Violence against First Nations Women
- Canada Pension Plan Survivor Benefit
- Funding for Natural/Adopted/Permanent Families
- Funding for On-Reserve Foster Children

Women in leadership training

Watch for applications in the secretary-treasurer mailing for the 9th Annual National Aboriginal Women in Leadership Training Conference, October 8-10 at the Best Western Richmond Hotel & Convention Centre in Vancouver. This conference offers three leadership training streams: Business and Economic Development, Personal Growth and Development, and Leadership. For more information, visit their website at <www.firstpeoplescanada.com>.

A who's who update:

- **Brian Barron** from Manitoba is the CUPE National Aboriginal Council Diversity vice-president.
- CUPE National Aboriginal Council Diversity co-senators are **Shirley Langon** of Manitoba and **John Thompson** of British Columbia.
- HEU servicing representative **Koni Marrington** is the new Staff Advisor to the First Nations Standing Committee.
- **Victor Elkins** and **Joanne Foote** are the HEU Provincial Executive members on the Equal Opportunities Committee. The EOC is a committee on which all four equity committee chairpersons have a seat.



Upcoming events

- The **Cowichan 2008 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG)** is happening August 2-10 in Duncan, B.C. For more information, please go to their website at <www.cowichan2008.com>.
- **National Aboriginal Day** – June 21
- **National Day of Action** – June 29
- The **Walk-4-Justice** will be starting at Trout Lake in Vancouver on National Aboriginal Day – June 21 – and will finish at Parliament Hill in Ottawa on September 15. For more information, visit their website at <www.walk4justice.piczo.com>.

For more than 40 years, the Walk-4-Justice has been organized to honour First Nations women who are missing or have died through violence.

The campaign is demanding action from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and INAC Minister Chuck Strahl to get justice, closure, equality and accountability, and ask for a public inquiry into all reported cases of missing women.



The campaign wants to:

- stop the ongoing genocide and legacy of “systemic racism” happening in this country;
- ask for accountability for the children who are our future leaders;
- raise funds for the children for health facilities, counseling, cultural awareness, treatment centres, and education facilities;
- help build futures for these children and stop the violence.

The Circle of Life

You may have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days, when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation and so long as the hoop was unbroken, the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living centre of the hoop and the circle of the four quarters nourished it. The East gave peace and light, the South gave warmth. The West gave rain and the North, with its cold and mighty wind, gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion. Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round and I have heard the earth is round like a ball and so are the stars. The Wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. The life of man is a circle from childhood to childhood and so is in everything where power moves. Our Teepees were round like the nests of birds and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.

Black Elk Speaks

Spiritual Advisor to the Oglala Sioux in 1930

