

FIRST NATIONS



NEWSLETTER

FALL 2007

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

Trudy Spiller, Chairperson (Gitxsan)
South Vancouver Island

Valerie Sailer, Vice-Chairperson (Kwakiutl)
Kootenay

Martin MacKenzie, (T'it'q'et)
Vancouver Coastal

Linda McNamara, (Métis)
Interior

Amie Williams (Wet'suwet'en)
North

Shelley Smith (Métis)
North Vancouver Island

Nancy Luis (Métis)
Fraser Valley

Della Fellhauer (Whispering Pines)
Member-at-large

Sheldon Agecouty
Member-at-large

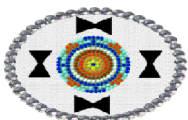
It was reported in the Winter 2006 First Nations Newsletter that the Equity Officer, **Sharryn Modder**, was on maternity leave and **Lila Murao** was filling her position. Lila has returned to her position with HEU as an organizer and **Melissa O'Sullivan** is presently the Equity Officer. We would like to thank Lila for her insight and wisdom on First Nations issues over the past year and wish her well as she returns to organizing. We would also like to welcome Melissa to our committee as she brings a vast array of First Nations knowledge to our committee and was HEU's First Nations Standing Committee Advisor.



Martin MacKenzie and Trudy Spiller were selected to sit on **CUPE National Aboriginal Council** August 2006 and attended the first meeting in Ottawa July 3 - 6, 2007. They met with Aboriginal CUPE members from across Canada and had an opportunity to update one another on what is happening in our provinces and divisions. Reports from across Canada clearly indicate that racism is alive and well in every province. Martin and Trudy will be attending **CUPE National Convention** in Toronto, Ontario October 14 - 19, 2007.

**5TH CONTINENTAL
WOMEN OF THE
AMERICAS
CONFERENCE**

Gerri Harris from Saskatchewan and HEU's Trudy Spiller were selected by CUPE National Aboriginal Council to attend the 5th Continental Women of the Americas Conference on Kahnawake Territory in Montreal July 9 - 11, 2007. 250 women from North, South and Central America gathered in a tent. Over the intense three days, talks included medicines, law, plants, slavery of young girls in the sex trade, abuse, etc. The panel speakers were young women, elders, medicine women and many were lawyers. Trudy was amazed when other countries spoke of young girls at the age of 12 going out to earn money to support their families in the sex trade and how many of them go missing and are never reported.



The newly elected First Nations Standing Committee met in Vancouver for the first time on September 6th & 7th. Some topics of discussion at our meeting were resolutions that were adopted at HEU 2006 Convention and the "Strategic Priorities for HEU" document. Discussions included:

➤ **RESOLUTION 67 – Equity Action Plan**

"BE IT RESOLVED that HEU work with the equity committees over the next two (2) years to develop ways to ensure greater participation at all levels of the Union for equity-seeking groups."

July 23 – 25, 2007 three members from each of the four standing committees attended an Equity Module course by Maire Kirwan at Provincial Office. Della Fellhauer, Martin MacKenzie and Trudy Spiller attended on behalf of the First Nations Standing Committee. The goal was to create a one-hour Equity Module that HEU could deliver to our members at local and regional meetings on equity. Our hope is that it will eventually be delivered at all HEU educational opportunities.

➤ **RESOLUTION 68 – First Nations Staff**

"BE IT RESOLVED that HEU work with the First Nations Caucus to identify and train First Nations members for potential staff positions focused in the North."

Our committee had much discussion on this and will be sending a letter to HEU's Coordinator of Servicing, Bonnie Pearson, to ask her to attend our next meeting which is tentatively scheduled for November 14 & 15 for discussion.

We identified the following:

- a) How do we identify First Nations members?
- b) Why don't First Nations members participate in the Union?
- c) Are there barriers that prevent them from applying?
- d) How can we help them to overcome those barriers?

For those members in the North that receive our newsletter, we invite you to join our First Nations Caucus by calling Melissa O'Sullivan at 1-800-663-5813 (ext 7062) or email her at mosullivan@heu.org to register.

➤ **RESOLUTION 96 – Strategic Plan**

"BE IT RESOLVED that to ensure a cohesive work plan, that there be a meeting following each Convention where all the newly appointed committees meet together with the Provincial Executive to build a common understanding of the Union's goals and objectives for the following two (2) years."

Every six months our Equity Officer will report to our Secretary-Business Manager, Judy Darcy, on what our Action Plan will be over the next two years and what we have done so far. Parts of our Action Plan over the next two years that our committee has identified are:

- Newsletters, Handbooks
- Get involved with elections
- September 23 Aids Walk
- May 17th International Day of Homophobia
- Aboriginal People Aids Conference
- Tough Enough to Wear Pink (Breast Cancer)
- Aboriginal Health Conferences
- Shuswap Health Conference in Kamloops
- Cops for Cancer
- BC Aboriginal Diabetes Conference
- Keep up to date with Bill C-31 decision
- Setting up booths at events where First Nations people attend



Women in CUPE
Strengthening our union

Valerie Sailer participated with **CUPE's** online survey for recommendations on the **Women's Task Force**. The National Task Force supports the principles and actions in the Vancouver Declaration and calls for the implementation of this Declaration. CUPE will continue to develop and deliver courses specific to women, especially leadership training and skills development. Course topics include: ***How to Mentor, Public Speaking Skills, Presenting a Grievance and Facing Management, Analyzing Budgets, Speaking with Media, Consensus-Building Skills, Consensus Leadership Models, and Lobbying Politicians.*** Make educational courses more accessible to women at all levels of the Union by providing scholarships or by subsidizing the costs of attending CUPE schools. In particular, CUPE should subsidize the cost of offering the week-long **Women Breaking Barriers** course so that more women, especially women from equality-seeking groups, are able to attend. For more information regarding the **CUPE National Women's Task Force**, go to www.cupe.ca/nwtf.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **SEPTEMBER 30, 2007**
CIBC Run for the Cure
For information on runs in your area go to:
www.cibcrunfortheure.com
- **OCTOBER 11 – 13, 2007**
8th Annual National Aboriginal Women in Leadership Training Conference
Vancouver, B.C.
For more information contact FNTCS at
250-652-7097 or email office@fntcs.com
www.firstpeoplescanada.com

If you are **Métis, First Nations** or **Inuit** and want to be on our First Nations Caucus list, please contact **Melissa O'Sullivan, Equity Officer**. 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.

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*The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by:
"Lugaganowals" (Trudy Spiller), Chairperson, First Nations Standing Committee.
Trudy wishes you all well and hopes you all have a wonderful winter.*