

2009-2011 REPORT OF THE AFL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

The AFL Women's Committee has played a vital role by bringing awareness about women's issues to the labour movement. The Committee continues to be active within the greater community to support the many socio-economic and quality of life issues facing women.

Each term we develop an action plan that allows us to plan our activities, events and follow-up on convention resolutions.

COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVISM

AFL/CLC Jasper School & Caucuses

Bargaining for Equality was offered in 2010 and women were provided with subsidies to attend.

In 2011, the Women's Committee recommended that an Activist Course/Leadership be offered. We are pleased to report that over 20 participants signed up for this course.

The Committee recommended a speaker be brought in during each week of the 2011 AFL/CLC school to do a presentation on the ACWS "**Domestic Violence & Your Workplace Toolkit**" – a toolkit made possible due to the generous sponsorship of HSAA.

John Radcliff, from the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters presented the outline of the toolkit to participants.

Women's caucuses/roundtables were held during the AFL/CLC schools in Jasper in both 2010 and 2011. AFL Women's Committee members led the discussions in these roundtables or caucuses.

We see these roundtables as opportunities to network, share ideas and learn from one another.

International Women's Day & AFL Women's Day Award

Members of the Committee participated in events to celebrate International Women's Day in 2010 and 2011.

The Committee reviewed the AFL IWD award criteria and poster; reviewed nominations in each year and made recommendations for the International Women's Day Award to the AFL Executive Council. The AFL IWD Award recipient in 2010 was

Sister Bena Pattni (CUPW) who received her award at the 2010 AFL Mid-Term Forum in Calgary. The 2011 award recipient is Sister Betty Ann Emery (UNA) who will receive the award at this convention.

April 28th – International Day of Mourning

April 28th is the International Day of Mourning and activities were held throughout the Province in 2010. Members of the committee supported these events.

December 6th National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

As a follow-up to the successful conference held in December 2008 and in keeping with resolutions and policy paper adopted at the 2009 convention on violence against women, the AFL Women's Committee initiated its first December 6th fundraising Brunch in 2010 and followed it up with an even more successful one in 2011.

The theme of the fundraising brunches is **"First Mourn, Then Work for Change."** The committee recognizes that while it is important to remember the 14 women who lost their lives in 1989, it is equally important to work for change. In keeping with that philosophy we want to continue to grow the Brunch each year and look forward to working with the affiliates to make it a bigger and better success each year.

We are thrilled by the level of support the December 6th Brunch has received from affiliates in terms of attendance and in terms of the numerous door prize donations. One in three participants received a door prize in 2010 and one in every two received a door prize in 2011.

The December 2010 speakers were: Elisabeth Ballermann, President of Health Sciences Association of Alberta; **Dr. Lise Gotell**, Professor in the Women's Studies Program, U of A and **Rachel Notley**, MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Monies raised in 2010 (\$3400) went to the Olga Blondheim Fund and (\$520) to the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters for a grand total of \$3920. The Olga Blondheim Fund was set up to ensure that women who want to run electorally will receive financial assistance during provincial election campaigns.

The 2011 December 6th speakers were: Muriel Stanley Venne, Vice President, Metis Nation of Alberta and President and Founder, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women; **Sonia Bitar**, Citizenship Judge and former Executive Director of Changing Together-A Centre for Immigrant Women; and **Jan Reimer**, Provincial Coordinator of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS).

Funds raised in 2011 (\$4000) went to the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS). Although our attendance was better, due to increased rental costs the amount donated to organizations remained relatively constant.

In 2011 we changed up the format for the Brunch to allow for a networking component – something we hope to build on in the future.

To mark December 6th, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, members of the AFL Women's Committee also participated in ceremonies held in Edmonton sponsored by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC).

Breakfast with the Guys

The AFL Women's Committee sponsored trade union men to attend breakfasts in Calgary and Edmonton. These are fundraisers for the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and are intended to raise awareness of men on the issue of domestic violence. Members of the Women's Committee also attended.

Lobby Day

The AFL Lobby Day during the Spring session is an opportunity for labour activists to go talk to their MLAs.

To mark International Women's Day on March 8, the focus of the Lobby was on women's issues – specifically women's pay

inequality and child care and the need for the government to appoint a Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

About 40 activists participated in Lobby Day 2011 making it a tremendous success. A morning breakfast briefing was followed by lobbying MLAs in pairs. Once the lobby was over, everyone came back to the hotel completed their evaluation forms and went for lunch to share experiences.

Members of AFL Women's Committee, other women's committees, labour activists, male trade unionists and coalition partners all participated.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The Committee would like a lobby to become a regular event as it serves three purposes: 1) educational in nature; 2) raise issues of concern; and 3) become actively engaged in the political process by talking and lobbying MLAs.

Lobby Day is also a wonderful networking experience for activists to share their views and ideas.

DISPOSITION OF 2009 CONVENTIONS RESOLUTIONS

Res. No. 701, 702, 707 – Domestic Violence

Some of the work done has included:

- Speakers at the Dec 6th brunches support the prevention of violence against women and offer practical solutions to help end violence and abuse in our homes, workplaces and communities.
- The introduction of the ACWS "Domestic Violence & Your Workplace Toolkit", to union members at the AFL/CLC Jasper School.

These issues remain current and require ongoing work and continuing strategies.

Res. No 703/705 – Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality

The Women's Committee continues to advocate for women's equality by fundraising through brunches and promoting the ACWS Toolkit at the AFL/CLC School & Caucuses. AFL Lobby Day on March 16, 2011 had the express purpose of asking the government to appoint someone to be responsible for the Status of Women in Alberta. The Committee has also had discussions on a coalition to address this issue.

Res. No 708 - Course Development

We continue to gather information and hope to collaborate with the Education Committee to develop a course to address this issue in the coming term.

Res. No. 709 – Sample Contract Language

A number of affiliates have sent information on their contract language but many collective agreements have no reference to the prevention of violence against women in the workplace.

In 2008, the Government of Canada introduced regulations under the Canada Labour Code to prevent violence in the workplace – recognizing that it is everyone's responsibility – employers, workers, unions and government. The Violence Prevention in the Workplace Regulations plays an important role in improving the safety of workers. They provide employers and workers with the requirements for preventing and protecting against violence at work. Provincial Labour Regulations already require employers to provide a safe workplace and face penalties if they do not. However it is always a good idea to have safeguards in Collective Agreements and not count on legislation that can be changed at any time.

Res. No 711 – Poverty & Homelessness

The AFL as a whole continues to raise awareness of poverty and homelessness in all of its activities and campaigns. The lobby events continue to bring these issues to the attention of our elected officials. (This requires constant and never-ending action).

The Committee was unable to find an organization willing to have us come in and prepare a meal for those less fortunate.

Many of the resolutions that are in the past report have no “end” as they are ongoing issues and cannot be resolved by a few in a short period of time.

CONCLUSION

This has been a tremendously active period for the AFL Women’s Committee with tangible results. The committee members

identified becoming more “political” as a priority.

We are proud of the successful December 6th brunches and Lobby Day and look forward to improving our networking with other women’s committees of affiliates; the broader labour movement and the community in the future.

One issue the Committee was working on and hopes to see continued in the next term is the development of an equity statement (new anti-harassment statement for the AFL).

We are looking for new members to serve on the 2011-2013 term and urge interested activists to review the attached Terms of Reference for the Committee.

We would like to thank the Officers and staff for consistently supporting us in our work.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

AFL WOMEN’S COMMITTEE, 2009 –2011

Denise Palmer, Chair	UNA
Betty Connelly, Council Liaison	CEP
Delores Pisl, Secretary	TWU
Mariana Burstyn	HSAA
Carisa David	PSAC
Pauline Klassen	CAW
Cherie Langlois-Klassen	USW
Linda Nyznyk	CUPW-Edm.
Jody Trotman	ATU
Maureen Werlin	COPE
Cheryl Watamaniuk	UFCW
Sue Gallivan, Alternate	UNA
Nancy Furlong (information)	AFL
Gil McGowan (information)	AFL

Committee members who served a partial term:

Michelle Gregoire	UUWA
Samara Jones	AFL Resource
Shannon Phillips	AFL Resource

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Enclosure



WOMEN - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Women's Committee shall:

- a) Be concerned with the rights of women in the work force who face discrimination, lack of equal opportunity, unfair treatment, and/or harassment in the workplace and union.
 - b) Encourage involvement of women in union activities and other activities concerning women.
 - c) Cooperate and liaise with other Federations and union committees in this common area of jurisdiction.
 - d) Be concerned with facilitating discussion on the socioeconomic quality of life of women and the special circumstances and situations facing them. e.g., dual roles, spousal/partner/child/elder abuse, job sharing, pensions and child/elder care.
 - e) Participate and/or initiate meetings, conferences, conventions and education courses where appropriate.
 - f) Compile materials and monitor legislation concerning women.
 - g) Promote and organize educational programs concerning women in the workplace, home and society.
 - h) Conduct studies as necessary.
 - i) Work with the Executive Council in promoting or assisting in the organization of women workers.
 - j) Encourage formation of Women's Committees with labour organizations at all levels.
- b) review their mandate from convention and develop a plan of action for their term.
 - c) deal with business referred to them by the Executive Council.
 - d) carry out activities of the committee, and report in writing any recommendations to the AFL Executive Council meetings. *(Please see reporting in clear language.)*
 - e) subject to Executive Council approval and in coordination with the AFL Officers, organize provincial or regional conferences.
 - f) liaise with affiliated unions and labour councils in matters related to their respective jurisdiction and CLC committees where applicable.
 - g) receive prior approval from the President or Secretary Treasurer before all correspondence, printed materials, public statements, etc. are produced.
 - h) prior to adjournment of a meeting, establish, whenever possible, the next meeting date of the committee.
 - i) communicate with other members of the committee. The AFL will supply the names, telephone numbers and email addresses of committee members.
 - j) report biennially on its activities to the convention of the Federation.
 - k) not have any authority to act or speak on behalf of the Federation.

Note: Affirmative Action representatives on the AFL Executive Council will automatically sit on the AFL Women's Committee.

GENERAL – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Specific terms of reference have been established for each Standing Committee according to their specific jurisdiction. However, all Standing Committees of the AFL shall:

- a) keep abreast of and be knowledgeable in matters and developments related to their jurisdiction, and keep the AFL Officers up to date in these areas.

The President and Secretary Treasurer shall be *ex officio* members of all committees. The Secretary Treasurer is the primary liaison for all Committees. AFL staff will be assigned to committees, when needed, to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

REPORTING IN CLEAR LANGUAGE

All committee resolutions to Conventions and all recommendations to the AFL Executive Council will be presented to the AFL in clear language.

RESOLUTIONS AND POLICY REVIEW

The AFL, through its committees, will review policies and resolutions for the purpose of:

- a) consolidating
- b) rewriting in clear language, or
- c) deleting or archiving those that are redundant or have been dealt with.