

REPORT OF THE AFL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two years the Education Committee of the Alberta Federation has been quite productive in meeting the goals discussed at our first meeting following the 2007 Convention. We were met in a timely fashion and got the business done. We said goodbye to the following Committee members: Sisters Bev Norman (CUPE); Lyndsay Arndt (HSAA); and Lyndsay McAvoy (HSAA). We welcomed new members Brother Ed Hanson (CUPE) and Sister Meaghan McNeil (HSAA). The 2009 School was the last attended by Bro. Les Steel, CLC Representative and resource person t this committee. We wish him well!

A resolution adopted at the 2007 convention was the establishment of an Education Fund. The committee has accessed some funds to sponsor facilitators and lower registration costs for a course.

AFL/CLC SCHOOLS

The Alberta Federation of Labour/Canadian Labour Congress Winter Schools at the Jasper Park Lodge was well attended in 2008 and 2009. Approximately 90 students participated in each week of the 2008 School held from January 14-25 at the Jasper Park Lodge.

There were new faces in both years that came with a willingness to participate and a keen desire to learn. Lots of networking, learning, fun and laughter occurred.

2008 Courses were:

Facing Management; Collective Bargaining (two courses were offered – one in each week); Labour Law; Labour History; Advanced Shop Steward; Union Counselling; Duty to Accommodate; Conflict Resolution, Workers' Compensation; Effective Communications and Public Speaking; and Human Rights.

2008 Facilitators were:

Jason Foster (AFL); Tim Gough (UNA); Cam Sherk (UFCW); Kirk Oates (CUPE); Deb Jamerson (CLC); Mark Turner (CAW); Linda Huebscher (CUPE); Jane Sustrik (UNA); Darla Leard (CLC); Kevin Flaherty (AWHC); Betty Ann Emery (UNA); Jim Selby (AFL); Carol Leighton (CUPW-Edm); Ivana Niblett (TWU); John Carpenter (TWU); Perri Garvin (United Way); Dee Mae Beller (UFCW); Rashpal Sehmbly (CUPW); Les Steel (CLC); Brenda Kuzio; and Michael Toal.

2009 School

94 delegates attended Week 1; 92 delegates attended Week 2. The School was held January 26 to February 6, 2009 at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.

Again the Committee saw the delegates were willing to try new ideas. A new course, offered in the second week of the school, “**Bargaining for Equity**”, dealing directly with equity and collective bargaining. There was a rebate of \$200 dollars for any sisters attending this class. One brother also took this course. The Committee will review the evaluations of the course.

Sixteen (16) new facilitators were trained at the 2009 School. One person from an equity seeking group was trained using funds from the Education Fund to cover costs.

2009 Courses were:

Advanced Collective Bargaining;;
Advanced Health & Safety; Advanced Shop Steward; Duty to Accommodate; Labour History; Labour Law; Union Counselling; Bargaining for Equity; Workers’ Compensation; Arbitration; Facilitator Training; Public Speaking & Parliamentary Procedure; and Conflict Resolution.

2009 Facilitators were:

Tamara Levine (CLC), Cam Sherk (UFCW); Jason Foster (AFL); John Carpenter (TWU); Ivana Niblett (TWU); Kris Farkas (UNA); Kevin Flaherty (AWHC); Jim Selby (AFL); Linda Huebscher (CUPE); Leslie Baker (United Way); Perri Garvin (United Way); Kellie Scanion; Mary Lou Cherwaty; Michael Toal; Dennis Bennett, Cindy Wiggins (CLC), Meaghan McNeil (HSAA); Deb Jamerson (CLC); Ed Hanson (CUPE); Jane Sustrik (UNA); and Tim Gough (UNA).

EDUCATORS’ CONFERENCES

The 2007 Educators’ Conference was held in Edmonton, November 2 & 3. Sisters Deb Jamerson, CLC and Karen Kennedy, CUPW facilitated the workshop **Diversity or Equity?** that focused on diversity within a classroom atmosphere. There were 18 participants. This workshop allowed for discussion around a subject that either divides or brings together people.

The 2008 Educators’ Conference was held in Calgary, November 7 & 8 with 15 participants. Cindy Wiggins, CLC National Education Director facilitated the session **Course Design in the 21st Century**. This workshop dealt with how to develop and deliver a workshop or course using the tools at hand and allowing for maximum participation. Rave reviews on the content and the facilitation. This was an excellent interactive presentation.

AFL KIDS’ CAMP

The 2007 AFL Kids’ Camp was held at Camp Goldeye in Nordegg from August 6-10. This was a transitional Camp for the AFL. Many thanks to Paula and Phil Harvie, members of CEP 707, who volunteered to jointly undertake the role of Camp Director. Leaders Elisabeth Ballermann, Judy Barry, Jill Hague, Maureen Werlin, Kelly Garland, Ken Schminosky and Sue Gallivan (nurse) and Junior Counsellors Lily Climenhaga, Amy Lenfesty, Laurie Cottrell, Josh German and Justin Cormier joined Paula and Phil – along with 75 campers ages 8-15.

This camp was a sharp learning curve for leaders but the Campers had a great time hiking, canoeing, swimming, rappelling, climbing the “Wall”, touring the abandoned coal mine and enjoying crafts – a welcome addition to activities given the rain! The Committee appreciates the monetary donations, sponsorships of campers, leaders and junior counsellors and the SWAG donated by unions for the campers. Without affiliate support the camp would not be possible.

A report on the 2008 AFL Kids’ Camp prepared by Camp Director Elisabeth Ballermann is attached.

The 2008 Camp was a huge success due in part to the learning from the 2007 Camp, the establishment of a Kids’ Camp sub-committee and a curriculum sub-committee.

The Education Committee needs to examine how we can attract more adult leaders, particularly volunteer brothers for the camp. We need to have a better balance of leaders. The challenge is there to all affiliates to sponsor both sisters and brothers to do this important work. Failing to get the needed volunteer leaders may lead the Education Committee to review the camp dynamics.

CLC LITERACY WORKING GROUP

The representative from the Education Committee to the CLC Literacy Working group from convention 2007 until May of 2008 was Sister Karen Kennedy from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Edmonton Local. The

alternate selected by the Committee was Sister Ivana Niblett from the TWU.

The CLC Literacy Working Group Coordinator position became vacant early in 2008; the work of the Committee had already been affected by the funding decisions imposed by the Federal Government. Literacy funding was altered in 2007, and although several unions applied for a renewal of monies for on-going projects, everything was put on hold. In the end, the CLC proposal was turned down and only one union received funding – the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) for a national project.

One Literacy Working Group meeting was held at the end of April 2008 in Ottawa through a distinct funding initiative. Sister Kennedy attended and reported back to the AFL Education Committee. There have been no further meetings of the CLC Literacy Working Group and future meetings are in question with the current approach to funding of proposals by the Federal Government.

A Literacy Roundtable was also held in Saskatoon, at the beginning of April 2008, and Sister Kennedy attended with the support of her local.

The Alberta Federation of Labour Education Committee continues to belong to Literacy Alberta. Sister Bev Norman (CUPE), previously on the AFL Education Committee was an elected member of the Literacy Alberta.

Following the CLC Convention of May 2008, the delegate to the CLC Literacy Working Group is now Secretary Treasurer Nancy Furlong.

CLC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Sister Ivana Niblett was nominated by the AFL Education Committee to sit on the CLC Education Advisory Committee that meets semi-annually. The AFL Executive Council endorsed Sister Niblett as the AFL representative for the 2008-2011 term. Sister Meaghan McNeil is also a member of the Committee representing NUPGE.

In June of 2008, both sisters took part in a collaborative development session in Cornwall, Ontario. This was an opportunity to work with other educators to develop short educational sessions on a variety of topics (work/life balance, critical thinking, globalization, etc.).

In December of 2008, the Committee meeting was used to introduce the “Art of Hosting.” Through Circle, Open Space, Appreciative Inquiry and World Café, the Committee learned innovative ways to move through an agenda rather than using traditional approaches to meetings. For more information about this topic, please visit www.artofhosting.org. Finally, the Committee was informed about the renewed Labour College of Canada. More information will be provided to all affiliates in March of this year. 2010 marks the return of this fantastic educational opportunity.

Participation on the CLC Advisory Committee has been extremely beneficial for committee members as we are involved in the communication process and introduced to new and interesting educational developments.

Sisters McNeil and Niblett will be attending the next CLC learning circle in May of this year.

ASPEN FOUNDATION FOR LABOUR EDUCATION

Committee members who sit on the Aspen Board for Labour Education are Ivana Niblett (representing TWU) and Beryl Scott (AFL Associate Director). Maureen Werlin from COPE is the AFL Private Sector Director on the Board. Beverley Norman held both the CUPE and the AFL Public Sector seats on the Board for a number of years – she was recently replaced by Bro. Ed Hanson, CUPE Education Representative.

The Aspen Foundation for Labour Education has been extremely busy over the past two years finalizing and promoting “**Looking into Unions**” a teacher’s guide that provides a brief overview of the role of unions in today’s society. The six lessons can be used individually or in any combination. The goal is to educate students to understand:

- 1) Why labour unions organized
- 2) Benefits to workers and society as a result of unions
- 3) The social and economic contributions of unions; and
- 4) The place of unions in today’s society.

Considerable time has also been spent trying to finalize the Medicare Unit for Grade 9 students and the Issues of Economic Globalization for Grade 10 Students. A focus group has recently been established to examine Grade 4 curriculum. A Speakers’ Bureau training session was held. This will connect teachers with trained persons interested

in speaking to a class about work and unions.

A Fundraising Committee was struck in 2008 and will examine how we can improve our fundraising, achieve more sustaining donors within the labour movement as well as examine charitable status. If the AFLE continues to try to produce 2 units a year, it will need more financing. The work the Foundation is doing is impacting our youth – potential members and leaders of the labour movement.

CLOSING REMARKS

A warm thanks to everyone that has been involved over the past two years with the Education Committee. There are some individuals that stand out that need some personal recognition and they are Maureen Werlin from the AFL office – without her we would be uneducated; and Les Steel from the CLC for his leadership and support to the Committee and the Winter School. His dedication over the years will be missed. A special thank you to the facilitators, old and new, that attended the Facilitators conferences and instructed at the Winter Schools.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

AFL EDUCATION COMMITTEE, 2007 – 2009

Beryl Scott, Chair & AFL Council Liaison	UNA
Karen Kennedy, Secretary	CUPW-Edm.
Elaine Alt	PSAC
Martin Duckworth	IBEW
Ed Hanson	CUPE
Meaghan McNeil	HSAA
Cam Sherk	UFCW
Ivana Niblett	TWU
Nancy Furlong	AFL
Bruce Chatterton (alternate)	UNA
Carol Leighton (alternate)	CUPW-Edm.
Gil McGowan (information)	AFL
David Winter (information)	CLC

Committee Members who served a partial term:

Beverley Norman	CUPE
Les Steel	CLC