

REPORT OF THE AFL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

The Education Committee of the Alberta Federation of Labour continues to participate in the advancement of education.

During the past two years there have been some changes to the faces at the table. We welcomed Sister Beverley Norman from CUPE, who replaced Sister Josie Finley who returned to the east. We also welcomed Brother Les Steel who replaced Brother Michael Desautels as the CLC Representative for northern Alberta. Sister Naydene Loewen from PSAC left to prepare for the birth of her child.

We say farewell and best wishes for everyone who has gone on to other avenues of their lives and welcome the new committee members. Sadly, we have not had Brother Turner, CAW, for the latter part of this term due to an unfortunate car accident. Mark, you've been missed. We wish you a speedy recovery!

We would also like to acknowledge the support provided to the committee by the staff of the Alberta Federation of Labour. They worked diligently to prepare all the materials needed for the Kids' Camp as well as the Annual Labour School. They prepared the materials, did the coordinating, typed up the minutes and all the tasks that we

know had to be done – but with little time to do. You are a credit to the labour movement and to your strong sense of dedication to the work at hand... Again, thank you all.

AFL/CLC SCHOOLS

Two very successful schools were held in the fall of 2003 and 2004. The schools were held in Jasper at the Jasper Park Lodge each year.

In 2003 the school was held from November 24 to December 5. The cost per delegate was \$1130 for single and \$930 for shared accommodation. There were a total of 215 delegates in attendance, 79 in the first week and 136 in the second week.

Courses held during the first week (November 24 – November 29) were: Arbitration; Labour Law; Leadership Skills; Pensions; The Steward as an Educator – Building Your Local Union. CAW and IWA both held a Leadership course at the same time. CUPW I and CUPW II were held as well. There were 15 facilitators in total, 7 for the AFL/CLC courses and 8 for the affiliate courses.

The morning plenary sessions during this week were: Public Interest Alberta (PIA); Political Action with Larry Booi, past president of the ATA; Jorge Lerma from Columbia; Barb Byers, CLC

Executive VP and the A-Channel Strikers.

Courses held during the second week (November 30 – December 5) were: **Advanced Shop Steward; Collective Bargaining; Conflict Resolution; Duty to Accommodate; Human Rights are Workers' Rights; Literacy & Clear language: Tools for Solidarity; and Facilitator Training.** A Prairie Organizing Institute course was also being held during this week.

The morning plenary sessions were Barb Byers, CLC Executive VP; Public Interest Alberta (PIA); Political Action with Larry Booi, Past President of the ATA; Issues Campaign with Larry Hubich, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the A-Channel Strikers.

The 2004 fall school was held from November 29 to December 4. The cost per delegate was \$1260 for single and \$1060 for shared accommodation. There were a total of 170 delegates in attendance, 94 in the first week and 76 in the second week.

The courses held during the first week (November 29 – December 4) were: **Advanced Shop Steward; Arbitration; Duty to Accommodate; Human Rights; Labour Law and Popular Economics.** There were 11 facilitators.

Morning plenary sessions were: Marta Ojeda, Executive Director of the Coalition for Justice in Maquilladoras; Dave Werlin with the Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI); and Bill Moore-Kilgannon with Public Interest Alberta (PIA).

The courses held during the second week (December 5 –

December 10) were: **Union Counselling; Parliamentary Procedure & Public Speaking; Conflict Resolution; Collective Bargaining; Advanced Health and Safety and Mobilizing to Reduce Management Power.** There were 12 facilitators this week.

The morning plenary sessions were: December 6 – Ginette Marcoux-Frigon on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women; December 7 – Glenn Taylor, Mayor of Hinton and a member of CEP 855; December 8 – Les Steel on the CLC campaigns.

There were many new delegates at the 2004 school although the number of young workers was low, especially during the second week.

There were a number of courses that had to be cancelled in each year.

Morning compulsory sessions were a great success again with great speakers each time.

Without our affiliates and their dedication to the labour movement the Annual School would not exist. We would like to thank the delegates and their Unions for all their dedication, hard work and devotion. We sincerely hope that you learned the tools you needed at our schools, and that you took these tools back and applied them in your workplaces and in your everyday lives. Our promise to you is that we will continue our dedication to educating our members and fighting for the rights of workers around the world.

There will not be a Fall School in 2005. Instead we will be holding future schools early in the year starting in 2006.

The first week of the 2004 school had a breakdown of 60% women and 25% youth (youth course was not held). The second week was a 50/50 split on gender and 7% youth. Both weeks were very weak on sisters and brothers from the diversity groups.

We were able to use two instructors for each class and 40% were first time instructors. All costs for facilitators were covered by affiliated local unions and the Canadian Labour Congress.

EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE

The committee was also determined to hold the Educators' Conference that had been mandated by the last Convention. Although we had tried to hold one in 2004 we had not been successful, for a number of reasons.

This time we started the preparation early and had lots of input from the committee as to how the conference should take shape. It was decided to have a "working" conference along the lines of the CLC conference held a few years ago in Winnipeg. The conference will include an education "fair/exchange", sessions that allow educators to hone their skills and a general discussion of where we are with union education in this province and where we would like to go. This will give union educators the ability to add to their skills, to share information about new courses and best practices, and find ways to deliver the kind of education the affiliates want, hopefully on a regular basis.

Originally scheduled for February, it was put off until March 11-13 because of logistical problems. The committee had intended to try for a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 40 participants however we only had 19 registrants by the

deadline. We decided to go ahead anyway because it was important to attempt to meet the mandate given by the delegates to the last convention. The facilitators for the conference were Sister Lynn Carlile from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in Ottawa and Brother David Condon from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) in Medicine Hat.

At the time of writing this report, the conference was less than one week away. It looks to be a fun and interesting weekend that will hopefully lead to annual gatherings for union educators.

KIDS' CAMP

2003 was the end of an era for the AFL Kids' Camp. After 9 years at Camp Warwa on Lake Isle, we had to move to a new location. Ironically, it was the success of the camp and increasing participation that had forced a move to a larger location. So it was that 88 campers and the counsellors bid a final farewell to Warwa, and started to look forward to what would become our new home for the summer camp, Goldeye Centre, located near Nordegg, Alberta.

With the arrival of the 2004 camp we were delighted to see our numbers had increased again. There were 57 female campers, 49 male campers, 8 junior counsellors and 15 leaders\counsellors, 5 of whom were nurses. We welcomed campers from all around Alberta and had a large contingent from the Northern Territories as well. Buses were provided to campers from Edmonton, Hinton, Calgary and a fleet of vans to Fort McMurray.

In changing the location of the camp there was a small increase in the registration fee from \$250 to \$275 but

even with this we ran a deficit of \$1610 as of September 30 of this year.

The activities at this year's camp included: hiking, canoeing, wall climbing, swimming, horseback riding, group challenges and a tour of the local coal mine that has been shut down since the early '40s after a mining explosion that was caused in part by a faulty ventilation system that the company was aware of.

Curriculum was developed by Sisters Jane Sustrik, Kerry Barrett and Leah Henderson and was developed to be age specific for the campers. A few of the things they learned about were: what unions are, what they do and why they were formed. They learned how to elect a president and a bargaining committee and were subjected to collective bargaining and eventually ended up going on strike to achieve what they felt were fairer camping

conditions, like more free time and a later curfew.

Other education included were, health and safety, rights of the worker, myths about unions and the pros and cons of belonging, and of course the labour history of Alberta with the tour of the coal mine.

Meals were provided by the staff at Goldeye Centre, with the campers enjoying buffet style eating. The bagged lunches were met with mixed reviews but any concerns brought up will be addressed at this year's camp.

Both the campers and leaders enjoyed their time at the camp, and look forward to returning in the future. All feel that the camp is an excellent opportunity to educate our youth on the importance of unions and the history of the labour movement, as they are our future members and leaders.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

AFL EDUCATION COMMITTEE, 2003 – 2005

Beryl Scott, Chair	UNA
John Carpenter	TWU
Dan Bieker, Jr.	CEP 855
Mike Kalpalka	CEP 777
Karen Kennedy	CUPW-Edm.
Beverley Norman	CUPE
Ralph Meyer	CDLC
Mark Turner	CAW 1087
Dave Condon	AFL Liaison
Kerry Barrett	AFL
Les Steel	CLC

Committee members who completed a partial term:

Josey Finley	CUPE
Naydene Loewen	PSAC 30040
Michael Desautels	CLC

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