



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter June 2006 Issue

Current News

□ The PEI Federation of Labour would like to welcome CUPE Local 1051 (West Prince Health Authority) and its 62 members into the federation as our newest affiliate.

□ Once again this year in early September, the Federation will be donating books, CD's, and DVD's, dealing with labour and social issues to the Provincial and UPEI libraries. The value of this year's donation will be approximately \$1200. Recently, the Federation sent out notices of this campaign to each of our affiliates asking them to donate \$50.00 to the Adopt-A-Book Fund. We feel that making sure that the general public has access to this information is very important. Last year, thanks to the generosity of many of our affiliates and their national bodies, the federation was able to donate approximately \$2300 worth of materials. If your Local wishes to donate to this campaign, please send a cheque payable to the PEI Federation of Labour (memo Adopt A Book Fund) to our office at 22 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown, PEI, C1E1E6. Thus far, we would like to thank CUPE PEI Division, CUPE Local 501, CUPE Local 1870, and UPSE for their generous donations.

□ On Monday, September 4, the P.E.I. Federation of Labour will hold its 7th Annual Labour Day Corn Boil and Barbeque at Victoria Park in Charlottetown. So bring a lawn chair and meet your brothers and sisters as we celebrate Labour Day 2006. There will be Entertainment, Games for the Kids, Prizes, Hot Dogs, Corn, and Fun For All. If your local has union hats, shirts, jackets, etc (Especially something for kids) that you are willing to donate for prizes at the event or if you have any members interested in helping out with the serving or preparation of food or with the children's games and races at this year's event, please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com by **Friday, September 1, 2006**.

□ On Friday, July 7, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for June was 10.5% up 0.4% from May's 10.1%. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

□ On Wednesday, June 28, Elmer MacFadyen, Minister responsible for labour announced that the minimum wage on PEI will increase from \$7.15 to \$7.50 per hour on April 1, 2007. With the increase PEI's minimum wage will rank 8th out of the 13 Canadian provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Approximately 2,800, employees in Prince Edward Island earn minimum wage.

□ On Friday, June 23, it was announced that UFCW Canada members have set a new fundraising record of \$1,133,808 in their annual campaign for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada (LLSC). The record breaking campaign makes the UFCW Canada membership the largest annual supporter of LLSC's research to find a cure for leukemia, lymphoma and other blood cancers. UFCW Canada adopted the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada as its charity of choice in 1985 and including this year's campaign, they have raised a total \$9,381,000.00 for the LLSC. The funds are raised through member-organized walkathons, bowlathons, barbecues, bake sales, pool, tennis, golf, volleyball and hockey tournaments and other events

□ On Thursday, June 22, it was announced that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities will be holding public hearings on matters relating to employability in Canada from Monday, June 1 to Friday, November 23, 2006. The Committee will examine issues, such as workers mobility, seasonal workers, older workers, skilled worker shortages, workplace literacy and the recognition of foreign credentials. Hearings will start in Ottawa (spring); before heading to St. John's, Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto in October and Vancouver, Calgary, and Saskatoon in November. The committee is expected to table a report in Parliament by the end of the year. All briefs must be submitted by Wednesday, September 6, 2006 in electronic form whenever possible and should be less than 10 pages long and must include an executive summary of one page prioritizing your proposals. The deadline to put your name in to appear before the committee is Friday, July 7, 2006.

□ On Wednesday, June 21, it was announced that an Environics poll of more than 2,000 Canadians has found that 76% support a national affordable child care strategy such as the former Liberal government's 2004 federal-provincial agreement that Harper's Conservative minority government is preparing to cancel. The poll also showed that support for a national child care strategy was high across the country in both rural and urban communities, in all provinces and across all demographics. In Atlantic Canada, when asked should the federal government create a national early learning and child care system, with the goal of providing affordable child care to all parents who need it, 83% were in support of the national system and when they were asked which plan is better: \$1,200 per year allowance for each child under age 6 or give funds to the provinces to create child care spaces?, 54% of Atlantic Canadians considered child care spaces

more important than Harper's child allowance which garnered 34%. The results of the poll are available here:

http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/action/codeBlue/pdf/Regional_Chart_key_results.pdf

□ On Tuesday, June 20, it was announced that New Brunswick will hold a May 12, 2008 referendum on proportional representation to decide whether the province should stay with the first-past-the-post system or change to a mixed - vote system. Unlike PEI and BC which set 60 thresholds on the vote, Premier Bernard Lord says he will set a 50% plus 1 threshold however he also says that atleast that 50% of eligible voters must vote in the plebiscite in order for it to count.

□ On Monday, June 19, it was announced that the approximately 5,000 current and former telephone operators employed by Bell Canada have voted 95% in favor of accepting a \$104 million settlement to their 14 year old dispute over pay equity. The members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada voted over the last month in 25 separate meetings across Ontario and Québec. It is expected that payments will start within 3 months depending on payment schedules opted for by those who are eligible with settlements ranging from \$1,000 to \$16,500 per person.

□ On Monday, June 19, 17 people, including current CUPW president Deborah Bourque and former president, Jean Claude Parrot, were arrested after trying to cross police lines at Canada Post headquarters in Ottawa to find a document that they believe outlines the Crown corporation's plans for post offices and processing plants across the country. The protest was held as part of CUPW's Operation Transparency Campaign.

□ Recently, the Montague Municipal Council passed a resolution brought to them by the CAW opposing federal government attempts to fast track a Canada-Korea Free Trade agreement. The CAW brought the resolution as part of their campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of Canada-Korea Free Trade and the damage that it would cause to industries such as auto manufacturing and shipbuilding . Canada already has a bilateral trade deficit with Korea of \$4 billion, which has resulted in the loss of 15,000 jobs. Thus far approximately 20 municipal councils in Canada have passed the resolution.

□ On Friday, June 9, it was announced that more than 50,000 Canadians have signed an open letter that urges the prime minister and premiers to honour the federal-provincial child care agreements signed last year. The letter is available to sign at <http://www.buildchildcare.ca>.

□ On Wednesday, June 7, Bell Canada received 99% shareholder approval at its annual meeting to create the Bell Aliant Regional Communications Income Fund which will combine Aliant's wire-line phone operations in Atlantic Canada with Bell Canada's

wireline operations in rural parts of Ontario and Quebec. Aliant shareholders have already approved the fund. The Fund will have 9,000 employees with 8,000 of them from Aliant and annual revenue of \$3.2 billion.

□ On Friday, June 2, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and Québec Premier Jean Charest signed a Labour Mobility Agreement that will significantly enhance the mobility of construction workers between the two provinces, while respecting the regulatory systems already in place. Amongst other things, it broadens the range of activities and circumstances giving Ontario workers access to Québec's construction market. It introduces simplified and abbreviated mechanisms for dispute resolution and for resolving complaints of harassment. It also provides that contractors from both provinces shall be equally entitled to bid on construction contracts of certain Crown Corporations, including liquor and lottery corporations as well as electrical utilities of both provinces. With respect to procurement, the agreement restores access for Québec contractors to the construction contracts of Ontario's public sector.

□ On Thursday, June 1, the federal government announced that it is extending the pilot program that gives seasonal workers 5 extra weeks of Employment Insurance up to a maximum of 45 weeks for another 18 months. The program applies to 21 economic regions including PEI where the unemployment rate is above 10%.

□ On Wednesday, May 31, it was announced that the majority of the Island's Paramedics have chosen CUPE to represent them at the bargaining table. On Monday and Tuesday, 67 paramedics voted with CUPE receiving 36 votes, IUOE receiving 20 votes and UPSE receiving 11 votes. The paramedics were forced to choose one union to represent them after ambulance services on P.E.I. were consolidated in April of this year.

Report on the Resisting Atlantica Events Held in Saint John New Brunswick

□ On Thursday- Saturday, June 8 -10, the Atlantic Provinces Chambers of Commerce, held a 3 day conference at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre called "Reaching Atlantica: Business without Boundaries" which attracted 500 delegates from the business community. The main goal of their conference was to discuss how to economically, socially and politically integrate Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec with Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and upstate New York to form a single coherent trade zone. Within this goal the proponents of Atlantica wish to remove the things that they feel are barriers to business and trade i.e. social programs such as EI, minimum wage regulations and other labour standards, public services, public health care, and the right to unionize.

-In response to this, events were organized by labour and social groups in opposition to

the business conference and their agenda under the title of “Resisting Atlantica”

□ On Thursday, June 8, approximately 300 people attended a Town Hall Meeting at the Fort Howe Coastal Inn sponsored by the Council of Canadians on the danger Atlantica poses to the people and environment of Atlantic Canada. The panel at the meeting was made up of Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians; Andrew Jackson, CLC; and Matt Schlobohm, Maine Fair Trade Campaign with Leo Broderick, Council of Canadians acting as the emcee. It was a very good opening event with very good attendance. The panellists gave those in attendance a good background on Atlantica and why it is so dangerous to the average Atlantic Canadian. Many of those in attendance also got up to the microphone to ask questions to the panellists and express their concerns about Atlantica.

□ On Friday, June 9, the 4 Atlantic Federations of Labour held a press conference at the Saint John Free Public Library with Michel Boudreau, President of the NBFL acting as the host for the event. The press conference went well with good press and public attendance and was getting good follow up coverage until the arrests of the three protesters at the business conference that afternoon caught the media’s attention. Below is the press release that the press conference was based on.

□ **“Atlantica: working families don’t want it!” say labour leaders***

-SAINT JOHN (New Brunswick) – Big business’ idea of creating an integrated cross-border economic region, to be called Atlantica, will make us all poorer and will restrict democratic decision-making. That’s why working families don’t want it, according to the leaders of the four federations of labour of Canada’s Atlantic provinces.

-In a joint news conference, Michel Boudreau, president of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, Ivy Shaw, secretary-treasurer of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, Reg Anstey, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour and Blair Penny, first vice-president of the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour, explain that “such a wrongheaded political and economic proposal has been hatched in the dark. In broad daylight everyone will see as self-serving, undemocratic and hostile to working families.”

-The labour leaders’ news conference is a response to the much-publicized “Reaching Atlantica” gathering convened in Saint John by the Atlantic Provinces Chambers of Commerce, the Saint John Board of Trade and the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, an extreme conservative think-tank.

-The blueprint for the proposed Atlantica is to create a region that encompasses the four

Atlantic provinces of Canada, a piece of Quebec, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and a large swath of northern New York State all the way to Buffalo. In that region of “business without boundaries,” according to the proponents, “the removal of barriers and harmonization of regulations” will provide corporations with more privileges than those they already enjoy with NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), will weaken government ability to sustain people’s quality of life and will bring about the loss of provincial control over natural resources.

-“Atlantica is not a blue print to make us more prosperous. It's a scheme by greedy corporations to make themselves richer at the expense of working people on PEI and across Atlantic Canada,” explains Blair Penny, first vice-president of the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour. “This proposal is nothing more than a direct attack on the average citizen in Atlantic Canada.”

-“The whole idea is an insult to the working people and citizens of New Brunswick,” says Michel Boudreau. “Working people and their unions have built an inclusive society in this province that is bilingual and that practices social solidarity through institutions like public medicare. Now a few greedy corporate executives want us to give it up on the altar of ‘harmonization of regulations!’ That’s not going to happen.”

-“They cannot build a modern society without strong citizens any more than they can build their businesses without workers. That’s why their Atlantica is fatally flawed,” says Ivy Shaw, secretary-treasurer of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour. “Any plan, like Atlantica, that includes abolishing the minimum wage or cancelling labour legislation is an attack on the quality of life of the working people in Nova Scotia.”

-“Because Newfoundland and Labrador seem to be an afterthought in this Atlantica scheme, I don’t see why the St. John’s business elite is participating in this?” says Reg Anstey, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour. “What big business calls ‘trade barriers’ or ‘red tapes’ are usually workers’ rights, families’ social protections and community-driven development. Something like Atlantica will vacuum away what’s left of the control we can still exercise on future power generation, on offshore petroleum production and on our fisheries.”

-The labour movement will be watching the reactions of the governments of the four Atlantic provinces and of the federal government to Atlantica. The Canadian Labour Congress, that represents over 3.1 million Canadian workers across the country, fully support the position of the Atlantic provinces’ four federations of labour in their denunciation of the Atlantica proposal.

□ On Saturday, June 10, the final event for the weekend was a March and Rally

Sponsored by the Saint John District Labour Council and even though it rained at times heavy on Saturday approximately 400 people attended. Speakers at the rally included Michel Boudreau, President of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour; CLC Secretary -Treasurer, Hassan Yussuff; Ron Oldfield, Saint John District Labour Council; and Wayne Lucas, President CUPE NFLD. In his speech, brother Lucas gave insider insight into what was being discussed at the "Reaching Atlantica" conference as he and the other CUPE Presidents from Atlantic Canada including Donalda MacDonald from PEI attended the 3 day business conference to make sure that labour would know what was being discussed. After the Rally, those in attendance held a peaceful march down to the Convention Center where the conference was being held.

Report From the Charlottetown, Present and Future Challenges for our City Forum

□ On Tuesday, June 20, the PEI Federation of Labour in association with organizations and community groups like the MacKillop Center for Social Justice held a Forum on Charlottetown, Present and Future Challenges for our City at the Basilica Recreational Centre. The forum attracted approximately 36 participants from a wide range of labour, community, and social organizations.

-The day started with Federation Vice President, Blair Penny welcoming everyone to the Forum. Then keynote speaker, Dr. Katherine Clough (Retired planner and policy analyst with the Government of PEI) gave an interesting presentation on the challenges Charlottetown will face mainly from an environmental perspective. One of the issues she brought forth was the affect that Global Warming will have on Charlottetown and the need there is for us to be prepared.

-Next those in attendance broke up into small groups to discuss the challenges facing Charlottetown in conjunction with the issues brought up in Dr. Clough's presentation.

The Panel Discussion chaired by Eileen Brown-Wilt (UPSE) followed next with panel members:

-Scott Ryan, Charlottetown's Manager of Finances who spoke on the city's finances and where the city gets its money from.

-Blaine Parkman President of CUPE, local 830 who spoke on the state of Charlottetown's public services, the problems associated with the city's increasing use of private contractors rather than using in house staff and the need to increase municipal staffing to handle the increased workload caused by amalgamation and an aging infrastructure.

-David M. Bulger Provincial Co-ordinator for research project "Multi-level Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities" who spoke on the state of democracy in the Island's municipalities, the need to make councillors more accountable to their constituents, the growing power that councillors have, and the need for citizens to get more active in municipal politics.

-After lunch, panel members, Bill MacKinnon (CUPE) (replacing Blaine Parkman) and David Bulger answered questions from those in attendance. Blaine Parkman and Scott Ryan had to leave after their presentation due to prior commitments.

-After this everyone broke up into 4 small groups to discuss a particular challenge:

-Group 1 discussed the environmental challenges facing Charlottetown. Dr Irene Novaczek, Director of the Institute of Island Studies was the speaker, Irene Larkin was the facilitator, and Jeanne Maki was the recorder. Some of the issues brought up in this group were: the impact rising sea-levels will have on the City waterfront, the negative impact Cruise ships will have on the environment, the need to adopt a ban for cosmetic pesticides, maintain green spaces and monitor emissions from the incinerator, and how to use public transit more effectively.

-Group 2 discussed the challenges the city faces in fighting poverty. Mary Boyd, Director of the MacKillop Centre for Social Justice was the speaker, Cathy MacKinnon (UPSE) was the facilitator, and Lisa Sheppard (CUPW) was the recorder. Some of the issues brought up in this group were: the need for more and spread out public and CO-OP housing, to monitor slum lords, for City Council to support a National Child care program, and improvements to EI, and Breakfast programs.

-Group 3 discussed the challenges the city faces as far improving living conditions in the city. Kele Redmond (Seniors United Network), was the speaker, Ron Kelly (Seniors United Network) was the facilitator, and Daniel Perry was the recorder. Some of the issues brought up in this group were the need for affordable housing and a livable income, how to create a sense of community, and how to make marginalised groups such as youths, seniors and individuals with disabilities and mental illness feel like they are a part of the community, and community safety .

-Group 4 discussed the challenges Newcomers to the city face. Ghassan Kassouf (PSAC local 90001), was the speaker, Kevin Arsenault (Executive Director of the PEI Association for Newcomers) was the facilitator, and JC Basque (CLC) was the recorder. Some of the issues brought up in this group were: how to retain newcomers after they come to the Island, the need for the city to have an equity policy with minimum targets for hiring at City hall, the need for the city to figure out how it can fulfil the unique needs

of newcomers, and the need for public education.

-After the reports from the groups, fed VP Blair Penny thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and the committee for their efforts in organizing the event. Emcee Bill MacKinnon then closed the event.

-All in all, the event went very well with good attendance and a high participation level from everyone. The next step will be for the committee to produce an information brochure and a questionnaire for candidates in the upcoming municipal election based on the discussions at the forum.

-The Federation would like to thank the organizing committee that worked so hard to put the event together (Jean Claude Basque (CLC), Mary Boyd (MacKillop Centre for Social Justice), Ghassan Kassouf (PSAC local 90001), Eileen Brown-Wilt (UPSE), Blaine Parkman (CUPE) Mary MacNeil (PSAC), Ron Kelly (Seniors United Network) , and Lisa Sheppard (CUPW). We would also like to thank the speakers, panellists, facilitators, recorders, and emcee Bill MacKinnon(CUPE) for all that they brought to the event.

C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Educational

☐The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation will be holding a one day educational at the Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn, Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Thursday, October 12, 2006 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (Lunch provided). The courses being offered are:

The Steward as Leader: Steward Training - Level 3

-The Steward As Leader highlights the basic leadership role of stewards in the local union and the responsibilities that this role entails in the face of a changing union and growing legislative responsibilities. The theme of this course is how to effectively build an union which is fair and inclusive for all members, what kind of commitments and strategies are required from the steward, the executive of the local and the union itself. Legislative responsibilities such as human rights and the duty of fair representation will be highlighted. The Steward As Leader is third in a series of CLC Stewards courses. Participants should already be well grounded in basic stewards training.

Mobilizing the Membership

-This 9 hour course deals with the very important issue of recruiting and maintaining - local union activists. Discussions focus on how we entice volunteers in our locals to

become active, and how we keep them active. The course will also briefly examine how we work within the structure of the labour movement to achieve our goals; how we organize campaigns in our locals, and how we work with other groups, outside our local unions to get our message out. Participants will spend a little time as well perfecting some of the "tricks" used to prepare ourselves and our message for the public and our members.

Registration Information

-Please complete the attached form and send it before September 28, 2006 along with a cheque made payable to the P.E.I. Federation of Labour to cover the registration fee (\$35.00 per person which includes lunch on Thursday October 12, 2006) to:
Marjorie Gyurus, Registrar P.E.I. Federation of Labour, 22 Enman Crescent,
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1E 1E6

-If you require additional information, please contact: Marjorie Gyurus at (902) 368-3068 or email: peifed@pei.aibn.com or Jean-Claude Basque at (506)-851-7086 or email: jcbasque@clc-ctc.ca.

Highlights of the Recent Harvard Medical School Study Comparing Health Care in the US and Canada

□ On Tuesday, May 30, it was announced that a recent study by Harvard Medical School researchers concludes that Canadians are healthier than Americans, they have better access to medical care, and are spending a lot less money to get better results. The study, published in the American Journal of Public Health, also found that:

- Canadians were seven per cent more likely to have a regular doctor
- Canadians were 19 per cent less likely than Americans to have their health needs go unmet.
- When you take into account income, age, sex, race and immigrant status. Canadians were 33 per cent more likely to have a regular doctor and 27 per cent less likely to have an unmet health need. Uninsured U.S. residents were particularly vulnerable, with 30.4 per cent having an unmet health need due to cost,
- Americans were more than twice as likely to forgo needed medicines because of cost.
- Americans had higher rates of nearly every serious chronic disease, including obesity, diabetes and chronic lung disease, even though U.S. residents were less likely to be smokers.

- And Canada spends approximately \$3,000 per Canadian on health care while the US spends approximately \$6,000 for each American.
- When it came to wait times, the study found that while Canadians wait on average, 3 times more than Americans for medical treatment, the actual number only translates to a little over 3% waiting for medical treatment.
- This first-ever cross-national health survey analyzed data from the Joint Canada/U.S. Survey of Health, with data collected by Statistics Canada and the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics.

Important Dates

Organizing meeting for the Labour Day Event	August 16, 2006	at 7pm at the Federation's office
Creative Lunchtime Rally in Support of Public Health Care!	Sunday, August 20, 2006	starting at noon Outside the Delta Hotel (18 Queen Street, Charlottetown, PEI)
Panel Discussion on the Dangers of For-Profit Health Care	Monday, August 21, 2006 _____	7 p.m. at the Holy Redeemer Parish (3 Pond Street, Charlottetown, PEI)
Labour Day	Monday, September 4, 2006	4:00 - 6:00 P.M. at Victoria Park, Charlottetown
Deadline for Resolutions for the Federation's Convention	Wednesday, October 4, 2006	
The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational	Thursday, October 12, 2006 8:30 am - 5:00 pm	Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn
PEIFL Annual Convention	Friday and Saturday November 3 and 4, 2006	Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn