

## **REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL TO THE 2008 ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONVENTION**

**MANDATE:** To establish and maintain effective communications within the Atlantic Region in both official languages.

The Atlantic Regional Structure Booklet was revised, translated, distributed to all locals; it can also be found on the PSAC Atlantic website. Information is updated on a continual basis and a letter has been sent to all locals requesting them to advise their PSAC Regional Office of any changes.

The Terms of Reference were established and approved by Council, they can also be found on the PSAC Atlantic website.

The Communication Committee was instrumental in establishing email networks within the Atlantic Region for all directors. The committee felt this was their primary goal as communication is the key to keeping the membership informed of all activities/campaigns (i.e. DQPS, UDP, Atlantic School, etc).

The Communication Committee prepared a resolution for Council to have a PSAC Atlantic Suite at all PSAC National Conferences to promote networking with members in the Atlantic Region. Council adopted this resolution.

### **WEBSITE:**

All Council minutes and Council information are now available on the website. A letter was sent to all locals asking them to provide pictures of various activities/campaigns/courses that their local has been involved in. A Calendar of events has now been added to the website.

The feedback received regarding the changes to the Atlantic Regional website has been very positive. The website is more user friendly due to the addition of icons. It is also being maintained and the information is kept current. Esthetically, the website is more attractive, thanks to the variety of pictures from various events.

In closing, the Communication Committee would like to thank Jeremy Tait, Assistant to the REVP for his expertise and assistance in maintaining and improving the PSAC Atlantic website.

Submitted in solidarity,

PSAC Atlantic Communications Committee,  
Tania Haché (chair)   Patrick Dwyer   Anna Goguen (Staff Advisor)  
Darlene Bembridge   Vaughan Davies  
Geri LeBlanc   Mark Power

## **REPORT OF THE HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL TO THE 2008 ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONVENTION**

The Health, Safety & Environment Committee of the PSAC Atlantic Council consists of five Council members and includes: Tania Hache - Chairperson, Kevin Bruff, Geri Leblanc, Donna Gourley and Patrick Dwyer. Sister Nancy MacLean, Regional Representative, is the Staff Advisor. The committee met prior to every Council meeting and at times by conference call. The committee developed an Action Plan taking into consideration the strategic goals of the PSAC, the CLC and the Atlantic Region workplace H&S activists. The plan identified five priorities: Education, Environment, Resource Materials, Smart Regs., Communication/Networking and Conferences.

### **Mandate:**

The mandate of the committee is “to promote a safe and healthy workplace through the collective actions of union Health & Safety activists.”

### **Education:**

The Committee had input into the Regional Education Plan regarding the need to develop and educate workplace H & S committee members and union activists. Through the promotion of the committee several training sessions were conducted on employer time and/or premise. In addition to basic H&S training the following advanced education courses were offered:

- Advanced H&S Training – 2006 Atlantic Union School
- Advanced Duty to Accommodate – 2007 Atlantic Union School

### **Environment:**

The Atlantic H&S website contains useful information on recycling and PSAC members have been encouraged to become active in re-using materials. The website also contains information on Earth Day and a checklist of how members can “play their part” in the protection of the environment. The Atlantic Region H S & E conferences hosted an Environmental Guest Speaker who spoke about global warming and how it has affected specific parts of the Atlantic Region. All handouts distributed during the conference were printed on double-sided paper and this practice has been promoted by the committee at all union events.

### **Resource Material:**

The PSAC has developed two excellent H&S educational tools during the Scent Free Awareness Kit and the H&S Toolkit. These resource materials have been made available to all workplace H&S union activists. The Atlantic H&S website is another resource that includes useful information and links.

### **Smart Regs:**

The Committee encourages members to learn more about the status of Smart Regs and the several Atlantic members who attended the National H&S Conference in January 2007 learned about the challenges of deregulation and its impact. Members also discussed and strategized about how to campaign to protect current legislations.

### **Communication/Networking**

An extensive H&S Network has been established in the Atlantic Region. The Committee continues to encourage Locals to have a representative sign-on to the Network. The H&S website contains information, tools and resources that workplace H&S activists have found beneficial in the protection and development of workers. In addition, the website and network have provided a vehicle for members to promote activists around commemorative days such as Repetitive Strain Injury (February 28), Earth Day and National Day of Mourning (April 28).

### **Conferences:**

There were two (2) Health, Safety & Environment Conferences held in the Atlantic Region. The Maritimes Conference was held October 19 – 21, 2007 in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and the NL was held November 2 – 4, 2007 in Gander, NL. There were more than 120 participants and guests who attended these conferences. The conferences were a tremendous success. Again, the committee is very pleased that the important issue of environmental awareness was integrated into the agenda for the conferences at a more effective level than ever before.

The National Health & Safety Conference held January 18 – 21, 2007 had 52 delegates attending from the Atlantic Region. An Atlantic caucus was held and it was a great opportunity for Atlantic activists to discuss ways to enhance the H&S program in the region.

In closing, the committee members would like to recognize the valuable contribution of Sister Nancy MacLean, Regional Representative – Health & Safety, and to express our gratitude for all her guidance.

Submitted in solidarity,

PSAC Atlantic Health, Safety & Environment Committee,  
Tania Hache (chair)  
Donna Gourley  
Patrick Dwyer  
Kevin Bruff  
Nancy MacLean

## **REPORT OF THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL TO THE 2008 ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONVENTION**

During the past three years, the Committee met at every PSAC Atlantic Council Meeting and had many conference calls in order to mobilize and have effective discussions regarding women's issues in the Atlantic Region.

The main activities during the past three years were: - Regional Women's Committees (RWCs); Women's Conferences; International Women's Day; December 6; Women's Retreats; Political Actions; Lobbying for Women at Work; Action Planning Seminar; Collective Bargaining, DQPS; Negative Impact of Media on Women and Girls and Pensions, Balancing at age 65.

The Women's Directors, with the assistance of the Atlantic Council Women's Committee, have created new and reactivated several Regional Women's Committees throughout the Atlantic Region. Currently we have five active RWCs in New Brunswick; five in Newfoundland and Labrador; three in Nova Scotia; PEI has one.

Andrea Delorey attended the past CLC Women's Conference in Ottawa. The two Regional Women's Conferences were held with approximately 122 attending. The Maritime Conference took place in Halifax, N.S. from 25 – 27 May 2007 and the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference was held in St. John's 1 – 3 June, 2007. The theme for both conferences was "Stand Up and Speak Out". Both conferences were very successful and they leaned towards political action and introduced DQPS to the Sisters in the Atlantic. The National Women's Conference was held in Toronto from 22 – 25 November 2007 with 250 Sisters in attendance – 49 from the Atlantic. At this Conference there was also an Atlantic Caucus held which was chaired by Sisters Jeannie Baldwin, Linda Oldford and Donna Gourley.

Women's Retreats and Workshops were held in Rocky Harbour, Goose Bay, Traytown, St. John's, Corner Brook and Kildevil, NL. The main focus was education and political action. They were very well attended and often included coalition partners.

The RWCs in the Atlantic Region have been actively carrying out plans and activities for International Women's Day – some in the form of luncheons both in and outside the workplace with guest speakers while other RWCs are joining with coalition partners throughout the Atlantic Region. For December 6, committees organized various events which included church services and vigils to remember the victims of violence.

Committees have been involved in "Operation Christmas Child" (279 shoe boxes filled with gifts distributed around the world); Adopt a Family (groceries to families at Christmas); School Bag Campaign (for needy families); Walk for the Cure;

Brown Bag Sessions; Habitat for Humanity; Wear Purple Day; helping at a Soup Kitchen & donations to food banks; a children's Halloween party; the Canadian Labour Congress "Equality, Once And For All" campaign (issues: cuts to women's program, child care; E.I., manufacturing jobs, pay equity, pensions, working women issues); Self Defence training; and many more speakers and activities to name a few.

We have been very successful in continuing to strengthen our relationships with the various coalitions i.e. Transition Houses; Provincial Status of Women; Health coalition; Women's Centers. As well, we have a number of Sisters sitting at various levels in the Federation of Labour and Area Councils.

During the Atlantic Schools, funds were raised for a community-based project. This was raised by means of raffles and silent auctions. At the Atlantic School in 2006, \$2129.50 was raised for Bryony House, Halifax and \$1278.90 for the Diamond Mine Workers Strike. At the 2007 School, \$1282.00 was given to Wings of Hope in Halifax.

RWCs put forward names for the Bargaining Conferences. There were two successful candidates and both these Sisters – Debbie Graham, Table 1 and Donna Gourley, Table 2 were successful in obtaining seats on their respective tables.

Sisters from the RWCs in the Atlantic took part in lobbying MPs – areas discussed were Child Care, Pay equity, Violence Against Women, Reassignment of Pregnant and Nursing Women and Poverty. This was very successful and the Sisters should be very proud of their accomplishments.

Sister Linda Oldford took the lead on the work done around Negative Impact of Media on Women and Girls. She facilitated workshops with the RWCs as well as at the NL Women's Conference. Also she provided education and information to the Atlantic Council Women's Committee and Council to heighten their awareness and have them, in turn, share the information with other Brothers and Sisters.

The Action Planning Seminar was held in Halifax in November 2006. Those who participated were the RWCs, Youth, Human Rights Committees and Area Councils. It was the first time this was done and it was very worthwhile and resulted in some specific plans of action for different regions. An additional spin-off was that it resulted in some Sisters joining the RWCs in their areas.

The Council Women's Committee spearheaded the lobbying effort to have the Women at Work course reinstated. It was a very high priority for the Women's Directors and it is wonderful that there will be a course held in Halifax in May 2008. However, the goal still remains that in the future there be one course held in each of the provinces in order to enable more Sisters to avail of this course.

Margaret Fawson gave us an informative update on “Pensions – Balancing at Age 65”. This is the claw back where our pension income is decreased affecting our quality of life. The Council Women’s Committee and some Regional Women’s Committees. have sent resolutions to convention to support changing the Canada Pension Act legislation.

It has been a busy term for the Women’s Committee of Council with Sisters contributing much time and energy which has resulted in a very rewarding experience.

Submitted in solidarity,

PSAC Atlantic Women’s Committee,

Donna Gourley

Linda Oldford

Debbie Kelly

Dawn Hardy

Margaret Fawson

Mary MacNeil (Staff Advisor)

Special thanks also to Kim Coles and Andrea Delorey for serving on the Committee for part of the term.

## **REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL TO THE 2008 ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONVENTION**

The committee consists of five members of the Atlantic Council and the staff Education Officer for the region. The committee meets on an ongoing basis by email, conference call and scheduled committee meetings associated to the PSAC Atlantic Council Meetings. Education Committee members meet regularly with respective staff responsible for education within their own regional offices to consult and plan for the delivery of education within the region.

The Education Committee is an integral part of the input, consultation and planning of the Regional Education Plan and budget. As education is fundamental to the achievement of our goals as a union, the Education Committee works to see that members gain the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to be effective in their union and works with a three year plan that offers various opportunities and activities for members here in our region.

Over the past three year term the Education Committee met immediately prior to all Atlantic Council meetings and provided written reports to each Council meeting.

### **Education Activities and Achievements**

**Weekend Course:** The delivery of weekend courses has been an integral part of our education program over the past three years. Some areas have experienced some major challenges when it comes to scheduling and delivery of courses and action is currently being taken to address this issue with further information later in this report. With a change of executive in many locals there has been a demand for our TUB (Talking Union Basics) and Steward Training. The new Public Service Modernization Act has seen us deliver courses on this topic, Staffing in the Federal Public Service as well as delivery, on demand, for Human Rights and Health and Safety Training. We were very successful in the delivery of courses in French for areas that needed training including our Atlantic Schools.

**Advanced Program Training:** During this term we were successful in the delivery of advanced training in areas of LOAT (Local Officers Advanced Training), Alliance Facilitator Training and UDP (Union Development Program) training.

**Atlantic School:** We were able to deliver two successful schools over this term, with a high demand for this type of delivery of our advanced programming. Due to budget restrictions we were not able to accommodate all applicants but there is certainly an increased interest in the number of members wanting to avail of this opportunity. Based on feedback from attendees at previous schools some changes were made to address concerns of participants and as a result a decision to change venue for the 2007 to St. Francis Xavier in Antigonish, NS

proved to be a great success. Plans are underway for the next school to be held in June 2009.

Because of concern over the number of weekend courses that have had to be cancelled, due to lack of participants in some regions, a lengthy discussion took place with the committee and staff over recent months. As a result, the education committee, in consultation with regional staff, have agreed to put in place a pilot project that would see additional funds and changes in the delivery method of some courses in targeted areas within our region. This initiative would attempt to make it easier for members to attend by providing a form of mini school over a weekend starting on a Friday, providing some loss of wages and allowing for the delivery of a couple of courses. Areas have been earmarked geographically for delivery over a period of time in places where there has been a higher than normal cancellation record. The first areas identified for this pilot have been Gander and New Brunswick. This is for the delivery of basic weekend programming only and does not interfere in any way with our Atlantic School.

This year we will be holding Women at Work courses in both languages in May of 2008. This course has been requested by members for some time and we are delighted to be able to respond to this need. Leadership Training I and II was also delivered over this term to members of Atlantic Council and National Officers within the region. This is relatively new training that was designed and delivered by PSAC and well received by all participants. The delivery of Alliance Facilitator Training during this term has increased the number of facilitators available to do mobilization workshops within locals around Collective bargaining and Defending Quality Public Services. Work is ongoing around a plan to get facilitators engaged in this process.

The Education Committee has been very busy over the past three years in seeing that members have received an opportunity to expand their knowledge, develop skills, and become engaged in understanding and playing an active role in facing the many challenges that impact on them as union members.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, the education officer assigned to work with the committee, other council committees and members of the Atlantic Council, Components, National Officers and all members in the region for their support, their interest and the role you have all played in making education fundamental to this region.

Submitted in solidarity,

PSAC Atlantic Education Committee,  
Margie Hancock, Chair      Lise Lévesque,  
Scott Gallant,              Gary Paynter  
Carol-Ann MacMullin      Lise Thibodeau (Staff Education Officer)

## **REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL TO THE 2008 ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONVENTION**

The Human Rights Committee of the PSAC Atlantic Regional Council consists of the four council members elected at Regional Convention to represent the four equity groups (aboriginal members, racially visible members, members with disabilities and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members). The REVP - Atlantic appointed the Director for PEI and the Director Women, NL to the Committee.

The Committee met prior to each council meeting. The Human Rights Committee of Council shared the activities they were involved in and developed strategies for issues affecting the equity portfolios. An Action Plan was developed taking into consideration the strategic goals of the PSAC and the CLC as well as recommendations submitted by existing Human Rights Committees in the Region. The Committee identified five priorities: Education, Communication/Networking, Committees, Action Days with Coalition Partners and Forums/Conferences.

### **EDUCATION**

The Committee had input into the Regional Education Plan regarding meeting the needs of the members in terms of human rights and equity training. We identified and monitored that human rights courses being scheduled on a priority basis. An Advanced Human Rights course was held at the Atlantic Union Schools in 2006 and 2007. The Atlantic Union School of 2007 held a Duty to Accommodate. In addition, the first training session for Aboriginal, Inuit and Métis (NAIM) members was held in Halifax in April 2007.

### **COMMUNICATIONS/NETWORKING**

The Atlantic Regional website is kept up to date with current activities and events including the HR Committee action plan. Each of the equity conferences presented excellent opportunities for equity Directors to meet and connect with activists from the Atlantic region. In October 2007, the Council Human Rights Committee held a conference call with Regional Human Rights Committees and Members with Disabilities Action Committee (MDAC) to discuss regional activities and to establish better communication links between all parties.

### **REGIONAL COMMITTEES**

There are now active Human Rights Committees in Sydney, Halifax and PEI with an MDAC in St. John's. Work is currently being completed on the establishment of a Human Rights Committee in Moncton. All Directors of the Human Rights Committee of Council are members of regional Human Rights or MDAC Committees where possible.

## **FORUMS AND CONFERENCES**

The HR Committee of Council hosted a Human Rights Forum in 2005, which was very well attended. Guest speaker was The Honourable Mayann Francis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. A panel comprised of different equity group members responded to queries from the audience. The Human Rights Committee of Council has worked to increase the participation at all equity conferences. Twenty-five Atlantic members attended the National Pride Conference held March 29 – April 1, 2007; 19 Atlantic members attended the National Access Conference held on Sept 6 – 9, 2007; 13 Atlantic members attended the National Racially Visible Conference held March 6 – 9, 2008. It is anticipated that there will be good representation from the Atlantic Region attending the National Aboriginal Conference, which is scheduled for September 18 – 21, 2008.

## **COALITION PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNITATIVE DATES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The Atlantic HR Committee of Council has been encouraging the development of coalition partnerships in all provinces of the region. Some of the partnerships include Newcomers to PEI, Cape Breton Aids Coalition, African NS Employment Centre, Federations of Labour, CLC, Women's Centres, Transition Houses, CNIB, Kitpu Youth Group of the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre, Crime Prevention committees, Habitat for Humanity and P-Flag.

A homophobia workshop was held in Sydney and was well attended. The HR Committee of Council has also encouraged locals to participate in many events supported by coalition partners and to support Regional, National and International Social Justice Projects. Some of the projects include Aids Coalition BBQ, Operation Christmas Child, Aids Walk, Christmas Shoebox Campaign, and CNIB Run for the Cure and volunteering at local soup kitchens.

The members of the Human Rights Committee of Council, Sister Dawn Hardy, Sister Linda Oldford, Sister Carol-Ann MacMullin, Brother Kevin Bruff, Brother Scott Gallant and Sister Geri LeBlanc, wish to acknowledge the assistance of our staff resource person Sister Nancy MacLean, Regional Representative. We thank Sister MacLean for all her hard work and guidance during the past 3 years.

Submitted in solidarity,

PSAC Atlantic Human Rights Committee,  
Geri LeBlanc (chair)  
Scott Gallant  
Carol Ann MacMullin  
Linda Oldford  
Dawn Hardy  
Kevin Bruff  
Nancy MacLean (Staff Advisor)

## **REPORT OF THE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL TO THE 2008 ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONVENTION**

Over the last three years, the Political Action Committee has been active in many areas.

Labour Day parades as well as other celebrations/parades have been attended and financially supported throughout the Region. PSAC members & activists as well as PAC members fly the PSAC Banner and flags at these yearly celebrations. It is important for the membership to support the PSAC and the work they do at these visible, fun activities in order to build solidarity and raise the profile of the PSAC as a progressive, active union.

Budget Watches have also been supported in the Region. Members attending have listened to speakers from our community partners as well as the PSAC address how they see the budget impacting on their community.

The PAC, when requested, as a committee as well as individually, assists candidates at all levels of government who show they support organized labour and the public sector.

There have been many fight back activities, which have included members taking action in all the Atlantic Region regarding the Dis-Service Canada Campaign, the Atlantic Job Loss Mobilization Campaign, the Atlantic Health Care Coalition, the Anti Scab Legislation, Making Poverty History and Pension Reform. In Nova Scotia, the Highlands Links fight back took place while in Newfoundland we had success at the Gander Weather Office and in New Brunswick at the Canadian Fire Arms Centre.

Lobby Training was organized and held in February 2008 in the Halifax/Dartmouth area with twenty Members from Atlantic Councils, Area Councils, Women's Committees, Human Rights Committees and various Component Locals attending a day long session in Dartmouth facilitated by Anne Marie Foote from the NDP. This was an excellent session and should complement our Lobbying activity throughout Nova Scotia.

Social Justice and Globalization are increasingly important areas for a socially conscious union. The PSAC supports member education and involvement in tours to countries like Columbia & Guatemala in order to see first hand how globalization affects workers lives in these countries. We also support worker-to-worker exchanges and have supported workers from Columbia coming to the Region.

Colombia is one of the worst violators of human rights in the world as evidenced by having the highest number of murdered/tortured and missing trade unionists in the world. Guatemala has a history of terrible genocides and Human Rights abuses at the hands of the government and we can assist in getting this information out to our members, communities, friends, family and political leaders.

Now we have a Conservative government who wants to have a Free Trade Deal with Colombia! We have much work still to do. International solidarity truly works!

The PSAC was a significant contributor as well as being quoted in a book, which was released in 2007 on the activities of the peoples of Colombia and the atrocities they face daily.

The Social Justice Fund is one of many important decisions PSAC members passed at the 2003 Montreal convention and because of it, we are making a difference in the world.

PSAC members are active serving as presidents of Labour Councils and sit as PSAC members on the various provincial Federations of Labour Political Action Committee as well as other committees.

The PAC is working at strengthening our ties with the nine Area Councils around the Atlantic in an effort to more efficiently carry out our political action mandate.

The Committee budget has been an important agenda item at every meeting. We as a Committee will continue to be diligent in assuring funds are utilized for political and social justice actions in the Region.

Other political campaigns that the PAC was involved in over the past three years involve the threat to our Maritime sovereignty termed Atlantica or the Atlantic Gateway, the continued assault on Health Care, and our current energies must be focused on Defending Quality Public Services or "Think Public" lobbies of Members of Parliament and education of the membership.

The prime emphasis in 2008 will be the upcoming federal election as well as Think Public. The Atlantic area has proposed five targeted ridings, Yvon Godin(NB) Peter Stoffer and Alexa McDonough(NS) and St John's East and St.John's West (NL and Labrador ) in which the Committee will focus their efforts around the CLC "Count Me in Campaign".

The Political Action Committee will continue to provide our Public Service Alliance of Canada Sisters and Brothers with leadership and encouragement to speak out on political issues to help improve our members' workplaces and communities.

Submitted in solidarity,

PSAC Atlantic Political Action Committee,

Debbie Kelly

Mark Power

Vaughan Davies

Margie Hancock

Margaret Fawson

Mark Rogers (Staff Advisor)