

Activities of the REVP North

Political Action and Mobilization

Last year has been highly politically charged, with elections being held at all levels of governance: municipal, territorial and federal. Subsequently, much of our work has focused on ensuring that progressive candidates were elected.

Our efforts took on several forms. We undertook a mailout to all of our members in the Yukon and Nunavut highlighting the cuts and damage the Harper Conservatives had caused during their tenure in office, and worked with the Union of Northern Workers to ensure members in Northwest Territories were reached as well.

PSAC North developed a handout, which outlined the 5 key issues that voters should keep in mind when heading to the polls, including renew-

able energy, good jobs, education and health care in the North.

We worked with local not-for profit organizations, including Alternatives

the Sisters in Spirit Vigil and march on Oct. 2 in Yellowknife and Whitehorse. The NWT Regional Women's Committee made a donation to the



Sisters in Spirit march - Yellowknife, Oct. 2 2015

North and the Native Women's Association to submit labour-friendly questions for candidates and attended numerous forums organized in Yellowknife (territorial, federal and municipal candidates).

Our regional offices participated in

NWA in preparation for the vigil. I also attended the Remembrance Day ceremony laying a wreath on behalf of unionized workers in Yellowknife. PSAC North co-sponsored a screening of the documentary *This Changes Everything* on Nov. 19, which

documents the damaging relationship between capitalism and climate change, based on the book with the same title by Naomi Klein. On December 6th, Women from PSAC North (members and staff)

attended the National Day of Action and Remembrance on Violence Against Women vigils across the North organized by the Status of Women Canada. The NWT Regional Women's Committee made a donation to the Native Women's Association to help fund programs for underprivileged Aboriginal women. Our PSAC North REVP's office staff took part in a Climate Change March Nov. 30th in Yellowknife.

attended the National Day of Action and Remembrance on Violence Against Women vigils across the North organized by the Status of Women Canada. The NWT Regional Women's Committee made a donation to the Native Women's Association to help fund programs for underprivileged Aboriginal women. Our PSAC North REVP's office staff took part in a Climate Change March Nov. 30th in Yellowknife.



REVP Jack Bourassa and newly elected Nunavut Regional Health and Safety Committee Executive, January 2016

of Women Canada. The NWT Regional Women's Committee made a donation to the Native Women's Association to help fund programs for underprivileged Aboriginal women. Our PSAC North REVP's office staff took part in a Climate Change March Nov. 30th in Yellowknife.

In November, I also attended several Yukon Regional Committees AGMs and relished the opportunity to celebrate the Yukon Employees' Union's 50th Anniversary, where I was given the opportunity to present many of the highlights of the last two years as well as the promising future endeavours of PSAC North.

Membership Engagement and Education

Much of our focus in Nunavut has been to revitalize equity commit-

I also make myself available to attend all other regional committees AGMs via teleconference by



request when I'm unable to take part in the meetings in person.

On Nov. 20 I attended the Northern Territories Federation of Labour's face-to-face executive meeting, where I delivered a presentation outlining the highlights of my term in office so far.

I also worked with the Component Presidents in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut to establish Standing Committees for Finance, Education and Political Action.

We have completed the selection process for the 2016 Union Development Program, having chosen promising candidates who will only further their leadership roles once they return to their committees.

Collective Bargaining

Arviat Housing Association – We are preparing to mobilize our members heading into another round of bargaining in late February. The employer has hired new legal counsel and is attempting to claw back housing and northern allowances in an effort to reduce costs. We are organizing

a "Hearts and Minds" campaign to educate the community about the issues at stake. The Nunavut Housing Corporation has taken over bargaining for all housing authorities, so we expect tough bargaining rounds in all housing associations throughout the territory. We are pooling together the resources of our negotiators on these files to share best practices and formulate a plan together.

Pimakslirvik Corp – The above group's Collective Agreement expired on December 31, 2015. We have yet to receive input and no members are

stepping forward to be a part of the bargaining team. This employer has a history of targeting any members who step forward to participate in union matters and in particular members of the Union bargaining team. During the last round, the services of a Federal Mediator were necessary in order to obtain a deal.

We explored the possibility that if no input or BU team members' names

were forthcoming, we might want to examine approaching the Employer for a rollover agreement with a fair wage increase only.

Campaigns

Healthy Apple – We're moving forward with a roundtable on food insecurity in the North, which will be held in early February with several food bank chairs, primarily in Nunavut.



The objective will be to ascertain the key causes of food insecurity for each community, the number of food bank users, and strategies moving forward to increase food bank donations as well as ways to reduce food insecurity.

Donation boxes have been ordered and will be delivered to communities for use in grocery stores. More grocery stores have also signed on

to the Healthy Apple campaign and agree to display “needed item” tags on their shelves.

Moose Hide – We have recently joined the Moose Hide Campaign, which is a grassroots movement of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal men who are standing up against violence towards women and children.



I have circulated this campaign widely and I invite everyone to wear moose hides and show your commitment to honour, respect and protect the women and children in your life.

I championed the campaign at the NTFL meeting in Yellowknife, YEU 50th anniversary celebration in Whitehorse, and I plan to build a local coalition of supporters to raise awareness about the campaign.

Already, dozens of supporters have signed the petition on our PSAC North website (www.psacnorth.com).

A series of *events* took place during the 12 days to End Violence Against Women in Yukon. Each year, awareness continues to rise and more and more Yukoners attend the event.

This year we had three regional committees participating: the Yukon Aboriginal Peoples Committee, the Whitehorse Regional Women’s Committee and the Yukon Racially Visible Committee. The committees sponsored snacks and refreshments at one of the events taking place on Dec 4th.

Living Wage Campaign – PSAC North continues to support the Living Wage Campaign in Yellowknife, which argues for a minimum wage that meets the cost of living in each city. I met with the Living Wage coordinators Jan. 22 to discuss how our two organizations can work together to promote the campaign. In Oct. 2015 we held preliminary



discussions with the Native Women's Association and the Centre for Northern Families who provide services to women in the NWT to help them organize a major fundraising event in the upcoming year.

Common Front Movement – In September, 41 individuals and representatives of First Nation, labour, and social and environmental justice organizations gathered in Yellowknife for the We Can Do Better: Building an NWT Common Front planning session.

Participants heard speakers and took part in discus-



sions aimed at identifying the values that promote a just NWT society. Actions were identified to promote those values and a proposal was made for the creation of a steering committee to consider next steps in carrying out those actions. The steering committee met in December to consider ways to move forward to promote our shared values.

Other organizations/events we have supported primarily through *financial contributions* were: Fracking Action North and Ecology North rallies and documentary screenings (such as This Changes Everything in Nov. 2015), Philippines Rotary Club (helping provide the newly renovated Bacolod North Health Center with supplies and books for their classroom), etc. Brother Potyak from UNW ensured the funds reached the intended recipients and will forward a brief report to the Regional Council before the next Regional Council meeting.

In the near future, our efforts will be focused on the upcoming move into the House of Labour, as we call it colloquially, organizing our 2017 Regional Convention and continuing to engage members through our regional committees. We will also build and strengthen our partnerships with community-based organizations through initiatives such as the Common Front Movement campaign. Last but not least, we will continue our collaboration with likeminded groups such as Alternatives North (the NWT unofficial opposition) and our partners in labour – the Northern Territories Federation of Labour.

Jack Bourassa,
REVP North
Public Service Alliance of Canada

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jack Bourassa', written in a cursive style.

Itinerary highlights

October 2015 – January 2016

Oct. 5	RSCC meeting- Town of Watson Lake	Yellowknife
Oct. 7	Federal candidates forum	Yellowknife
Oct. 25-31	AEC/NBoD meetings	Ottawa
Nov. 3	NWT Aboriginal People's Committee AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 3	Election campaign launch (Kevin O'Reilly)	Yellowknife
Nov. 4	NWT Racially Visible Committee AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 5	NWT Access Committee AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 6	NWT Young Workers Committee AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 7-8	Health and Safety course	Yellowknife
Nov. 9	NWT Pride Committee AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 11	Remembrance Day Commemoration	Yellowknife
Nov. 12	UNW Local 345 (City of Yellowknife) AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 19	NWT H&S Committee AGM	Yellowknife
Nov. 19	Screening of This Changes Everything	Yellowknife
Nov. 20-26	Yukon- Regional Committees meetings, YEU 50th anniversary	Whitehorse
Dec. 1	YK Aboriginal Peoples' AGM teleconference	Yellowknife
Dec. 2	YT Racially Visible AGM teleconference	Yellowknife
Dec. 3	Education Standing Committee teleconference	Yellowknife
Dec. 6	Vigil – NUP	Yellowknife
Dec. 8	Christmas shopping and delivery to Centre for Northern Families and Native Women's Association	Yellowknife
Dec. 10	Area Councils conference call and Yukon H&S Committee AGM teleconference	Yellowknife
Jan. 5	Strategy Call- Arviat Housing Authority	Yellowknife
Jan 8 - 13	Travel to Ottawa for SSO and AEC meetings	Ottawa
Jan 13-17	Travel to Iqaluit for Regional Committees AGMs	Iqaluit
Jan 22	Living Wage Campaign meeting	Yellowknife

