

Union of Northern Workers



## What's been happening

May is Asian Heritage Month

PSAC National Convention

## Upcoming Events

June is Aboriginal History Month

June 21, 2015 Aboriginal Day

Equity Committee Meeting  
June 25, 2015

June 27, 2015 Canadian Multiculturalism Day

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## Asian Heritage Month

by Jennifer Kinipela Chieh Ho

May is *Asian Heritage Month*. Let us encourage everyone to learn more about this month and celebrate the contributions Asian-Canadians have made - and continue to make - to Canada!

Asian Heritage Month celebrates a long list of people who come from, or whose ancestors came from; East Asia – China, Hong Kong, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan; South Asia – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; Central Asia – Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; and Southeast Asia – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

This is meaningful for me personally as I came from Brunei Darussalam in Southeast Asia and am of Chinese ancestry. I had a lot to learn when I first arrived in Canada - it's vast geography, the people, the government, the education system and of course, human rights. On the other hand, my immigration to Canada has given Canadians a chance to learn about the unique aspects of Southeast Asian and Chinese culture. Today, as Canadians, we appreciate that Canada remains a country of Asian-Canadian diversity with many different ethnicities, languages and traditions.

Now, as an Asian British Columbian, I am pleased to share with you that on Monday, May 7, 2012 – after 70 years - the Province of British Columbia formally apologized to the Japanese-Canadian community for the internment of thousands of people during the Second World War. For more details, please refer to [cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/05/07/bc-japanese-internments-apology.html](http://cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/05/07/bc-japanese-internments-apology.html)

Enjoy reading

# PSAC National Convention

By Miriam Gordon

I had the honor in attending my first National Convention for the PSAC in Quebec City April 26, 2015- May 2, 2015.

Not only did I learn so much about the process of Convention but the networking with other equity members during caucus was amazing. We really came together to make sure some really important resolutions were passed.

Here are some of the resolutions that I know our membership will be proud of. It really shows a forward inclusive thinking and the solidarity of the convention were felt in the days past.

## **Union Education for Aboriginal Women**

A leadership course geared specifically to Aboriginal Women. This course would help to remove barriers and encourage increased participation of Aboriginal women in leadership position within the union.

## **Gender Identity**

The PSAC Lobby to add gender identity to the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

## **Domestic Violence Awareness**

PSAC creates a domestic violence awareness course for the education of members on the struggles of victims of domestic violence and/or workplace abuse and of approaches that can be taken to make a difference to the lives and families of members affected by such violent situations.

## **Regional Racially Visible Conference**

To provide racially visible members, who may be isolated in their workplaces and /or communities and experience racism and/or discrimination, a forum to discuss, strategize, mobilize, and share their experiences with other racially visible members in their region.

## **National Campaign for Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women**

PSAC in addition to the current postcard campaign, produce and present a brief and conduct a direct lobby campaign that will call on the Government of Canada to commence a National Public Inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal Women.

## **Gender Neutral washrooms**

Access to washrooms can be a serious problem for trans people. Providing access to gender neutral washrooms is a basic human right. Unions must play an active role in the workplace to remove barriers for trans people.



*"While our members still feel neutral, third-party arbitration is the best way to quickly resolve the labour dispute, our two sides are very close and we believe that through negotiations we can reach an agreement that benefits the whole community"*

- Gayla Thunstrom

## May 21-24, 2015 is Aboriginal Awareness week

Aboriginal Awareness Week (AAW) was first introduced in 1992 with the purpose of increasing awareness of Aboriginal peoples within the federal public service. Since that time, it has evolved and grown into a government wide celebration that gives federal public servants from across Canada the opportunity to participate in a week of interactive activities that honour the diverse cultures and traditions of the Metis, Inuit and First Nation peoples.

## Hay River Strike

Our members have been on strike for over 100 days. Since this began in February we have been back to the table twice. We tried to end this dispute in April by extending an offer of binding arbitration but the Town Council refused.

There is a driven wedge in the community of Hay River over a 2% pay increase. The Town refuses to reach a fair settlement promoting an atmosphere of division and anger.

The town has decided to use replacement workers (scabs) which will take the work of our members. This action will only heighten tensions and deepen the divide in the community.

Here are some Myths around striking workers:

**Myth:** Striking workers don't have a say on any of the negotiations.

**Truth:** All striking workers are kept informed daily by their bargaining team. The workers gave the bargaining team their mandate.

**Myth:** The striking workers are puppets / pawns for the "union bosses in Yellowknife"

**Truth:** The bargaining team and the striking workers tell the Union what they want. UNW and PSAC provide support and assistance to them.

**Myth:** The striking workers are greedy. Non-unionized workers don't get raises for nothing.

**Truth:** The wage increase that is in dispute is a cost of living increase. Even Wal-Mart has an annual cost of living increase on wages. If some private employers do not, that is a shame. But our workers deserve to keep up with the cost of living. If the Town needs to cut spending, it should be somewhere else – NOT wages of its employees/citizens.