

Friday, June 6, 2008 - PM Edition

Renewal, new ideas critical to building BCGEU, labour movement, says Heyman

Leaving the BCGEU is difficult, admitted BCGEU president George Heyman in his farewell address to convention delegates. He reflected on how he became active in the union and how activism had been a major part of his life.

In his speech Heyman talked about the need for the union and the labour movement to continue to renew itself and be open to new ideas.

In his remarks, Heyman touched on a number of issues important to the union. He also made some personal reflections on being president. "Leaving this job, leaving an active role in this union is very hard for me. It's *been* my life for more than half my life," he said.

"But renewal and new ideas are critical to continue building our movement. And I know that's going to happen."

Heyman reviewed a number of the challenges and successes faced by members under his nine years of leadership. He reflected on the importance of our union's engagement in broader social justice issues such as our Cool Communities campaign to address global warming, and the BCGEU's international solidarity work in countries such as Colombia.

"Another thing that sets us apart," he noted, "is our union's willingness to do the hard work it takes to work with others in coalitions and to build alliances."

Heyman talked about how the union has fought to support and follow members whose jobs have been cut, privatized

or contracted out. He noted that the BCGEU's organizing budget has been doubled in the past year, and that since 2005 some 3,500 direct members have joined our union, along with over 1,200 new special associate members from the child care sector.

He noted the successful conclusion of job actions by highways workers and child care workers in the last year, observing that, "One of the things that makes us stand out is that we are a pragmatic, negotiating union. But we've never shied away from a strike when talk doesn't work."

Heyman reminded members that, "We face a lot of important challenges coming up in the next three years. We have critical rounds of bargaining ahead. We know we face issues of equity and wages and that we can't leave anyone behind. And the issues of privatization and contracting out will always be with us.

"We have to make sure our members won't lose their jobs or wages because of any lack of commitment from our union to protect them.



GEORGE HEYMAN delivers his keynote speech to delegates. Delegates were moved by his speech and gave him thunderous applause at the end.

He added, "For me, renewal has always been about engaging our members – through supporting education, workplace leadership, member-to-member campaigns, and reaching out to the young workers who have been stepping up around the province.

"Let's not forget, when we make it a matter of personal connection, members will respond."

He emphasized that, "We must

remain creative, outspoken and connected to our communities. We must look beyond our borders, and continue to build stronger links with natural allies."

As members rose to honour Heyman in loud ovation, he concluded, "It's been a tremendous honour to represent BCGEU members for the past nine years as your president. I'm confident I'm leaving a very strong union in your good hands."

Summary of Resolutions - Friday, June 6, 2008 - Morning

COMPOSITE RESOLUTION 9:

Delegates passed a resolution calling on the provincial government to enact anti-bullying legislation to protect each citizen of B.C. from bullying. The resolution also calls for an end to all forms of workplace bullying and for the union to make this a bargaining issue.

RESOLUTION C-86: Delegates passed a resolution calling on the Ministry of Transportation to ensure that contracted highways road and bridge maintenance providers fulfill their contractual obligations and that there be audits of the work performance of contractors.

COMPOSITE RESOLUTION 6:

Delegates passed a resolution that any new provincial facilities opened to provide care for people with mental illnesses are staffed by direct government employees and that the government

provide the staffing and resources necessary to restore quality care to people with mental illnesses. The resolution also called on the provincial government to stop the downsizing of Riverview Hospital.

COMPOSITE RESOLUTION 12:

Delegates passed a resolution that calls on the BCGEU to re-commit to organizing new workers into the union and that the union organize in traditional and non-traditional ways.

COMPOSITE RESOLUTION 7:

Delegates passed a resolution opposing the efforts of Community Living BC and the Ministry for children and Family Development, to de-unionize the community sector that provides direct services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

The **Computer Centre** is in the Cowichan Room Level 2. The hours are: Friday (8:00 am to 6:30 pm), Saturday (8:00 am to 6:30 pm and 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm), Sunday (8:00

am to 1:30 pm). The phone number is (604) 785-1936.

Convention phone numbers: (604) 681-6625. Fax: (604) 681-6635.

Honouring members

Life Membership

Life Membership is awarded to members who have given long service to the union.

The following received this honour: Arthur Appleby (Local 1006), Daryl Barnett (501), Ian Carnie (2012), Val Cleary (404), Sandy (Alexander) Crawford (2012), Walt Dettwiler (1011), John Elcoate (1004), John Eldridge (603), Debra Foster (nee McDonald), (607), Don Geiger (2012), Joyce Glover (703/04), Roberta Glubis (412), George Heyman (2012), Jim Jordan, (501), Charles Lavertu (601), Erwin MacDermid (2012), David Manning (406), Larry Martin (2007), Bill Mikaloff (712), Bill Munro (506/510/511), Randy Pearson (512), Paul Perkins

(1210), Marlene Reimer (705), Virginia Reynolds (403), Bill Richardson (1007), Doug Stephen (1201), Sally Stevenson (402), Gordon Towers, (608), Wayne White (2002).

Honour roll

Two members were also added to the BCGEU Honour Roll, which recognizes BCGEU members who met the criteria of Life Membership, but had not been bestowed before they passed away while in service or following their retirement.

The Honour Roll is awarded to the following members: Mary-Jane Anderson (Hospital and Allied Services Component), Michelle Tessier (Administrative Services Component).

Delegates can check the BCGEU web site (www.bcgeu.ca) at any time to look at the bulletins and photos from the convention.