

BC Federation of Labour Convention 2014

I found out that my Local (CEIU 20938) was not able to send a Delegate to the 2014 BC Federation of Labour Convention. I asked the President if anyone from our Locals had come forward with a desire to attend the Convention and Leslye Brown (President of local 20938) indicated that nobody had come forward. I asked if I could use the Credential that our local is afforded and she said yes. Next, I had to figure out how to fund my attendance. I was told that PSAC helps to subsidise members to attend the CLC and Regional Federation Conventions and a request for funding should be submitted ASAP. I did and I was approved for a subsidy for \$475.00.

There was a Diversity Forum prior to the convention and I attended this as well. I arrived Sunday at the Hotel Vancouver to attend a very interesting and worthwhile meeting of activists with a particular affiliation for Diversity. It was supportive and informative. Well worth the extra day of meetings.

Considering the National Officers meeting was being held Monday at 7:30AM I decided to stay at the Hotel Vancouver. This meeting again was very informative and went the full time allotted: 11:30. The BC Fed conference started at noon. Made for a tight schedule but all was well. I also decided to move to the Waterfront as most meetings had an element of start time that was extremely early or we would go to 9PM or even 10PM with meetings and forums every day. It made for very long days. My home is near the airport and would require me to travel too much time.

There was a very spirited campaign in full swing for President but also for Secretary Treasurer. Even though at the time there was only one candidate, but that could change at any moment as anyone could be nominated from the floor or simply by submitting their name at the registration office.

I found out that the incumbent LGBTQ officer of the BC Federation was not running for re-election. As I had worked closely with her for the last two years and felt that I had done some of the functions with her as a team there would not be a very large learning curve should I run for this position. As lead of the Multi Union

Pride group it was only logical for me to seek the nomination and support from the LGBTQ caucus. I asked for permission from Bob Jackson (REVP PSAC BC) and he was quick to give his affirmative response.

I submitted the papers and started campaigning. I found out that Sister Jennifer Chieh Ho was also running for the Racially Visible caucus officer for the BC Fed. The elections were scattered all over the Convention and some of the meetings were a bit difficult (especially the members with disabilities caucus meeting) who ended up meeting in a hallway of the Pan Pacific as there was not enough space for the meeting in the actual room. I was very concerned with this as all caucus meetings were to be held the same way in the same room. Another room adjacent was booked and all other caucuses were successful in their meetings. Jennifer Chieh Ho is now the new Members with Disabilities officer of the BC Federation of Labour.

In the mean time Resolutions were passed (including one submitted by the CEIU BC Component in relation to Service Canada) and several (if not all) of the concurrent resolutions were passed without too much fuss. The campaign for President of the BC Fed was getting more and more serious. Jim Sinclair was presiding over the meetings with great aplomb and compassion as always.

Political actions were done and a rally was held outside the Convention Centre to launch the \$15/Hour minimum wage campaign. Elections were held and the convention had all the earmarks of a very successful event. Finally the big election day arrived with many hundreds more Delegates registered to vote for the new President of the BC Fed. A record number of Delegates had in fact registered by election time.

Irene Lanzinger was the successful candidate for President of the BC Federation of Labour. As most elections came to a close all successful candidates, up to that point, were asked to come to the front and be sworn in as Officers of the BC Federation of Labour. It was a great sight. Only problem was, the GLBTQ officer was not there as this election was slated for that evening.

The election happened and three candidates put their names forward including yours truly. The candidates spoke and answered some very good questions and the LGBTQ caucus voted for the new LGBTQ officer for the BC Fed. On the first ballot I was successful as the new Officer for the BC Fed. It was an emotional roller coaster as the members who put their names forward were all very qualified for this position. Of course it is my honour to work with all members of the BC Federation of Labour across the province foremost and across the country as well.

Now there was the issue of being sworn in as an officer of the BC Federation of Labour. After some discussions Jim Sinclair asked for me to come to the front and be sworn in as there was an oversight in scheduling and unfortunately the election happened after the previous days swearing in ceremony. So, he swore me in as the newest Officer of the BC Federation of labour in front of the 2000+ Delegates who gave me a standing ovation. It was very overwhelming! The Convention came to a close at noon that day with an era having come to a close with Jim Sinclair's retirement. He will remain active and will help where help is needed.

I would like to thank the PSAC and PSAC BC for supporting my attendance and candidacy at the BC Federation of Labour Convention.

Much appreciated and with Pride and Solidarity, respectfully submitted,

PCC

Paul Croes,

PSAC BC PRIDE coordinator

BC Federation of Labour LGBTQ Officer

National Vice-President for Citizenship and Immigration Canada

(Canada Employment and Immigration Union) – NVP CIC @ CEIU