



MINUTES

of the

5th ANNUAL CONVENTION

of the

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

held at the

**Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe
Resort & Spa**

Victoria, B.C.

May 29, 2004

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CALL TO ORDER

President Kathy Danchuk called the 5th Annual Convention of the Professional Employees Association to order at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 29, 2004.

The President welcomed the delegates to the PEA's fifth annual convention.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

The President called on Val Leverington, Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, to give a report.

The Chairperson advised that there were 62 delegates and Executive members registered. She also reported that there were 4 staff in attendance.

M/S/C to accept the Credentials Report.

The Chairperson reported that four of the delegates were not able to attend as planned. The following alternate delegates were registered:

Troy Lockhart, alternate for Mike Grainger	Government Licensed Professionals
Ron Greschner, alternate for Ivan Listar	Government Licensed Professionals
Pat Blonde, alternate for Mariann Olchowy	University of Victoria
Monika Coates, alternate for Sue Ward	Paramedical Professionals

M/S/C that these delegates be seated.

M/S/C that the Credentials Committee stand down, with thanks.



DELEGATES

The following delegates were registered.

Association Executive

Table Officers

President	Kathryn Danchuk
First Vice-President	Jim Russell
Secretary-Treasurer	Tom Gore

Chapter Representatives

Government Licensed Professionals	Trudy Goold Sharlie Huffman Sheldon Martell
Health Sector	Valerie Leverington
UVic Administrative & Academic Professional Staff	Morag MacNeil
Small Chapters (Family Maintenance Enforcement Program Lawyers, Legal Services Society Lawyers, Okanagan Regional Librarians and Prince George School District Professionals)	Georgia McKay

Chapter Delegates

Government Licensed Professionals

Paul Albu	Ron La Torre
Jim Annunziello	Troy Lockhart
Bruce Barnewall	Mary Lou Nesbitt
Anthony Britneff	Mike Madill
Ken Chalmers	Gerald Reichenback
Brian ChowKerry	John Robinson
Clark	Steven Rogers
Cheryl Conant	Roxanne Still
Robert Glassford	Les Thiessen
Ron Greschner	Kevin Walker
Shawn Hedges	Andrew Wheatley
Harry Jennings	Rostam Yazdani
Mike Jobke	

Community Health Services & Support Staff

Marie Kardash
Carol-Anne McMillan

Dawn Barbeau
Laurel Lafaut

Family Maintenance Enforcement Program Lawyers

Ron Dumont
Debra Padron

Legal Services Society Lawyers

Kathy Kendall

Susan Grattan

Okanagan Regional Librarians

Fern Teleglow

Paramedical Professionals

Joanne Montgomery

Monika Coates
Guido Vanderheyden

Prince George School District Professionals

Daphne Laboucan

Holly Kavanaugh

St. Margaret's School

Rebecca Kaukinen
Dana Reid

Pat Giommi

**University of Victoria Administrative &
Academic Professional Staff**

John Hall
Kim Lewall
Pat Blonde
Inez St. Dennis
Ian Thornton

Vincent Connor
John Foxgord
Bert Klatt
Bill McGhee
Garry Sagert
Joanne Thomas

STAFF

Executive Director
Staff Officer
Staff Officer
Administrative Clerk

Jodi Jensen
Tony Bute
Ernie Gorrie
Joanne Petersen

CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Resolutions Committee:

Pat Giommi
Morag MacNeil
Andrew Wheatley
Ernie Gorrie, *Secretary*

Jim Russell, *Chair*

Ways and Means Committee:

Dawn Barbeau
Steve Byford
Roxanne Still
Jodi Jensen, *Secretary*

Tom Gore, *Chair*

Credentials Committee:

Ron Dumont
Kathy Kendall
Joanne Petersen, *Secretary*

Val Leverington, *Chair*

Sergeant-at-Arms Committee:

Daphne Laboucan
Fern Teleglow
Guido Vanderheyden
Tony Bute, *Secretary*

Trudy Goold,



CONVENTION RULES OF ORDER

The Executive Director read the Rules of Order:

1. A member of the Association may bring any matter before a convention for consideration by means of a resolution. The resolution must be signed by the member and at least one other member before it can be considered.
2. A resolution, except a resolution to amend the constitution, can be considered from the convention floor only if at least two-thirds of the delegates present, and voting, vote to accept the resolution for consideration.
3. Convention reports cannot be amended from the convention floor but a motion to refer the report back to the committee for reconsideration is in order. A motion to refer is not debatable. When a referral motion is properly seconded, it must be put to a vote immediately. A delegate cannot move referral after speaking on the issue.
4. If the recommendation of a committee is defeated, the matter is automatically referred back to the committee.
5. Once presented, a motion is the property of the convention. It may be withdrawn only by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting.
6. A motion to reconsider can only be made by a voter in the majority. Such a motion requires a majority to pass.
7. A delegate wishing to speak on a motion on the floor must be at a microphone and be recognized by the chair of the convention.
8. If a point of order is raised while a delegate is speaking, the delegate shall, at the request of the chair, stand down until the question of order has been decided.
9. If two or more delegates rise to speak at the same time the chair of the convention will determine the order of speakers.
10. Except when a delegate is speaking, a delegate can request that a motion be re-read for information.
11. No delegate can interrupt a delegate who has the floor except to raise a point of order.
12. A delegate may not speak more than once on an issue until all others who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so.
13. A delegate who refuses to stand down when requested by the chair to do so shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the session.
14. Speeches are limited to three minutes.
15. Except as set out above the convention will be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

M/S/C to accept the Rules of Order.



INVESTMENT REPORT

The President introduced Paul Siluch, PEA Investment Advisor, who gave an overview of the financial outlook and the state of PEA finances in 2003 and the first quarter of 2004.

ALLOCATION OF RESOLUTIONS

The President introduced Jim Russell, Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee, who advised that the committee had met on April 20 and referred the Secretary-Treasurer's Report, 2003 Audited Financial Statements, 2004 Budget, and Resolution #7 to the Ways & Means Committee.

REPORT OF THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The President called on Tom Gore, Chairperson of the Ways and Means Committee to give his report.

The Chairperson introduced the members of the committee, and PEA auditor Tony Charles-Roberts of the accounting firm Moore, Roberts & Co.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The PEA auditor reported on the 2003 Audited Financial Statements.

M/S/C to accept the Audited Financial Statements.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

(full report printed at the end of minutes)

Secretary-Treasurer Tom Gore reported that growth in some chapters more than offset the loss of members due to government downsizing in 2003, resulting in membership dues income being higher than budgeted; that income, combined with reduced staffing levels resulted in an operating surplus after amortization of \$80,332. In contrast to the market losses of 2002, the investment reserves grew from \$5.85 million to \$6.20 million; however Gore cautioned that a significant strike coupled with an adverse investment climate would result in depletion of these currently healthy reserve funds. Gore also noted the adverse impact on dues income resulting from the public sector mandate of zero per cent wage increases and the corresponding impact on the operating budget given inflationary pressures.

M/S/C to accept the Secretary-Treasurer's Report.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

M/S/C that the firm Moore, Roberts and Co. be reappointed as Association auditors for the 2004 fiscal year.

2004 BUDGET

The Secretary-Treasurer drew attention to the updated budget.

M/S/C to accept the 2004 Budget.

The Chairperson of the Ways & Means Committee read the following resolution to the delegates.

RESOLUTION #7

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate the purchase of a suitable building in which to locate the Association's office(s) at an appropriate time, considering the expiry of the current leases and the real estate market.

M/S/C to refer back to the committee.

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The President called on Jim Russell, Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee, who introduced the members of the committee.

The Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee called on the President to present her report.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(full report printed at the end of minutes)

President Kathryn Danchuk reported that despite the B.C. Liberal government's agenda to force concessions on unionized workers and privatize public services, she felt hopeful that the political tide appeared to be turning in time for the provincial election in May 2005. Danchuk reported on collective bargaining settlements reached over the previous year on behalf of PEA members in health, government service and family maintenance; and on-going efforts to achieve fair collective agreement settlements with the University of Victoria and St. Margaret's School. In closing, Danchuk extended her thanks to the Association's staff and to members for their involvement and support.

M/S/C to accept the President's Report.

The Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee called on the Executive Director to present her report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

(full report printed at the end of minutes)

Executive Director Jodi Jensen reported on issues of leadership development and organizational sustainability arising from her participation in the Ninth Commonwealth Study Conference, and thanked the Association Executive for their sponsorship and support. Linking these issues to the Association's 30th anniversary, Jensen asked delegates to consider in their decision-making not only the history of activists and organizers who built the union into a successful representative of professional employees, but also the importance of envisioning a common agenda for the future.

M/S/C to accept the Executive Director's report.

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE (cont'd)

The Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee read the following resolutions to the delegates and made recommendations on behalf of the committee. The delegates either adopted, referred or defeated the resolutions as follows:

RESOLUTION #1

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association takes the position that all time limit provisions on welfare benefits should be rescinded and conditions should be attached to the new Canadian Social Transfer to prevent the imposition of time limits on welfare benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association Executive work collaboratively with other like-minded organizations.

The committee amended this resolution to read:

RESOLUTION #1 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association takes the position that all time limit provisions on welfare benefits should be rescinded and conditions should be attached to the new Canadian Social Transfer to prevent the imposition of time limits on welfare benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association work collaboratively with other like-minded organizations to have the time limits on welfare benefits rescinded and to urge the federal government to place conditions on Canadian Social Transfer payments to prevent the imposition of time limits on welfare benefits.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #2

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA investigate the criteria for membership in the BC Federation of Labour and present members with the pros and cons of membership in the BC Federation of Labour and put joining the BC Federation of Labour to a vote of the full membership.

The committee amended this resolution to read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate membership in the BC Federation of Labour; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that should the Association Executive favour joining the BC Federation of Labour that a referendum be held on the issue.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #3

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA call on the current BC provincial government to re-evaluate their lack of financial recognition of the contribution of workers and rescind its oppressive zero, zero and zero policy and permit workers' to negotiate fair compensation for their labour.

The committee amended this resolution to read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association call on the BC provincial government to re-evaluate its lack of financial recognition of the contribution of workers and rescind its oppressive zero, zero, zero policy of no wage increases and permit workers to negotiate fair compensation for their labour.

M/S/C to refer back to the committee.

RESOLUTION #4

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that programs be developed to provide opportunities for younger members of the PEA to learn about unionism and to become actively involved in the organization.

M/S to refer back to the committee. Defeated

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #5

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA Scholarship Policy be revised so as to allow eligibility to members who are part time students in regular University or College academic programs.

M/S/C to refer back to the committee.

RESOLUTION #6

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate consolidating the current offices effective January 2006.

M/S/ to refer back to the committee. Defeated

M/S/C Non-Concurrence

RESOLUTION #7

The committee referred this resolution to the Ways & Means Committee.

RESOLUTION #8

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association lobby the government to immediately reverse the privatization of the Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare and maintain public control of this vital gateway to our public health care system; and

BE FURTHER IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association lobby the provincial government to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure to ensure that health care is maintained as a public service and that the principles of the Canada Health Act of a universal, accessible, portable, comprehensive and publicly-administered health care system are strengthened.

The committee amended this resolution to read:

RESOLUTION #8 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association lobby the provincial government to immediately reverse the privatization of the Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare and maintain public control of this vital gateway to our public health care system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association lobby the provincial government to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure to ensure that health care is maintained as a public service and that the principles of the Canada Health Act of a universal, accessible, portable, comprehensive and publicly-administered health care system are strengthened.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #9

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association condemns the BC Liberal government for its attacks on workers in British Columbia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association will work with other like-minded organizations to ensure that the BC Liberal Party does not have the opportunity to continue its policies after May 17, 2005.

The committee amended this resolution to read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association condemns the provincial government for its attacks on workers, specifically the legislated imposition of contracts, the removal of collective agreement rights, and the negotiation of wage rollbacks and concessions on workers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association will work with other like-minded organizations to ensure that future provincial governments implement progressive labour policies.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #3

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association call on the BC provincial government to re-evaluate its lack of financial recognition of the contribution of workers and rescind its oppressive zero, zero, zero policy of no wage increases and permit workers to negotiate fair compensation for their labour.

The Chairperson reported that the committee amended the resolution to read:

RESOLUTION #3 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Professional Employees Association call on the BC provincial government to re-evaluate its lack of financial recognition of the contribution of workers and permit workers to negotiate fair compensation for their labour.

M/S/C Concurrence

The President asked the Resolutions Committee to stand aside.

ELECTION OF TABLE OFFICERS

The President turned the gavel over to Jodi Jensen, Executive Director, who outlined the procedures for the election. The delegates were advised that the positions to be filled were 2nd Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer.

2nd Vice-President

Nominations were declared open for the position of President, for a two-year term. Andrew Wheatley was nominated and no further nominations were made. After agreeing that he would stand for the position of 2nd Vice-President, Andrew Wheatley was declared elected by acclamation.

Secretary-Treasurer

Nominations were declared open for the position of Secretary-Treasurer, for a two-year term. Tom Gore was nominated and no further nominations were made. After agreeing that he would stand for the position of Secretary-Treasurer, Tom Gore was declared elected by acclamation.

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE (cont'd)

RESOLUTION #5

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA Scholarship Policy be revised so as to allow eligibility to members who are part time students in regular University or College academic programs. The chairperson reported that the committee amended the resolution to read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA scholarship policy be revised to provide scholarships for part-time students. The amount of the scholarship award to a part-time student will be limited to the actual cost of the course proposed as shown on the receipt for tax purposes to a maximum of \$1,000, and completed by the part-time student.

M/S/C Non-Concurrence

APPROVAL OF 4th ANNUAL CONVENTION MINUTES

M/S/C that the minutes of the 4th Annual Convention be adopted.

The President called on the Chairperson of the Ways & Means Committee.

RESOLUTION #7

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate the purchase of a suitable building in which to locate the Association's office(s) at an appropriate time, considering the expiry of the current leases and the real estate market.

The Chairperson reported that the committee amended the resolution to read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate the purchase of suitable space in which to locate the Association's office(s) at an appropriate time, considering the expiry of the current leases and the real estate market; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive will report to the membership, in an accessible manner, the business case for renting or purchasing office space.

M/S/C Concurrence

M/S/C to dismiss the Ways & Means Committee with thanks.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolutions from the Floor

Two resolutions were received from the floor.

The delegates voted to allow the following two resolutions on the floor for debate.

1. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate reducing the bond portfolio from a minimum of 70 per cent to a minimum of 60 percent of the investment reserves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate investing in higher yield investments.

M/S/C to refer to the committee.

- b) THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate means of providing financial support for part-time studies by members and their dependents.

M/S/C to refer to the committee.

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE (cont'd.)

RESOLUTION #1 FROM THE FLOOR

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate reducing the bond portfolio from a minimum of 70 per cent to a minimum of 60 percent of the investment reserves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate investing in higher yield investments.

The committee recommended concurrence.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #2 FROM THE FLOOR

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive investigate means of providing financial support for part-time studies by members and their dependents.

The committee recommended concurrence.

M/S/C Concurrence

M/S/C to dismiss the Resolutions Committee with thanks.

ADJOURNMENT

The 5th Annual Convention of the Professional Employees Association adjourned at 2:50 p.m, Saturday, May 29, 2004.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I reflect back over events of the past year I can't help but feel hopeful about the future of our Association. This may seem an odd statement to make given the numerous and difficult challenges PEA members have faced since the election of the Campbell Liberal government in 2001. We've suffered the effects of their fiscal mismanagement and their ideological drive which values private profits over public services.

Immediately upon taking office, the Campbell Liberals signaled a change in direction for this province by delivering the largest personal and corporate tax cuts in Canadian history, cuts that disproportionately benefitted the wealthy and which have failed to pay for themselves. On that day, this government took its first step down a path that has led to massive public sector layoffs, privatization and reduced services. Having caused the provincial deficit to balloon to new levels, this government is gutting collective agreements, forcing concessions on unionized workers and selling off public assets such as B.C. Rail to meet its own legislatively required budget targets. Finance Minister Gary Collins introduced a balanced budget for 2004/05 on the backs of public sector workers, and to the detriment of all British Columbians who rely on public services.

So why feel hopeful, especially when many PEA members are at the bargaining table fighting to protect their collective agreements from concessions and when at best it seems we are looking forward to at least a two-year wage freeze? Why feel hopeful when March 31 marked the successful conclusion of the government's efforts to reduce the size of an already-lean public service by one-third and when many of our colleagues continue to face the spectre of layoffs and privatization?

I feel hopeful because I feel the tide turning. The Campbell Liberals have stumbled. Their agenda to hand over child protection and other services for children and their families is in disarray amidst resignation and scandal. The cuts to the public service have been shown to be too deep for government to do its business. After paying out millions in severance, early retirement and relocation costs, the Ministry of Forests recently announced more than 100 new vacancies. The government's efforts to sell off the Coquihalla and the Roberts Bank rail line have failed.

As the effects of cuts to public services – health, education, legal aid – are felt, British Columbians are becoming angry. Recent public opinion polls show that British Columbians have had enough of this “New Era” especially in the interior and rural areas. A year from now, in May 2005, we will be heading to the polls and I am hopeful that given the opportunity, British Columbians will vote to put our province back on a path that values people over profits. I am hopeful that change is coming.

Unfortunately, that change has not come soon enough for the six PEA bargaining units that are engaged this year in collective bargaining. This spring, PEA members in our Community Health Services and Support Chapter voted to ratify a collective agreement delivering a 4.06 per cent wage rollback and improved employment security after their bargaining association fought off efforts by health employers to introduce changes that would result in wage rollbacks exceeding 20 per cent, eliminate sick leave provisions and cut vacation. Our community health members made a tough decision to accept modest wage concessions in order to avoid the very real possibility that radical take-aways would be imposed by legislation.

Last year, Family Maintenance Enforcement Program Lawyers lost their ability to negotiate an independent collective agreement when they were swept into the community social services sector by Bill 61, the *Community Services Labour Relations Act*. Despite being part of a union bargaining association representing members very unlike lawyers, the PEA succeeded in protecting our members' current rights and entitlements. Their new collective agreement was ratified in April.

As this report went to press, Government Licensed Professionals had just voted to ratify a two-year extension of their current collective agreement with improved employment security but no wage gains



or rollbacks. Our Paramedical Professionals are currently at the bargaining table as part of a bargaining association and have been presented with a package totaling nearly 100 pages of concession demands from health employers.

Collective bargaining for renewed collective agreements for our members in the University of Victoria Administrative & Academic Professionals Chapter and the St. Margaret's School Chapter are about to get underway, while our Prince George School District Professionals have decided to delay negotiations until the fall.

There is no doubt that this has been a challenging year, particularly with the number of chapters at the bargaining table. However, as always our staff have risen to the occasion and managed the turmoil in stellar fashion. Jodi Jensen has done an excellent job of maintaining service to the members. As some of you may know Jennifer Duprey and Barinder Rasode are currently on maternity leave. Jodi has ensured that we have hired quality staff to replace them during this time. Ernie Gorrie has stepped in and hasn't missed a beat. This year has also seen Tony Bute significantly challenged. He too, although sometimes painfully, pressed on to ensure that our collective rights were upheld.

Therefore on behalf of the Executive, a big thank you is in order. Not only have the staff managed external changes, they have also navigated internal challenges and still continue to provide all the personal service that members have come to expect.

In closing, I also want to thank those who ultimately support the whole organization. Caroline Ward and Marianna Crawford in the Victoria office and Joanne Petersen in the Burnaby office are integral to the operation of the union and their helpfulness is always appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Danchuk,
President



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PEA TURNS 30

The Professional Employees Association marks its 30th anniversary this month. The Association's first certification, for Government Licensed Professionals, was granted by the B.C. Labour Relations Board on May 3, 1974.

Over the last three decades, the Association has negotiated a total of 64 collective agreements, survived nine premiers – five New Democrat, three Social Credit and one Liberal – had three logos, 13 Presidents and four Executive Directors. We have grown from a single bargaining unit to nine and our governance structure has evolved accordingly, to ensure democratic representation of an increasing diversity of members and bargaining units. The single founding executive has been replaced by an Association Executive and nine chapter executives. The Association's Annual General Meeting has evolved into an annual delegated convention while each chapter's own annual general meeting has been preserved.

From its founding in a ballroom at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, the PEA has grown in membership numbers and resources to become a well-established and effective representative of professionals in British Columbia. That founding meeting represented an act of imagination. Establishing a new union required a leap of faith by a group of professionals dedicated in purpose and with a shared vision for the future. Having a shared vision – collectively refined time and again – has sustained the PEA through three decades of growth, struggle and success.

Sustaining the PEA into the future may require similar leaps of faith, similar acts of imagination. Collectively, your task as delegates is to contribute to a shared vision for the future. Where do we want to be in another five, 10 or 30 years, and how do we get there?

VISIONS

Last October, I had the privilege to be one of six delegates chosen from Canadian labour organizations to attend the Ninth Commonwealth Study Conference, jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand. More than 200 delegates from labour, business, government and non-governmental organizations gathered for more than two weeks, in plenary and in groups of 15, for a unique educational and leadership development opportunity.

Being a conference participant gave me the opportunity to put the Association on an international stage and to make strong national links with other participants and alumni from the Canadian labour movement. I learned a great deal from the other members of my study group – who hailed from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Barbados, the U.K and India – not only about their respective organizations and countries, but about leadership qualities, group dynamics and innovative organizational practices. I also learned about employment practices and legislation affecting unionized and non-unionized workers in a variety of countries and industries, which permitted me to place the challenges facing the labour movement in B.C. in a much wider context. I was surprised to learn, for example, that workers in Australia have no legal guarantees of union recognition, so that even if one hundred per cent of workers in a workplace sign union cards, the employer is under no obligation to recognize the union or enter into collective bargaining. In Australia, unionized workers have no legal right to strike and there is no such thing as a closed shop. Our rights in these areas are not to be taken for granted. I came away convinced of the importance of the struggle to preserve the legislative framework that currently governs issues of certification, collective bargaining and dispute resolution in B.C., in addition to our current efforts to protect members' negotiated rights and benefits, and achieve fair collective agreement settlements.

British Columbia is in flux – socially, politically, economically; in my report to convention last year, I



was so bold as to label this a revolution. In these circumstances more than ever we must pay attention to what might otherwise be invisible or assumed. Our job is to examine what is – as well as what might be – as we evaluate the kind of future we envision for ourselves as a union and as a community of citizens.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Much of the PEA's energy this year has been directed towards collective bargaining, with three settlements negotiated on behalf of members working in community health (CHSS), government (GLP) and family maintenance enforcement program (FMPEP) bargaining units. Bargaining for renewed collective agreements is pending or continuing on behalf of our Paramedical Professionals (PP) as well as members employed by the University of Victoria (UVic), St. Margaret's School (SMS) and the Prince George School District (PGSD).

The B.C. Liberal government has created a challenging environment for collective bargaining, with the Premier and Finance Minister publicly declaring that no wage increases will be permitted for public sector workers. The government's budget and fiscal plan for 2003/04 to 2005/06 sets out no funding for future wage settlements beyond the 0-0-0 mandate.

In February, the B.C. Liberals were required by their own legislation to introduce a balanced budget for 2004/05, after introducing the largest tax cuts in Canadian history and allowing the provincial deficit to balloon to new highs. Those tax cuts, and the cuts to public services that go hand in hand, have disproportionately benefitted the wealthy in the lower mainland while hurting citizens in rural areas and the interior. PEA members and their families know too well the impact of office closures and relocations, privatization and layoffs, restricted mandates and reduced public services.

The PEA has worked hard to achieve the best possible settlements for our members in this context. The most difficult to date has been the agreement delivering a 4.06 per cent wage rollback and improved employment security for our members in community health. While far from ideal, members voted to ratify this settlement when faced with efforts from health employers to roll back wages 20 per cent or more – among a host of other concessions – while hovering in the background was a Liberal government that has shown no hesitation in using legislation to end legal strikes and impose collective agreements.

In March, the PEA succeeded in protecting the rights and entitlements of our Family Maintenance Enforcement Program Lawyers, despite their having been forced by legislation into a large, multi-union bargaining association. That collective agreement has now been ratified.

Also in March, we negotiated employment security as part of a two-year extension to the current collective agreement for Government Licensed Professionals. Members voted eighty-two per cent in favour of ratifying the deal.

PENSION GOVERNANCE

In June, I will assume the Association's seat on the Public Service Pension Board of Trustees. Since joint trusteeship of the plan became effective on January 1, 2001, the Association has been more than ably represented by trustee and former Executive Director Doug Hensby. I am very much looking forward to taking on this important role.

Contribution rates to the Public Service Pension Plan increased on April 1 of this year. The employer contribution rate increased by 0.25 per cent on April 1. The member contribution rate for all contributing employees will increase by 0.25 per cent on April 1, 2005. The PEA has negotiated an agreement requiring the government to pay Government Licensed Professionals' portion of the

contribution increase.

The contribution increases will be used to improve funding for the Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA), to protect cost of living adjustments (COLA) to pensioners and to pay full or partial premiums for Medical Services Plan coverage, extended health care coverage and life insurance to age 65 for those who retire at a younger age.

VOLUNTEERS

Thirty years ago a group of professionals came together inspired by a vision – of collective empowerment, of having a say in their working conditions – and they dedicated significant time, effort and energy to making that vision a reality. Today, all PEA members enjoy the fruits of their labours, and of all those who have contributed since.

The passion for making a difference continues to be evident today among the literally hundreds of PEA volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to improving the working lives of their colleagues and who contribute to this organization's continued effectiveness as a bargaining agent for professionals.

Whether as local representatives, executive members, bargaining committee members, convention delegates or in a myriad of other roles, PEA members have consistently stepped up to the plate to volunteer when needed and have enriched the working lives of their colleagues by doing so. On behalf of all members and staff, I extend appreciation and thanks.

STAFF

My kudos go to the staff members I am so fortunate to work with at the PEA. The past couple of years have not been an easy time to work in the labour movement. In the face of repeated government attacks, PEA staff have persisted on a daily basis to defend our members' rights and achieve the best possible results for PEA members. That they have done so with grace and good humour is commendable.

As the staff officer in Victoria, Tony Bute ably represents our members with compassion and persistence. Having been with us since 2000, Tony is coming up into the ranks of the old-timers at the PEA and with each year our appreciation of his talents grows. It is my pleasure to introduce Ernie Gorrie to a PEA convention for the first time. Ernie is now nearly half-way through his tenure with the PEA, filling in for Jennifer Duprey and Barinder Rasode in our Burnaby office, who are both on leave. I think members will agree with me that Ernie has done a remarkable job in coming up to speed on our sometimes idiosyncratic ways and is an effective representative of PEA member interests.

A special thank you goes to Joanne Petersen, who has turned convention planning into a fine art, seemingly effortless but involving superior organizational finesse. Joanne's efforts ensure a successful event that seems to get better each year. My thanks also go to Marianna Crawford, whose enthusiasm and friendliness provide a first greeting for members in need of assistance; and last, but certainly not least, to Caroline Ward who so capably handles the union's financial administration. Their work is the bedrock supporting all of this union's activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Jensen
Executive Director

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

This year the Professional Employees Association has done better than we expected, partially because membership dues were greater than budgeted, partially because our investments showed gains and partially because we operated with a somewhat reduced level of staffing. Growth in the Paramedical Professionals, St. Margaret's School and the University of Victoria bargaining units more than offset a further loss of 75 members from the GLP, resulting in membership dues being only slightly down from 2002. The Association's net gain of 16 members during 2003 brought our total membership to 2,243 at year end. This compares with a net membership decrease of 235 in 2002.

The PEA's membership dues totalled \$1,181,750 for the year while operating expenses including amortization totalled \$1,101,418. Our dues from members were \$128,974 greater than budgeted while our expenses were \$58,161 less than our cautious budget estimate and \$89,518 less than in 2002. This meant that the PEA had an operating surplus after amortization of \$80,332 in 2003. Gains from our investments totalled \$264,383, compared with a loss of \$70,285 in 2002. This resulted in an excess of revenue over expenses of \$344,055 for 2003; which was considerably better than last year's deficiency of \$225,664. Our investment gains continue to be constrained by our policy of holding at least 70 per cent of our investments in bonds but this policy is necessitated by the potential need to liquidate a substantial portion of the portfolio in the event of a major strike.

Our retained reserves grew from \$5,851,890 at the beginning of the year to \$6,195,945 at year end, an equity of \$2,762 per member. While this slow growth in our assets is gratifying, a significant strike coupled with an adverse investment climate would result in this very healthy reserve being significantly depleted.

I should also note that there will continue to be an effective decrease in our membership dues as a result of the public sector 0-0- and 0 mandate. This unconscionable wage freeze means that over three years our members suffer a cumulative decrease in spending power of 6.3 per cent when frozen salaries are adjusted for inflation. Since the PEA's revenue is a percentage of its members' salaries, the PEA as a result also suffers a decrease in its spending power.

I want to especially thank Caroline Ward in the PEA office and our auditor Tony Charles-Roberts for always keeping me up to date on the financial affairs of the Association and leading me through the maze of our statements.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Gore
Secretary Treasurer

