

Melissa Doyle

In terms of numbers, this was a big year for the PEA as we turned the big 4-0. The PEA kicked off its 40th anniversary celebrations at the **2014 Education Conference** held in Victoria, BC January 31st & February 1st. The conference focused on PEA renewal and enhancing skills and knowledge of members. Linda McQuaig provided keynote address and Jackie Larkin facilitated a member engagement session. Other guest speakers included Irene Lazinger (Secretary-Treasurer of the BC Federation of Labour), Debbie Cameron (Director of Mediation for the BC Labour Relations Board) and Leo McGrady (PEA Legal Counsel). Ben Isitt presented the history of the PEA along with his book, *Duty with Dignity*, in commemoration of our 40th anniversary.

By late 2013/early 2014 many chapters were already in **bargaining** preparations for what was anticipated to be (and has proven to be) a challenging round at the bargaining tables. The Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA), which includes our HSP members, ratified a five-year collective agreement in June despite 81% of HSP-PEA members voting to reject the deal. The ORL chapter voted in favour of a two-year agreement ending Jan 31, 2016. PEA members in the PGSD chapter were significantly impacted by the BCTF job action and strike pay was issued to those members so that they could support the BCTF and respect picket lines. UVic has ratified its five-year collective agreement and GLP and several other chapters are in bargaining or bargaining preparations.

With additional pressures on unions coming from the Federal level in the forms of Bill C-377, Bill C-525 and threats to the Rand formula, the PEA has never been more relevant to its members. As such, our **2014 Strategic Plan** focused on increasing bargaining capacity and power, education and awareness building, engaging members in the PEA and strengthening strategic alliances. Plan priorities were identified from a union-wide membership survey in September 2013. Part of this plan includes our trial affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour and Canadian Labour Congress and we're now entering the second year of that affiliation.

As part of our member engagement and education strategy, a new PEA **advanced local rep training** program was rolled out in December 2013 with a focus on human rights and member engagement along with the opportunity for local reps to attend training more frequently. The Association also sent several PEA staff members Association Exec to attend the 2014 Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Winter School. For the 2015 CLC Winter School, we will be sending up to three PEA Association members and four staff.

A "Train the Engager" session was also held as a half-day pre-Education Conference event to launch the Canadian Labour Congress **Together Fairness Works campaign**. The session was aimed at those already attending the Education Conference as well as local (Victoria and area) chapter executive and local reps.

The **GLP Public Awareness Campaign** on Endangered Experts received good province-wide media coverage, social media shares and online support. Point Blank Creative, the Vancouver company behind the GLP campaign, is currently working with UVic Chapter Executive on a **Post-Secondary Education Awareness Campaign**.

Scott McCannell, Executive Director of the PEA, continued his efforts in forming alliances, reaching out to politicians from parties with seats in the BC legislature and raising awareness through the media on issues affecting our members and their communities. Scott will also attend the BCFED Convention that takes place November 24-28 2014 as Federation officer.

In other staff news, Brett Harper's work on The Professional was once again recognized with a CALM award in Montreal for best publication in the category of excellence in Print Layout in a regular print publication. The PEA also hired Jennifer Bond as the temporary Financial Officer in place of Teresa Husband who is on leave. PEA community involvement continued this year with Brett Harper and other PEA staff organizing participation in the **Victoria Pride Parade**.

The PEA continued its tradition of giving back to local, provincial and national non-profit organizations through two separate programs. Our **2013 Giving Back Program** distributed \$10,000 in donations to the ten organizations receiving the highest number of votes, as voted by PEA members' province wide. Votes for the **2014 Giving Back program** have been tallied and results will be presented to the Association Exec and announced to members soon. Voter turnout this year was at an all-time high of 21.8% (563 members).

In addition to the Giving Back Program, the **Grants & Donations Committee** also distributed \$10,000 amongst several local, provincial and national non-profits. As part of the 2014 allocations, a onetime contribution of \$5000 was made to the BCTF Hardship Fund.

In April 2014, the **Scholarships Committee** recommended awards for nine scholarships of \$1000 each to 6 high-school students and three post-secondary students, and one bursary of \$500. A list of the 2014 awards recipients and their essay submissions is available on the PEA website: <http://www.pea.org/scholarships-bursaries.html#Bursary%20Recipients>.

Association Executive and staff met for two days of strategic planning, September 15-16, to discuss priorities and potential initiatives for the **2015 Strategic Plan**. Jackie Larkin facilitated the two-day session. The Association will meet again soon to begin formalizing action items.

PEA staff and association exec are also preparing for the **2015 PEA Convention** scheduled to take place in Victoria on April 17th and 18th, 2015.

For more information about member and staff accomplishments throughout the year, please refer to the 2013 PEA Year in Review available in the Resources section of the PEA website under The Professional.