

Building Our Future Together

moveUP CONVENTION 2024

Welcome to Day 3 of Convention 2024!

Convention is truly a whirlwind of activity and, right when it feels like you're getting used to it, it's quickly over. But the past three days, including our various caucus meetings on Wednesdays, have been filled with a lot of engagement, excitement, and a lot of work has been accomplished.

There is still a lot of work to be done this morning before Convention formally concludes. At the top of the business agenda is the announcement of our vice-president election race for all three of our component areas. We sincerely thank Safar Alikhani, Christy Slusarenko, Anderson Charles, Rysa Kronebusch, Brian Martens, and Dimitri Ossinsky for putting their names forward to run for this/these critical positions in our union and demonstrating your passion for our members. We wish you all the best of luck.

While we are on the topic of demonstrating passion for our members, today we will formally honour two long-time MoveUP members and leaders in our union for their years of dedicated services – former president David Black, and former secretary-treasurer Lori Mayhew.

Throughout the last several days, you will have seen short tribute videos from people both in and out of our union sharing their thoughts on the impact that David and Lori have both had at MoveUP and in the labour movement. Before Convention closes, our delegates will have one final opportunity to formally thank them for all they have done to grow and strengthen our union. ■

2024 Peter Corren Award

Peter Corren was one of the most prominent 2SLGBTQIA+ activists in Canadian history. Along with his husband, Murray, the two are known for their series of court challenges that helped ensure the rights for gay people to adopt children, led to the legalization of equal marriage, and the inclusion of human rights material and curricula in BC's public schools.

On April 28, 2006, the Correns and the Ministry of Education signed a private agreement after a lengthy fight starting when the Correns filed a human-rights complaint against the Ministry in 1999. This became known as the "Corren Agreement" setting an unprecedented change to the BC school system to introduce a new Grade 12 elective about social justice and a pro-2SLGBTQIA+ curriculum.

Peter meant a great deal to 2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians across the country, but he also meant a lot to our MoveUP family specifically. He was a 20-year member of our union, a dedicated job steward, and a human rights activist. He passed away in December 2009 following a long battle with cancer, but his legacy remains.

MoveUP's Peter Corren Award was created in 2018 to acknowledge a member or retiree, living or deceased, who has volunteered their time and energy to ending discrimination against First Nations, 2SLGBTQIA+, Persons Living with Disabilities and/or Persons of Colour.

It was given to an individual who has displayed a passion for grassroots advocacy within the four equity groups that our Human Rights & Multicultural Committee supports as defined by the Canadian Labour Council and BC Federation of Labour.

MoveUP is proud to present this year's award to Zoran Stjepanovic. A MoveUP member from Capilano University, Zoran has been a dedicated advocate for the health and well-being of those in marginalized communities, in particular the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Zoran has championed the intersectional needs of queer, trans, and gender-diverse individuals through his volunteer involvement with the Health Initiative for Men, Qmunity, and the Windsor-Essex Pride Fest.

Zoran's human rights activism is rooted in his belief in equality and justice for all individuals, particularly within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. He has actively worked to create inclusive and celebratory events for the community while also advocating for systemic change. He has been instrumental in providing advocacy and producing programs that aim to combat social isolation, which is often a significant barrier for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

Past recipients of the award are Gurpreet Sran and Vanessa Sharma. ■



Photo: Peter Corren (left) with his husband, Murray

Photos



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A year of milestones

2024 marks a year of significant milestones for our union in many ways.

Back in June, we officially celebrated the 80th anniversary of our union being officially certified by the BC Labour Relations Board. That occurred a few weeks after May 19, 1944, when 90 percent of our membership (based in Vancouver and Victoria), all of whom were working at BC Electric (the predecessor to BC Hydro, BC Transit and TransLink among others), voted in favour of certification to become a legally recognized union.

Back then, our union was known as the BC Electric Office Employees' Association (commonly referred to as OEA), a name adopted sometime around 1918-1921 when office workers at BC Electric decided to formalize going from a social club planning dances and picnics to an association that would deal with working conditions and wages. In those early days, dues were \$1 a year deducted from employees' salaries to fund the OEA and to provide a club room which included a billiard table, records, and magazines.

This past June also saw our national union, COPE, celebrate its 20th anniversary of becoming an independent, autonomous national union. It was on June 20, 2004, that Canadian delegates of OPEIU declared autonomy at the international union's Convention in Florida.

Those who were present in Florida – including David Black and Lori Mayhew – when the notice of autonomy was delivered will remember just how tense the situation was, complete with process servers, lockdowns, and even an ill-fated attempt food delivery attempt through a hotel window that resulted in past president Andy Ross being tackled by security.

And finally, this November will mark our union's 50th anniversary of representing workers at ICBC. We will have a much more robust feature on this significant milestone in an upcoming edition of our Local Voice magazine. Suffice it to say, it remains, to date, our union's most significant organizing effort and victory ever.

Facing off against the combined forces of the BCGEU and CUPE, who had come together to form the "Association of ICBC Employees," our 'little union that could' would find a way to capture the hearts and minds of the workers at ICBC. On November 5, 1974, it became official that our union would be the new certified bargaining agent for employees at ICBC after a successful 63.2% vote count with 882 out of 1,417 ballots cast in favour of OTEU Local 378, as we were known at the time. *Happy anniversaries to us!*



Coming full circle

If we had to pinpoint a specific location for where our union first took roots, it would probably be the BC Electric office and tram depot located at the corner of Carrall St. and Hastings St. in Vancouver. It's an iconic building that once saw trolleys enter directly into the structure.



That was the second headquarters for British Columbia Electric Railway Co. They had previously been tenants of a building at 163 West Cordova St. in Vancouver.

The building at Carrall St. and Hastings St. is now a Heritage Building. Its specific address is 425 Carrall St. If that sounds familiar to some of our members today, it should. That building is home to several companies and organizations including serving as the Vancouver office of Ecojustice Canada.

MoveUP has proudly represented the workers at Ecojustice's Vancouver office since 2007.

Photos

