



NOVEMBER 7-9, 2023 | SHERATON CENTRE HOTEL, TORONTO

Biennial Convention Highlights

ONA President Reflects on 50 Years of Activism in Keynote Address

Taking the podium for her first Biennial Convention at the helm of our organization on November 7, ONA President Erin Ariss provided a recap of what was going on in the world in 1973 in celebration of our 50 years.

Apart from the songs, the culture and the politics of the time, there were the nurses. In fact, it was those nurses that led to the founding of our union on October 13, 1973 because of the precarious working conditions, low pay and disrespect they faced, she said in a keynote address that roused the passions of our members and prompted many glowing comments from the 900 delegates and guests (many also attended virtually).



"These wonderful, fierce and courageous nurses were fed up and ready to do something to achieve the respect they deserved," she stated. "They took huge risks to organize. They could have been disciplined or terminated at the drop of a, well, nurse's cap. But they kept going. They persisted and fought and demanded, and did not back down!

"These renegade, badass founding members of ONA started a burgeoning labour movement for nurses. It took guts, determination and, in truth, probably a bit of luck. We all owe these women a huge debt of gratitude for their bravery and desire – or need – to change the brutal conditions they were working under."

She noted that ONA's founding CEO Anne Gribben, first President Jean Lowery and so many others were her inspiration to continue our work and advocacy.

"I want to be as brave as our forebearers were in ensuring that everyone – from our workplace CEOs to our MPPs to Premier Doug Ford – knows that nurses and health-care professionals will not be silenced. We will not be ignored. We will demand respect. And we will achieve it!"

She noted that in so many ways, "history has been repeating itself these past few years: there is a Conservative premier who disrespects our profession, attacks women and is trying to distract people from the scandals he is involved in by attempting to stir anger in people and attack the rights of 2SLGBTQI people."

We know the impacts so many Ontarians are experiencing these days as wages continue to stagnate, working conditions decline, paid sick leave ends, and our publicly funded and delivered health-care system is being dismantled and privatized, she added.

"Our public health care is on the chopping block. Ford is carving it up and expanding for-profit health care to benefit his corporate friends, not the people of this province."

Even more sobering is that the latest statistics indicate that by 2027, Ontario will be short more than 34,000 nurses.

"In 2026, Ontario is holding a provincial election where a new slate of MPPs will be elected by you and me," Ariss said to one of many standing ovations. "We are coming and we are ready to work together with one goal: to kick Doug Ford out of Queen's Park once and for all!"

To watch the entire keynote address, go to youtube.com/ontarionurses.

"ONA's story is one of courage, determination, progress and resilience, of always moving forward and never giving up."

— ONA President Erin Ariss, RN

Support and Advocacy Key Themes at HRE Caucus

Our popular Human Rights and Equity (HRE) Caucus provided an opportunity for continued discussions on how to support our members and communities with their equity, diversity and inclusion issues.



Under the theme, *Building Bridges: Championing Diversity, Promoting Inclusion and Creating Equitable Communities*, the day-long event, which kicked off Biennial Convention week on November 6 and was planned with input from ONA's HRE Team and Anti-Racism Advisory Team, featured guest speakers, education and member stories.

Similar to last year's Caucus, attendees met in Communities of Support breakouts – groups of people brought together by commonalities to support one another in a culturally safe environment – for Indigenous, Francophone, 2SLGBTQI, Disabilities, Racialized and Allies. Within each breakout, members shared their direct experiences with discrimination and the support they received.

Workers' Action Centre Organizer Pam Frache spoke with passion about advocating for workers across the province to bring about positive changes in the labour movement.

"We all know that the kind of work we get shapes where we live, our quality of food and access to medicine, which is fundamental to all of us," she said. "We must fight to raise the floor of wages."

Keynote speaker Cathy Crowe captivated attendees with her personal journey on becoming a street nurse and tirelessly advocating for the homeless and social justice



issues. She underscored the need to continue to champion for all, noting, "we are all people, and we need to advocate for one another."

Several members shared their personal stories, and some emphasized the need to reach out and ask for support. As one noted, "ONA taught me how to survive."

"I hope our guest speakers, panelists and the Communities of Support discussions have encouraged us all to take a closer look at our own ways of looking at diversity and promoting inclusion," concluded Region 3 Vice-President Karen McKay-Eden, who holds the HRE portfolio. "Your advocacy has and will continue to make a huge difference."

Biennial 2025
See you there!

The 2023 Biennial Convention may just have concluded, but we're already planning for our next one!

The 2025 Biennial Convention takes place at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto from November 18-20. Our annual Human Rights and Equity Caucus will kick off the week on November 17 and our education session will wrap it up on November 21.



Professional Issues, Political Action Often Collide, First VP States

ONA First Vice-President Angela Preocanin spent the majority of her presentation highlighting our many wins in her portfolios of professional issues and Local political action.

“By working together we have made some undeniable progress that improved the work lives of our members while improving patient, resident and client care,” she began. “Quite often the two sides of my portfolio collide. When that happens, the results can be tremendously beneficial to ONA members and those under our care.”

Take the incredible win at the Mount Sinai Hospital Fetal Medicine Unit, for example, “which was possible through the collaborative work of professional practice and mobilizing staff,” she said. The unit is part of the highly specialized Ontario Fetal Medicine Program and the only program in Canada to offer all specialized services to critically ill mothers and their babies.

“RN sonographers challenged their employer on short-staffing, specialty training and mentorship, poor recruitment, retention and morale,” she explained. “They knew there was inadequate orientation provided to new nurses and they were not given enough time to do ongoing education.”

The nurses instigated an action committee, working tirelessly to organize other members, and as a result, 91 per cent signed a letter that was delivered to the Chief

Nursing Executive (CNE). They demanded change and firm timelines for implementation.

“Because of their actions, two additional positions have been added to orient and mentor new nurse sonographers, along with protected time for education,” Preocanin said. “Their commitment to improve safety and the quality of care, and to achieve a healthy workplace was instrumental in winning these significant gains in a binding agreement. This mighty group of members has shown that when you organize, you can achieve the changes you need!”

Our mobilizing work continues to span across all sectors, from hospitals to public health, Home and Community Care Support Services to long-term care, Preocanin said, emphasizing that “we are proud to support all sectors in their mobilizing initiatives.”

“We are here to help as best as we can.” CEO Emphasizes

In a speech peppered with personal and heartfelt anecdotes about how she became a nurse and the ONA staff who helped her as a member and Local leader, ONA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Andrea Kay told delegates she is hopeful about the future.

“I am proud of where we stand today,” said Kay of the partnership between ONA staff and members. “We will continue to negotiate collective agreements based on your identified needs. We will continue to attend arbitrations and court cases as they arise. It is vital that we do so, even if our legal work is never-ending. We will continue to provide you with many ways to receive communications, whether it be through technology-driven town halls, social media, email blasts or a combination of all. And we will continue to listen to you on the issues and problems that you face in your workplace. We are always here to help as best as we can.”

Although she has been around health-care circles for



several decades and has attended many Biennials in her previous roles – this was her first as CEO – Kay said she has never seen this level of chaos and disarray.

“I thank you for the great advocacy and activism that you do and will continue to do,” she concluded. “We all have a common voice – and that is our strength.”

Regional Reports Focus on Member Stories

DURING THEIR PRESENTATIONS, ONA'S FIVE REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS FEATURED JUST A FRACTION OF THEIR EXTENSIVE PORTFOLIO WORK, BRINGING MEMBERS TO THE STAGE TO HIGHLIGHT KEY AREAS.



**Region 1 Vice-President
DAWN ARMSTRONG, RN
Portfolio: Education**

A highlight of Armstrong's presentation was how many members have taken up roles in our Bargaining Units to take action in their workplaces and communities. One such member is Blanch River Health Bargaining Unit President Patti Roy (left), who spoke to Armstrong about how she became active.

"As a nursing student, I was introduced to the Joint Health and Safety Committee by my ONA Rep," she said. "I learned about member involvement and how to make an impact. This initial experience encouraged me to become involved in our union. I was mentored by ONA20 Local Coordinator Debbie McCrank, and she always made me feel like I could come to her with any questions, and she continues to be a wonderful mentor. ONA's education team supported me by providing various educational opportunities, both virtually and in-person. I have participated in so many workshops and lecturettes, but two that stick out are 'Rock your Role' and the September Leadership Summit. I value the mentoring and the education that have supported me as a Local leader."

Each Region produced a video to highlight its unique and storied history. Check them out at youtube.com/ontarionurses.



**Region 2 Vice-President
BERNIE ROBINSON, RN
Portfolio: Local Finance**

The role of Local Treasurer may not be glamorous, but Robinson would argue it is one of the most important positions in a Local as that person tracks the money. And that takes education, time and a significant amount of support from our dedicated ONA staff and Robinson, who estimates that the Local Finance portfolio takes up 80 per cent of her time.

"Our Locals and Treasurers deserve to receive the dedicated and focused Board support they need to undertake all they have to do from a financial lens," she said, reiterating that a Constitutional Amendment regarding a new Board Treasurer position was passed (see page 11).

Robinson spoke with Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health Bargaining Unit President Joshua Marcon about what led to their recent six-week strike, how members were motivated to take action and what they ultimately achieved.

"My members and I felt like we were bear-hugged by ONA," he answered. "We were so supported, it was unbelievable. There was a lot of pivoting and we moved into the communities where we continued to talk about our demands."

As Robinson concluded, "this is proof that when we work together, we win!"

Regional Reports Focus on Member Stories



Region 3 Vice-President KAREN MCKAY-EDEN, RN

Portfolio: Human Rights and Equity

McKay-Eden highlighted several key human rights and equity (HRE) initiatives that are moving forward.

"I'm pleased to report that our HRE Team will now include an ally member," she said. "This is excellent news and builds on our core tenet of 'everyone included.' The Expression of Interest will be open in the new year, so please stay tuned."

She announced that Rose LeMay is ONA's new Indigenous Consultant and will lead our reconciliation work and develop education focused on decolonization and reconciliation. New education on our eLearning portal is also now available for all members and nursing students. *Beyond Good Intentions: Understanding Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression* promotes awareness of intersectional forms of racism encountered by Indigenous, Black, Racialized and historically marginalized ONA members and communities.

For the first time in ONA's 50 years, we participated in the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, a celebration of the emancipation of slaves. McKay-Eden spoke with ONA43's Helene Bernard (left) who noted that, "ONA's participation in the carnival is a commitment to marginalized communities. We approached the ONA Board, and we highlighted the importance behind the history of the parade and provided suggestions on how to participate."

"It is through these kinds of community initiatives that we hope to work with organizations to develop approaches to address racism," concluded McKay-Eden.



Region 4 Vice-President GRACE PIERIAS, RN

Portfolio: Health and Safety

In her first provincial meeting as Region 4 Vice-President, Pierias underscored her commitment to support members in preventing injuries and illnesses, including workplace violence.

"We need to change how we define violence," she stated. "This demands our attention, empathy and a collective commitment to find solutions. The people who devote their lives to healing and caring for others are increasingly becoming victims of physical, verbal and emotional abuse and harassment. And it's not only patients that are abusing you. It is the system you work in. That means your employers and managers."

She also noted several stark statistics regarding nurses' mental health, which is "horribly understudied. But what we do know is that female nurses are three times more likely to report suicidal ideation and die by suicide than the general population. Males are twice as likely." Pierias emphasized the need to raise awareness among health-care organizations, governments, policy-makers and the public to understand the magnitude of this problem.

Queen's Garden Bargaining Unit President Chinyere Worenwu (left) joined Pierias on stage to shed light on the abundance of challenges in the long-term care sector, noting that the most significant is "without a doubt staffing. There are shifts where I can be responsible for up to 30 to 40 patients. Recently, I was the only nurse for two floors of patients. I had to administer all the meds, complete all of the assessments. It was so unmanageable. All of this creates a risk to my licence and to my patients. They deserve better."

When asked how members can support the sector, Worenwu stated, "we need to put pressure on the government. We need mandated ratios in long-term care. If we create a stable workplace, then more nurses will work in this sector."

Regional Reports Focus on **Member Stories**

Region 5 Vice-President

ALAN WARRINGTON, RN, BScN

Portfolio: Labour Relations

With handling grievances the nuts and bolts of what we do as a union, it is no wonder Warrington relayed that more than 9,600 grievances were filed over the past two years, resulting in thousands of wins.

He noted that common labour relations issues continue to be scheduling, premium pay, vacation, job posting and overtime violations, largely related to agency use and the recruitment and retention of staff. One burgeoning grievance theme relates to internationally educated nurses (IEN) whose experiences and education are not recognized by their employers. Member Marjorie Luquinario-Landicho spoke with Warrington about the hurdles she faced as an IEN and how ONA supported her demand for extra steps on the wage grid.

"I submitted my application to the College of Nurses in March 2012 to register as an RN," she explained. "It took them two years to advise me that I have to go back to university to complete nursing competency gaps. I became an RPN and I got accepted at York University's Post-RN BScN. I passed the NCLEX in December 2018



and registered with the College on January 1, 2019. I informed human resources that I have over four years of international RN experience and I asked them if they would recognize it. They declined. In September 2022, I met an ONA Labour Relations Officer, who immediately filed a grievance and we achieved a settlement in February 2023. We came to Canada equipped with years of lived nursing experience that we earned with hard work, resilience and perseverance from our country of origin. Do not let your experience go unrecognized. ONA will advocate for and defend our rights!"

Cherished Late Chief Negotiator Given Special Award

In one of the most somber and emotional moments of the entire Biennial, ONA President Erin Ariss awarded a posthumous honorary membership to Steve Lobsinger (right), ONA's former Chief Negotiator, who passed away this summer.

The honorary membership is awarded to individuals with high excellence, who have gone above and beyond distinguished service. Lobsinger, who was also once a front-line member, did exactly that.

"He fought for our members' rights locally and provincially," a visibly emotional Ariss said. "He fought time and again for better benefits, pensions, premiums, leaves of absence, paid professional learning, protection from health and safety hazards, top-ups, wages and so very much more."

Lobsinger came from a family of dedicated nurses. His mother Julia was a former ONA Board member in the



1990s and his sister Pam (above, right), who accepted the honorary membership on her family's behalf, is ONA4 Local Coordinator.

ONA's Human Rights and Equity Bursary has also been renamed the Steve Lobsinger Bursary.

"The Nurses are Coming!" ONA Unveils Refreshed Brand Identity

In a riveting presentation, livestreamed on Facebook, ONA President Erin Ariss and branding company Stiff CEO James Hanington unveiled our new brand identity to Biennial delegates.

A new logo reflecting ONA's five regions and new, accessible colours that can be easily used by ONA Locals as they take back their power and fight were just two of the visual brand elements revealed (and are seen throughout this document).

Delegates heard of the rigorous process Stiff and ONA went through to develop the new brand, including member focus groups and research. The incredibly simple conclusion that was reached: it is time to return to the grassroots beginnings of ONA.

As Ariss noted, "ONA was born from the grassroots and we'll grow at the grassroots" over our next 50 years. "Local action is our action" and ONA is a platform for local action.

Governments and employers have tried to silence nurses, to take away nurses' honour and have disrespected the profession. Nurses are angry, and as she urged delegates, it's time to "fight like a nurse."

The renewed brand is designed to

do just that. Each Local will have their own identity, their own "street logo" that can be easily used to make Local ONA flags, signs, stickers, buttons and more. A branded ONA tape and new fonts that echo the handwritten protest signs members have made for decades have been developed.

Going forward, the renewed brand will make it easy for front-line members to tell the brutal truth to Ontarians – what this government and employers have done to health care and to the nursing profession – and will allow members to rekindle the sisterhood of the profession and restore the nobility that once came with being a nurse.

ONA Locals are being empowered to do just that – to take Local action and when angry, show up and fight back!

At the Biennial, Local Coordinators were given a "Fight book" and package of materials to begin rolling out the new, invigorating plan. And in a touching moment, the first-ever ONA flag featuring the new logo – made by ONA with supplies from a dollar store – was signed by attendees (pictured above) and will hang in the Toronto office boardroom as a testament to ONA's bright future in Local activism.

View the full presentation at youtube.com/ontarionurses.



Board Acknowledged, Thanked

As ONA continues to charter our union through the tough challenges ahead, it is critical to have a strong Board of Directors in place – and we certainly do! That Board was acknowledged and thanked during the Biennial Convention, with CEO Andrea Kay (front row, left) noting, "they are at the forefront of everything we do at our union, and it has never been more apparent than over these past few years. The decisions they make to navigate our union through the good times are

even more important during the challenging ones." Continuing to lead our union are Board members (back row, left to right): Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson, First Vice-President Angela Preocanin and Region 4 Vice-President Grace Pierias; front row (left to right beside Kay), President Erin Ariss, Region 5 Vice-President Alan Warrington, Region 3 Vice-President Karen McKay-Eden and Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong.





Pasts Presidents Honoured

In a moving segment, former ONA President Vicki McKenna (above, right), who served from 2018-2021, was honoured for her commitment to our union and many years of service.

In presenting McKenna with an ONA President pin, ONA President Erin Ariss described her as stoic, professional, proud, passionate and feisty, one who “would not settle for any nonsense.

“When I was a Bargaining Unit President and Local Coordinator, I looked to our provincial leaders for guidance,” she said. “When COVID hit, my workplace had



its PPE hidden in large Tupperware containers, and when I finally got my hands on it, it had expired and was completely unusable. We all knew what was going to happen when COVID came to our workplaces, and we needed to be protected. I was completely petrified and horrified, so I picked up the phone and called the ONA offices. I spoke with Vicki McKenna, whom I will always consider *my* president.”

Ariss said McKenna, along with ONA staff and other Board members, swung into action and reassured her ONA would do everything they could to protect her members.

“And she and ONA kept their word,” she added.

Region 2 Vice-President Bernie Robinson (above), who stepped up as interim ONA President for several months beginning in the fall of 2022, was also given a past President pin for her tireless work and dedication.

Looking Back



What would a 50th anniversary celebration be without a little nostalgia? During the Biennial Convention, we displayed memorabilia and photos from ONA’s last five decades, many donated or on loan from our members, including old uniforms, charters establishing their Locals and notable awards. Delegates also had the opportunity to watch our 50th anniversary timeline video in a room set up theatre-style during breaks in Biennial proceedings.



Watch Again (and again if you like!)

Many videos shown at the Biennial Convention, including the past and current President videos, can be found on our YouTube Channel at youtube.com/ontarionurses.

"You gave me the greatest gift."

Canadian Women's Hockey Legend Tells Members

Medical doctor and former Olympic champion Hayley Wickenheiser, keynote speaker at the Biennial Convention, learned an important lesson early in medical school.

"The first thing I learned was if you wanted to survive, you better listen to the nurses," she said. "It turns out the RNs weren't so scary! As a new staff physician, it was sometimes overwhelming, but I learned there is always the bigger health team to lean on."

Wickenheiser also leaned on the skills she learned as a four-time Olympic gold medalist for the women's national hockey team. A member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, her hockey career is peppered with amazing accomplishments. She was on seven world championship teams, made six Olympic appearances and earned five Olympic medals in total. In 2018, she joined the Toronto Maple Leafs as assistant director of player development before being promoted to assistant general manager in 2022.

Alongside her career in the NHL, she is currently a resident medical doctor in the Toronto-area, which she began in 2017 following her retirement from the national women's



hockey team after 23 years. She is also the author of *Over the Board: Lessons from the Ice*.

Wickenheiser, who is also a member of Order of Canada, a retired member of the International Olympic Committee's Athlete's Commission, a member of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, and founder of the Canadian Tire Wickenheiser World Female Hockey Festival, told Biennial delegates that there was more pressure trying to win gold medals than working in health care, but medicine brings different pressures with lives on the line and people coming at their darkest moments for help.

"As an athlete, the focus is mostly on self and performance. Inside the world of health care, I have to take care of myself but also a lot of other people. With that in mind, anything is possible. You gave me the greatest gift anyone could ask for. True freedom. It's never about the wins, it's about the people. You taught me that."

Wickenheiser, who was given an ONA hockey jersey to add to her collection, also stayed after her presentation to pose for photos with members.



Exhibit Hall the Place to be!

Members looking for additional information on ONA services, our vendors and partners – or even to do a little holiday shopping – didn't have to venture too far. The Exhibit Hall, held throughout the Biennial Convention, contained a vast arrange of tables from ONA teams, as well as from our membership benefit and pension providers, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, the ONA "merch" shop and businesses selling purses, jewelry and so much more!



"We have to be loud." CFNU President Stresses

Always a welcome guest at ONA provincial meetings, Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) President Linda Silas said she was delighted to join in on our 50th anniversary celebration.

"You are the first nurses' union to celebrate 50 years, and that's quite an accomplishment!" she began.

ONA has three representatives on the CFNU Board: First Vice-President Angela Preocanin, who was acclaimed as its Secretary-Treasurer over the summer, ONA President Erin Ariss and Region 1 Vice-President Dawn Armstrong. Together, they are helping CFNU raise the bar for nurses across Canada.

"You deserve better than what you're getting from collective bargaining, working conditions and government policy," said Silas, now in her 20th year at the helm of the CFNU. "We have to make sure nursing jobs are the best jobs in the community."

CFNU will be working to bring Quebec nurses back into the fold and will also be redoing its survey of up to 8,000 nurses, sounding out their views on the pandemic and why they may be leaving the profession. By 2027, there will be about 34,000 nursing vacancies across Canada,

about one-third of the nursing workforce.

"Nurses need to be at the table to work with policy-makers on solutions," Silas stated. "Back in the '70s when nurses started to create unions, the question was can you be a professional nurse and a union nurse at the same time. Today's nurses are different. They're angry and burnt out. We have to be loud and in politicians' faces."

Politicians don't see the light, they feel the heat, she noted, adding, "we bring them research to support what we are saying. We need to keep our

experienced nurses working and make the profession attractive to bring in new people."

The ratio of nurses to patients is an urgent issue to be tackled, she stressed.

"Thirty years of evidence shows that if you have the appropriate number of nurses to the acuity of patients, you will provide safer and better patient care and have safer working conditions. You can only solve that by working together, getting loud and taking it to the politicians and decision-makers."

Black and Gold and ONA Bold!

In celebration of our 50th anniversary, we held a special Black and Gold Gala – and members clearly understood the colour assignment, including this glittery group from ONA81! Throughout the night, a huge turnout of members and staff shared stories and memories of our union as they dined and danced the night away to a fantastic rhythm and blues band. Head on over to our social media pages to see many more of our – and your – celebratory pics!



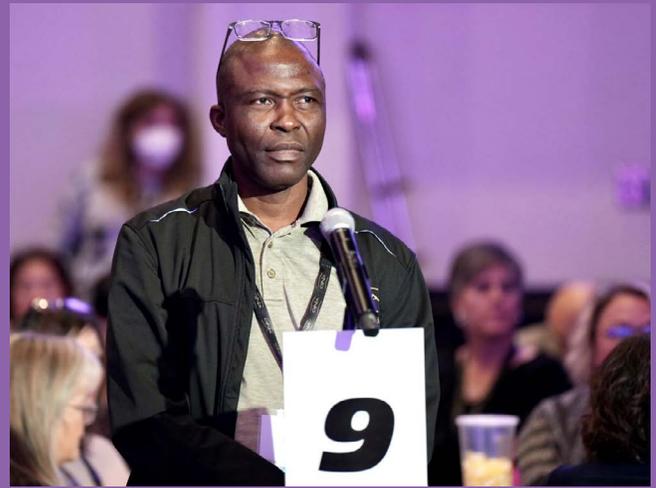
Voting Delegates Pass Constitutional Amendments, Resolutions, Statements of Belief

Over two days of Convention, voting delegates debated and passed amendments to a total of two Statements of Belief, four Resolutions and 25 Constitutional Amendments.

Both Statements of Belief amended parts of ONA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement; the amendments also introduced the commitment to integrate anti-racism and anti-oppression practices and principles to every level of ONA.

Many of the 25 Constitutional Amendments carried dealt with the addition of a new Board position – that of Treasurer – refining details around elections and a process for replacing/removing a Board member, President, First Vice-President or Treasurer should the situation arise. An amendment was carried that directs the Board to appoint an interim CEO from among ONA's senior management team should that be necessary. An amendment setting out standards for nominations and elections for Local Executive Committees carried, along with an amended motion to add a Land Acknowledgement to Bargaining Unit meetings.

Finally, Resolutions to increase ONA member dues for 2024, 2025 and 2026 passed after a rigorous debate, which



followed a detailed financial report that highlighted the financial situation of the union. A resolution carried that eliminates the ONA dues escalator of 3 per cent (see ona.org/dues).

For detailed information, see the Constitutional Amendments and Resolutions Passed document at ona.org/biennial.

Delegates Knocked our Socks off with Generosity!



Time and time again, ONA members prove that their caring goes far beyond their profession. Because maintaining good foot health is crucial for people experiencing homelessness during the winter season, we asked delegates to consider donating a pair of socks during the Biennial. Donation bins were located outside of the main meeting room, and by the time the week was over, they were overflowing. We thank delegates for making a difference to those in need. You knocked our socks off!



Want to Know More?

Looking for more information about the work of our union over the past two years, which was highlighted throughout the Biennial Convention? Check out our 2023 Biennial Report, distributed to all delegates, including these two members, and placed on our Biennial Convention platform. Read yours in English or French at ona.org/2023-biennial-report.



Staff Take to the Stage

ONA staff were a big part of the Biennial Convention discussions too, with (left to right) Chief Financial Officer Nina Sinopoli providing the financial report, Chief Legal

Officer Sharan Basran discussing our legal and Legal Expenses Assistance Plan work, and Negotiations managers Marilyn Dee and Pat Carr detailing the status of bargaining in all sectors, including our recent arbitration decisions.

Candidos from the Convention!



Education Session Helps Build Intergenerational Solidarity

There might not have been a dry eye in the house by the time the half-day education session, which wrapped up Biennial Convention week on November 10, concluded.

Because we know there are current challenges to building ONA teams, particularly due to the perceived differences across generations, communication styles and personalities, the education session was designed to support ONA leaders in listening and having conversations with members and utilizing those skills to build Bargaining Unit engagement. And it certainly did!



Facilitated by members of ONA's Education and Communications and Government Relations Teams, the session, entitled, "Strengthening our Union through Intergenerational Solidarity," featured a panel of members, including Joshua Marcon, a young leader in public health, Melissa Tilley, a seasoned long-term care leader, and Jane Penciner, a seasoned hospital leader. They discussed how they overcame their intergenerational challenges and built an effective and engaged Bargaining Unit, while sharing approaches to tackle the work of the union and embrace new ideas and perspectives.

The session then focused on why it is important to come together across generations to make positive change and sustainability in our Bargaining Units. Noted one leader, "we must overcome our perceived differences and be united – our collective power is our strength, so we must

build relationships with our fellow ONA members to reach and see our values in practice." Facilitators guided leaders on how to accomplish this by going where your Bargaining Unit members are, listening with intention, asking them about their issues instead of telling them what they should care about, and building a meaningful relationship where mobilizing is based on common issues.

Finally, delegates were guided on how to have these one-on-one discussions with their members and practised in small groups. During the subsequent report back to the full plenary, one story in particular had many in tears. One Local leader described how she didn't think she could continue in her demanding role, but ONA President Erin Ariss inspired her to reconsider and the exemplary education offered by our union made her feel like she could.



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