

BULLETIN

## Conventions: an important democratic tradition

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Annual Convention is an opportunity to meet with the many friends who are committed to advancing our union, and a time to participate in the supreme governing body of our union. As I write this, the convention is five weeks away, but we will be in the middle of the proceedings when *The Report* bearing this column is distributed.

I expect this year's convention to be an exciting one. In addition to receiving reports, hearing about bargaining, debating constitutional and financial changes, re-connecting with old friends and meeting new ones ... we have a very full agenda. Over 40 resolutions were forwarded for consideration to the 1998 Convention and we expect each and every resolution to be debated. Conventions are democracy in action. It is very important that members appreciate the importance of the role in attending convention and take the opportunity to participate in the democratic processes to ensure the union remains a vehicle for advancing the wishes of HSA members.

Conventions are also an opportunity to bring all of HSA together. We are a provincial union and a great deal of our strength and achievements flows from having a provincial presence. And while the geographic reality can be a challenge, convention provides a structure where we can see our union as a whole. Members work in the North, the Kootenays, the Lower Mainland and on the Island; in large and small facilities; in transition homes, children's services and acute care ... at the end of the day we are members of HSA. Convention is a vehicle that brings us together to celebrate in the work we all do in the union.

I have been at enough conventions to know better than to anticipate the convention's direction on any particular issue. Your elected representatives take direction from the convention and are energised by the enthusiasm that follows from it. Convention is not just a time for accountability over last year's events, it is also a time for renewal and re-commitment for the year ahead. This springs anticipated deliberations augur well for the year ahead as our commitment to democratic participation and control moves forward.

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