

**EXECUTIVE BOARD  
- COPE Local 343-**

**President**  
Kelly Belbin

**Vice-President**  
Casey Oraa

**Secretary-Treasurer**  
Tina MacPherson

**Recording Secretary**  
Pauline Fitzgerald

**Members at large**  
Tanya La Rush  
Kevin Mayers  
Ronda Allan

**Youth Member at large**  
Vanitha Ethiraju

**Equity Members**  
Lorraine Boucher  
Guled Warsame

**Trustees**  
Ashley Kirby  
Tiffany Main  
Marilyn Smith

**COPE Local 343**  
555 Richmond Street West  
PO Box 1202, Suite 1108  
Toronto, ON M5V 3B1  
Tel: 416-703-4448  
1-888-224-5553  
Fax: 416-703-8520

**Email:**  
office@cope343.com

**Website:**  
www.cope343.com

It's no secret that our local is one of the most politically active locals you can find in the labour movement. One of the reasons for that is because of the talent pool we draw from.

So how does a union full of organizers put on a conference? Simple, by bringing together some of the greatest minds in political campaigning and organizing.

Whether it was the leaders of the Bernie Sanders campaign, some of Toronto's rising political stars, voices from the Indigenous movement, organizers using the latest technology or the election readiness provided by the NDP—our members took away a lot of lessons which we plan to implement directly in our communities.



Members got to hear from union leaders that smashed barriers in their workplaces and in the movement itself. Of course the highlight of the night was a keynote presentation offered by Canada's greatest living orator and a lion of the left-wing, Stephen Lewis.

These presentations, workshops and social events left us all with the conclusion that our union has enormous capacity for change in our communities, in our political system and in the labour movement.

Coming away from the incredible weekend we remain more determined than ever to make that change happen.

I'd like offer a special thank you to every single unit member who put in countless hours to make this conference such an incredible success.



## Young Workers in Action Summit

Submitted by: Vanitha Ethiraju

January 19, 2018 was a day like no other. Our local had the pleasure of holding a Young Workers in Action Summit at the Marriott Yorkville in downtown Toronto. We had 18 young workers participate and for many of them it was their first COPE 343 event. We started off the day with a panel of speakers featuring Felicia Samuel (ONDP candidate for Scarborough-Rouge Park), Joseanne Job (OPSEU Local 527 President, Provincial Young Workers Committee Representative Region 5 and We Own It Campaign mobilizer) and Angela Zhu (Member at Large for the ONDP Executive). These awesome panelists shared their stories and experiences about how they bring the issues that they are passionate about to the table. Topics included social media, public services, running for office and activism.

We were all very engaged and the audience participation was AWESOME!



After the panel we joined the \$15 and Fairness campaign at the University of Toronto St. George Campus (Sidney Smith Hall) for a rally in support of Tim Hortons workers who are being treated unfairly due to the minimum wage increase. For many of the young workers it was their first rally and it was positively received, and hopefully inspired some to be future revolutionists.

In the afternoon we had two breakout sessions. One on the “We Own It” campaign led by Joseanne Job and Ram Selvarajah who are mobilizers for the campaign from OPSEU. The second on organizing run by COPE Ontario organizer Aminah Sheikh.

The highlight of the day was the sign making competition. The young workers were asked to create signs based on several themes for the Women’s March at Nathan Philips Square. These

signs were not only impressive but they stood out in the crowd.

I have to say this was one of the most rewarding events in our Local and I feel very positive and hopeful about the future of our union. We have some amazing young activists in the making and I encourage all of you – young or experienced to get involved whether it be as a steward or joint health and safety committee member. It’s the little changes that make a huge difference!



## AGM 2018

Reminder...June 16 and 17, 2018 is our next AGM at Marriott Gateway by the Falls. We are looking forward to a fantastic weekend.



## Young Workers Equity Forum

If you think being in Niagara Falls isn’t awesome enough, we will be having some great discussion around equity, anti-racism, and how young workers can lead the charge in creating change!

**When:** Friday, June 15, 2018 (1 pm – 5 pm)

**Where:** Marriott Gateway by the Falls

Don’t think twice about it, just sign up!

**Note:** There is no limit on how many young workers can attend, however for the AGM, each bargaining unit is entitled to one youth seat (anyone under 30). If more than one youth in your unit is interested in attending, please submit their name to [office@cope343.com](mailto:office@cope343.com) where an additional five seats will be drawn. The Elections Committee will determine a process for selecting delegates (Article 12.8 of the Constitution).

**Questions?** Please email [youngworkers@cope343.com](mailto:youngworkers@cope343.com)

## AGM Resolutions

The Executive Board has discussed four resolutions for the members' consideration. The proposed amendments to the Local's Policy and Procedures involve two 'housekeeping' matters regarding the Standing Agenda for Executive Board meetings; providing clarity to travel and per diems, and adding the category of 'labour donations' to the donation policy.



## Constitution Corner

You are not seeing double, there are currently two Constitutions on our website. One of them is the version marked "pending approval," which reflects the resolutions passed at the Local's 2017 Convention. It is awaiting confirmation from COPE National.

Once this version is approved, the Constitution Committee will be doing some housekeeping to the document. Namely, it will be changing Annual General Meeting (AGM) to Biennial General Meeting (BGM), as this meeting is held every other year.

If you are wondering how the Constitution Committee can amend the Constitution outside of Convention, the answer is a housekeeping resolution passed at the 2015 Convention. This resolution authorizes the Constitution Committee to make changes provided the changes do not alter the intent of provision.

## NEW Resource—Delegate and Alternate Information Sheet



The Executive Board has prepared an information sheet about what the Local expects of the members who attend conventions or events as a COPE Local 343 delegate or alternate. You will find it on the Resources page of our website.

We hope you find the information helpful. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for other topics that may be of interest.

## COPE National Mid-Term Conference

*Submitted by: Lisa Hawkins*

For those with a chance to attend a COPE National Mid-term Conference in future, it's an opportunity not to be missed!

Several of us from COPE Local 343 had the privilege of attending the most recent event in Victoria, British Columbia, this past February. The February 2018 conference featured a range of presentations including a keynote address by Irene Lanzinger, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour discussing collaborations between labour and the New Democratic Party in the province and a workshop on recognizing and responding to domestic violence co-presented by Patty Clancy, Director of COPE Ontario.

The highlight of the conference, however, was an interactive workshop led by two facilitators, one First Nations and the other Metis, employed as Aboriginal Education Workers with the B.C. public school system. While "Truth and Reconciliation" may only be (yet another) vague federal government initiative to Ontarians, in British Columbia, where more than ten percent of the student population self-identifies as aboriginal, they are living the act of healing every day.



For those out of province attendees, we received an intimate and moving example of how students, workers and families alike are recognizing the truth and choosing to move forward. So taken were many of the participants several rose to apologize personally for the trauma inflicted by the then Catholic Church and government of the day...much of which still reverberates today.

## PAC Training Retreat

*Submitted by: Ryan Donnelly*

What does a political activist even do?

While we are facing two elections this year and are working hard to support and encourage our members to get involved, it's important to recognize that not all political action focuses on elections. In fact, given the nature of many of our workplaces even defining what political action is becomes nearly impossible.

We had a retreat in Oshawa and took the opportunity to find out what being an activist means outside of the electoral world. We focused on what it takes to build a movement, within our communities and within our workplaces. Our members had the extraordinary pleasure of learning directly from long-time community activist, president of the Toronto Environmental Alliance and co-founder of CAWSI, Walied Khogali, as well as the OFL's Director of Political Action and Outreach, Melisa Bayon. These incredible community activists gave our members tools we could use to engage with those who are angry but not engaged and tap into their passions and frustrations. We were encouraged to turn these feelings into action and ultimately into. Whether that meant activism over issues in our communities, campaigns of the labour movement or simply organizing against injustice and unfairness in our workplaces the tools were the same.

With members coming from as far away as Halifax we were able to use this opportunity to unlock the abilities within ourselves to become change makers. As we all go back to our respective workplaces we have a new sense of what we're capable of doing when we work together and the tools to make it possible.

I don't know if the original question becomes harder to answer after taking this training but I do know our union is stronger for it.

## 2018 Elections

So how do you think Premier Ford is doing?



Can you believe Premier Wynne won again and is selling off even more of our public assets?

Do these possible outcomes scare you? Don't worry – us too. Thankfully, we have another choice.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP have worked hard to put forward a progressive and bold vision for change in Ontario. Given the staff of the NDP are not only our members but the only unionized employees of a political party in our province, our union is unapologetic in support of our party but this time is different. The members of our union are organizing in new and innovative ways not seen elsewhere in the labour movement.

And we invite you to be part of the change.

Regardless of your skill level, previous activism history or time commitments – we need every bit of help we can get. If you have a bit of time to spare, all you have to do is email our committee. We'll connect you with a local campaign that's working to bring change to your community and get you connected with the work activists are doing in your riding. Whether you've worked several campaigns or none at all, there's a place for everyone and we encourage you to join us to change Ontario for the better.

If you want to be involved, email Ryan at [pac@cope343.com](mailto:pac@cope343.com)!

## Retirements

Heather Lockhart and Paulette Nagle both recently retired. Sisters, we wish you a healthy and happy retirement!





## CLC Lobby Day

*Submitted by: Tanya LaRush*

On February 6, 2018 the Canadian Labour Congress coordinated the largest, in their history,



an all-affiliate lobby on Parliament Hill. By most accounts the event was a success and some of us in our local were part of the 196 scheduled meetings with 325+ other union members, as we carried out the messages of creating a national pharmacare program, worker/pensioner protection when employers file for bankruptcy, fixing our EI system and to legislate pay equity nation wide. Initial reports indicate that the MPs and Senators that met with us strongly supported our messages. In the near future the CLC will hold these Members of Parliament accountable and will continue to open dialogue and to press them on these issues. This was my first lobby effort. I've always been the support staff behind the scenes making the arrangements for my employer but this year I was able to voice my opinion and concerns to the decision makers. In addition to making our voices heard around these issues, the comradery and networking with other like-minded folks set the tone for what I forecast to be a successful road to equity, security and inclusion for the labour movement.

## 2018 Scholarship Application

COPE Local 343 has an annual scholarship fund in the amount of \$3000. This fund is to help offset the costs for members and their children who have been accepted at or are enrolled in post-secondary education, including but not limited to trade schools, colleges, universities and professional designations.

Folks who wish to apply must fill out an application and submit an essay (500-750 words)

or a work of art (illustration, painting, song, etc.) and description of the piece that is in line with the topic/theme. This year's topic/theme is around social justice and youth—please see the application for details.

Following the application deadline, the Executive Board will review the applications and decide on the successful applicants. At their discretion, the Board can choose to disburse the fund to a maximum of 6 applicants.

Deadline to apply is June 15, 2018. Complete details can be found on the application form. A copy of the application form has been enclosed with the physical mail out of the newsletter.



To obtain additional copies of the form, please visit the Local's website at [www.cope343.com](http://www.cope343.com).

## Local 343 Workplace and Membership Survey

In the past, Local 343 has conducted surveys following events as well as to gain insight into the needs and desires of our membership. As part of our continued commitment to understanding the membership, their experiences and hearing from them on what they're looking for, Local 343 will soon be launching its first ever comprehensive survey - the Local 343 Workplace and Membership Survey!

The Survey is composed of two parts. "Your Workplace and You," asks questions that pertain to your experiences in your workplace. "Your Union and You," explores your experiences as a member of your union.

What about your confidentiality you ask? That is something that is very important to the Local. Rest assured, all information will remain anonymous and will be presented in aggregate form.

As we want to show our appreciation to members for taking the time to fill out the survey, there will be participation prizes being offered.

Keep your eyes peeled as we'll be rolling out the survey in the coming months!

## Happy May Day 2018 Labour Day is on the Horizon

Taking place annually on May 1, May Day (aka International Workers' Day),



is a global day of observation and celebration of workers. The roots of May Day are found in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when workers successfully organized and rose up to fight for an eight-hour workday. We continue to observe and celebrate May Day to not only recognize the history of the day but also, to note the struggles we collectively face and fight against as workers in a capitalist society.

Also, please make sure to mark your calendar as Labour Day 2018 is on the horizon! This year, Labour Day is taking place on Monday, September 3 and once again, members of Local 343 will be participating in the Toronto parade as well as in communities across the country!

The Local is once again looking for Labour Day Leads, members willing to organize the Local 343 contingent for their community, so if you're interested, keep your eyes open as we'll be sending a call out in the near future!

### Fall School 2017

*Submitted by: Ronda Allan*

On October 27 and 28, 2017, COPE Local 343 hosted its first ever Fall School. Held at the Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport, the two-day event was a huge success with 35 members in attendance.

Fall School offered members the choice of one out of four courses to attend. The topics included Mental Health; Indigenous Cultural Competency; WSIB/Mental Health and Anti-Oppression. After an opening plenary, the members went to their respective course which engaged them for the following day and a half.

On the Friday evening, members were invited to a screening of the film *A Better Man*, a documentary starring Attiya Khan who revisits a past relationship in which her boyfriend abused her on a daily basis. Khan wants to know how her ex remembers their relationship and whether he will take responsibility for the abuse. Due to the serious and sensitive nature of the content, Gary Drenfeld, renowned social worker and speaker, was on-hand to field any questions or concerns the audience had.

Fall School 2017 was jammed packed with goodness that always includes bonding with fellow members.

### Donation

At our Political Action Conference in January, we were very fortunate to have Stephen Lewis speak to our members.



To thank him, the Local made a donation to African Children's Book Box Society. The Society sent the Local a beautiful thank you card and advised our donation will be used to purchase equipment for the Flame Tree Vocational School in Tanzania.



The building of the Flame Tree Vocational School in Karatu District, Tanzania