



# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO AND CLC

No. 481

Issue 4, Winter 2002-03

## Local 4873 organizes Nonpareil potato factory

### *For the first time, workers have a voice on the job*

**I**TPE, OPEIU Local 4873 has won a big organizing victory, as workers at the Nonpareil potato processing plant voted 271-115 on Wednesday, December 4 for representation by the Industrial Technical and Professional Employees Union (ITPE), OPEIU, Local 4873, Savannah, Ga. There are 472 workers in the bargaining unit at the Blackfoot, Idaho plant.

The workers at Nonpareil had never had union representation before, and the workers have suffered low wages and have been "treated poorly by their employer," according to ITPE Organizing Director Dennis Arrington. "These workers wanted a voice in the workplace, and now they have it," Arrington said.

The organizing drive began approximately two months earlier after a worker at the



Local 30 Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer Walter Allen, Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 648 Organizer Mike Hoover, ITPE, OPEIU Local 4873 Organizing Director Dennis Arrington, and Plumbers Local 648 Training Coordinator/Organizer Michael Breed join the demonstration at Nonpareil.

plant contacted ITPE. Talks between the union and Nonpareil employees began shortly thereafter.

"We formed an organizing committee of about 50 employees," Arrington said. "And there are so many responsible for this win. We have to thank the workers for contacting us and beginning this whole process. An employee of King B Jerky in Idaho Falls that helped in the recent organizing win there used that experience to help organize Nonpareil. Just as at King B, the majority of the employees are Hispanic, so a translator went to all organizing meetings. A worker representative was also a guest for ten segments on a local Spanish radio station where callers' questions were answered about the union and benefits of representation."

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## NLRB sustains Local 153's objections in Prudential case

### *Landmark decision calls for new election*

**I**n a historic judgment that affects OPEIU and countless other unions in the future, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that OPEIU, Local 153 was correct in objecting to a disputed election in April at Prudential, reports Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan. A new election is expected in the coming months.

Local 153 challenged the election results because Prudential had disallowed employees to communicate with each other over the company's e-mail system about the election and other union activities, under the auspices of a newly instituted no solicitation/communication rule. Moreover, Prudential enforced this new rule in a discriminatory fashion by allowing company supervisors and managers to communicate with each other regarding union activities and to solicit votes against OPEIU.

The NLRB ruled that Prudential's policy of prohibiting employees from using the

company e-mail system to communicate about union-related matters is, "overly broad and interferes with and restrains employees in the exercise of their rights under Section 7 of the [National Labor Relations Act.]" Section 7 clearly states that employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining. For example, the judgment stated that because many of the Prudential employees work from home on their own computers or laptops and set their own hours, communicating about union-related matters should not interfere with Prudential's core business.

Another tenet in the ruling examined whether Prudential's anti-union practices

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## Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis dies in car accident



Carol Dupuis

**T**ragically, on Tuesday, December 31, as the result of injuries sustained in a car accident on Christmas Day, Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis, age 42, beloved wife of Michel Dupuis and loving mother of 2-year-old son Alexander, passed away. She was the dearly loved daughter of Ann and Lawrence Olive, and sisters Linda and Sandra. Carol was the cherished aunt to Vanessa and Rob and will be sorely missed by many aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and thousands of OPEIU members in Canada and the United States.

Before being elected Secretary-Treasurer, Carol held the post of Staff Representative for the Central Ontario Council. Her career in labor began with her employment at the Union of National Defense Employees in 1979. Carol was a member of OPEIU, Local 225 in Ottawa, Ontario.

Tributes to Carol Dupuis will be published in the next issue of *White Collar*.

## ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

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|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
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# OPEIU Local 277 recognizes contributions of J.B. Moss

## Conference room dedicated to late union leader; political action fund renamed

In recognition of the many outstanding contributions of International Vice President J.B. Moss, OPEIU Local 277 has dedicated in his name the boardroom at the offices of the local in Fort Worth, Texas. OPEIU's Political Action Fund has also been renamed in Moss' honor. Moss died in April 2001.

"We are here today to dedicate this meeting room in memory of J.B. Moss, a great man who made a tremendous contribution to the growth and success of Local 277, the OPEIU and the labor movement," said International President Michael Goodwin at a dedication ceremony of the J.B. Moss Meeting Room on November 7, 2002. "Dedicating this room in his name appropriately memorializes that growth and that success," Goodwin said.

"J.B. dedicated his life to the labor movement, its members, its objectives and its ideals. It is therefore proper for us to gather here tonight to remember him, to miss him, to honor him and to make sure that the contributions he made to the members of Local 277 and the labor movement are never forgotten," Goodwin said.

"By renaming this room in the memory of J.B. Moss, we are all saying collectively tonight that we loved him and appreciate everything that he did to improve the quality of life for so many workers," Goodwin said.

### A life of service

Moss spent his life on behalf of working people. He began his career in military service. In 1954, J.B. entered the aviation branch of the Army as a flight crew member on rotary wing aircraft, better known as helicopters. After military service, he was

employed by the Convair Company working the second shift, while at the same time earning his Bachelor of Science degree from Texas Christian University Business School. While at Convair, he was a member of the Machinists Lodge 776, a committeeman and Recording Secretary of the union.

In early 1957, he transferred to St. Louis to work for McDonald Aircraft, maintaining his IAM membership. Upon his return to Texas later that year, J.B. took a job at Chance Vought and became a member of UAW Local 893. He returned to Convair in May 1958 — this time in a job covered by Local 277 — to work in the company's logistical support department, also known as "spare parts." Once again, he became active in the union as a committeeman on the grievance committee and served as Sergeant-at-Arms and Chairman of the negotiating committee.

In October 1960, at the age of 25, he was elected President/Business Manager of Local 277 — a position he held until 1990. From 1990 until his death, Moss served as Local 277 Business Manager.

"When J.B. was elected to serve Local 277 at the tender age of 25, he already had packed a lot of living — and a lot of union experience — into his life, but there was a lot more yet to come," Goodwin said.

Upon his election, he immediately announced his intention to move the local forward with the strong belief that sound business methods could also be applied to labor unions — providing growth and advancement of wages and working conditions of union members. He reached out to the labor movement in Tarrant County, asking their help in the growth of Local 277 — and grow it did!



Kevin Kistler, OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services; Carol Dupuis, OPEIU International Secretary-Treasurer; Becky Turner, President/Business Manager, Local 277; Michael Goodwin, OPEIU International President; Margo Peel, Secretary-Treasurer, Local 277; and Martha Moss, wife of J.B. Moss, at the dedication.

Moss led Local 277 to numerous organizing successes highlighted by the organization of American Income Life Insurance Company. With the bargaining unit at General Dynamics as its foundation, Local 277 was in a position to be a strong voice for all office and professional employees. Over the years, many difficult negotiations took place and, in some cases, work stoppages had to be threatened to enforce member demands. "J.B.'s knowledge of labor relations was so vast that he often outshined everyone in the room. The employers had the greatest respect for his knowledge and ability," Goodwin observed.

Moss appeared on television to debate with company officials right-to-work laws in Texas. "Anyone who knew J.B. can easily guess who won that debate," Goodwin said. "There was no one in the union with a greater ability to debate issues than him."

Moss was also a leader in the fight for legal "agency shops" in Texas. The "agency shop" had been considered outlawed in Texas because of right-to-work laws, however, Moss and other unions argued that the "agency shop" in defense plants such as General Dynamics was legal because many such plants are on federal property, citing that in the early 1940s the state of Texas ceded such property to the federal government in return for the plants being located in Texas, waiving all jurisdictions. General Dynamics was therefore located on a "federal enclave" not

subject to the right-to-work laws of Texas. In fact, as a result of this exception, many unions now enjoy the security of an "agency shop" provision when the employer is located on a "federal enclave."

Moss also championed cutting issues of the day such as the 35-hour workweek, the four-day workweek, child care for working parents and disability pay for workers on maternity leave. He was hailed in 1966 for negotiating a first-in-the-nation contract provision providing childcare allowances for working parents.

"That's why J.B. was so important in his role as International Vice President," Goodwin said. "He was a familiar figure at OPEIU conventions and I don't think you could find anyone who ever attended a convention who doesn't remember J.B. Moss."

"As Chairman of the constitution and laws committee he had the ability to explain the constitutional changes with brevity, simplicity and humor. And there was no one in the union who understood more of the necessity for the union to be involved in political action," Goodwin continued. "He professed it everyday of his life and was able to convince Local 277 members to participate. In fact, no other person or local union has done more to raise political action funds than J.B. Moss and Local 277," Goodwin said.

"That's why the International Union has renamed our political action fund in his name," Goodwin concluded.



Family of the late J.B. Moss gather at the memorial service, including J.B.'s parents, L.B. and Hazel Moss (far left), wife, Martha (fifth from the left), and daughter Shelly Moss (far right).

## Local 277 member receives LCLAA award

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) Chicago Metro Chapter President Jose Caez presents OPEIU, Local 277 member and American Income Life public relations representative Sue Gilbert with a LCLAA Community Service Award.

Congratulations to Gilbert on this great honor.





## OPEIU charters MAGE Local 2002



International President Michael Goodwin joins in as International Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis presents the MAGE Board of Directors with the OPEIU charter for Local 2002. Pictured (left to right) are: Kevin Kistler, OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services; Theresa Horner, OPEIU International Vice President; Goodwin; Dupuis; Sharon Luce, MAGE President; Y'von Forehand, MAGE President-Elect; Dale Threehouse, MAGE First Vice President; and Mille Hall, OPEIU International Vice President.

OPEIU has issued a charter to the Michigan Association of Governmental Employees (MAGE), OPEIU Local 2002, thus completing the affiliation of more than 1,300 state employees working in managerial, supervisory or confidential classifications. The affiliation was effective October 1, 2002. MAGE members range from wardens of the state prisons to directors of psychiatry at state mental hospitals.

Leaders from OPEIU and MAGE praised the affiliation. "We are pleased to present this charter to MAGE Local 2002," Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis said, "and are looking forward to a long and fruitful affiliation."

"We know that, in the public sector, our strength is in numbers," said John DeTizio, MAGE Labor Relations Director. "We know that the more members we represent, the more clout we will have when we call upon our legislators



OPEIU International Vice President Millie Hall, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler, International President Michael Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis, and International Vice President Theresa Horner meet with the MAGE Board of Directors.

to protect our benefits or our job security, or to even conjure up another early retirement.

"Though all of these discussions, one thought remained at the forefront," DeTizio said. "The one key goal — the primary focus of any union — should be to become bigger, more powerful, more influential, while maintaining the highest level of representation," he said.

Included in the agreement is the understanding that OPEIU will assist and support

MAGE in building its membership base through organizing and will provide consultation with OPEIU legal counsel, access to research, education services and labor-related publications. In addition, OPEIU will make available information published or disseminated by the AFL-CIO Department of Professional Employees. MAGE employees in good standing will be eligible to participate in all member benefit programs.

## Are we in good hands with Allstate?

### **National Labor Relations Board dismisses OPEIU petition to organize Allstate Insurance agents; OPEIU appeals**

Region 13 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recently dismissed a petition filed by OPEIU to organize and unionize 10,000 Allstate insurance agents. OPEIU is appealing the decision to the five-member NLRB in Washington, D.C.

As reported in a front-page article in the Bureau of National Affairs' (BNA) *Daily Labor Report*, NLRB Region 13 Director, Elizabeth Kinney, ruled that the agents who sell policies for Allstate are deemed independent contractors, therefore exempting

them from the National Labor Relations Act. In her findings, Kinney stated that the agents have, "substantial entrepreneurial opportunity for gain or loss." The article also mentioned that the agents "have a proprietary interest in their work, hire their own employees, determine their own advertising strategies, decide the amount and type of work they will engage in on behalf of their agencies, and are compensated solely by commission."

OPEIU plans to argue to the NLRB that the Allstate agents are employees that should be covered under the National Labor

Relations Act. "The employee characteristics clearly outweigh independent contractor characteristics," OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin said.

Allstate converted 6,500 employee agents to independent contractor status; this restructuring followed an earlier conversion of another 3,500 agents to independent contractor status. Both groups of agents lost all their benefits, including health insurance, profit sharing and a 401(k) plan, among other benefits.

In a *Daily Labor Report* article from August that detailed OPEIU's reasoning for

the petition, a former Allstate agent stated that the company has put further restrictions on the agents, including setting the hours they have to work, requiring them to use certain phone companies, and terminating them for no reason.

We hope that the NLRB will hear OPEIU's appeal as soon as possible.

Special thanks to General Counsel Melvin Schwarzwald and attorney Todd Smith of Schwarzwald and McNair for the great job they did in presenting a very difficult and lengthy case to the Regional NLRB in Chicago, Ill.

## AFL-CIO hosts photo exhibit honoring 9/11 working heroes

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) sponsored a photography exhibit paying tribute to the working men and women involved in the rescue, recovery, and clean-up operations following the terrorism attacks of September 11, 2001. This commemorative collection of pictures was on display in the lobby of the AFL-CIO building in Washington, D.C., September 4-19, 2002.

The exhibition marking the one-year anniversary of the tragedy is named *When Duty Calls: A Tribute to the FDNY and the Heroes of 9/11*. The pictures were taken by labor photographer Earl Dotter. With the use of his camera, Dotter tells the stories of the courageous rescue workers and tireless clean-up crews. Through his lenses unfold the horrific devastation that workers were exposed to at Ground Zero, scenes of

sorrow and exhaustion at the surrounding area fire stations, and a few of the many memorials displayed by workers and citizens alike. Many

of the workers involved in the humanitarian effort were union brothers and sisters. There were pictures of everyday union members work-

ing under extraordinary circumstances. The photos depicted Iron Workers cutting through twisted steel, Teamsters hauling away tons of debris, Communication Workers reconnecting down transmissions, and Operating Engineers clearing out a structure that all of these workers once proudly built.

Similar scenes were unfortunately realized in Washington, D.C., with the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon, and in western Pennsylvania from the failed attack against targets in the Nation's Capital due to the courageous actions of the passengers aboard the flight.

Even in times of despair, the American spirit is triumphant. This was tested on September 11, 2001. The challenge was met head on. The working men and women were united and their solidarity was captured on film to be shared, honored and not to be forgotten.



The AFL-CIO's photo exhibit honoring the working heroes of September 11.

## Local 32 honors Pat Tully with retirement dinner

More than 200 friends, family, and union members came out to honor Pat Tully at his retirement dinner after 23 years as Business Manager of OPEIU, Local 32, Union, New Jersey.

The dinner was held at the East Brunswick Hilton in New Jersey and featured several distinguished speakers, including International President Michael Goodwin. Also in attendance were Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis, Vice Presidents Richard Lanigan and Mary Mahoney, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler, and many others from the International office, Local 153 and Local 6.

President Goodwin spoke of Tully's untiring efforts in fighting for OPEIU members and their families. He also cited Tully's contributions during his 11 years as a Vice President from Region II on the OPEIU

International Executive Board and his commitment to helping the OPEIU grow through organizing, noting that Tully is a two-time recipient of the prestigious Henderson B. Douglas award for excellence in organizing. Later in the program Dupuis honored Tully by presenting him with a gift from the International Union in recognition of his contributions to the OPEIU.

Former New Jersey State Democratic Chairman Thomas Giblin told the audience of his long association with Tully and said the labor movement in New Jersey is better off and a lot stronger because of his contributions on behalf of working families.

The Executive Board of Local 32 also presented a retirement gift to Tully and his wife of 38 years, Roseann.

At the end of the evening Tully thanked the gathering for honoring him and thanked

all of those in Local 32 who helped in its growth. He also spoke of the privilege of working with two outstanding OPEIU Presidents, first John Kelly and then Mike

Goodwin, who helped in the growth of Local 32 from 1,500 members when Tully started in 1979 to more than 6,500 when he retired in May 2002.



Retiring Local 32 Business Manager Pat Tully thanks his guests for honoring him.



Local 32's officers present a retirement gift to Pat Tully. Pictured (left to right) are Local 32 President Ed Andryszczyk, Secretary-Treasurer Steven Tully, Vice President Juanita Ray, Recording Secretary Mary Short, and Pat Tully.



OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis present Pat Tully with a retirement gift from the International Union. Also pictured is Local 32 President Ed Andryszczyk (seated).

## Local 509 members forced on strike

On November 5, 2002, members of OPEIU, Local 509 in Elkhart, Ind. were forced on strike by their employer, Dynamic Metal Forming Inc. The local and the company had engaged in thirteen days of contract talks before the members were forced to reject the company's final contract offer.

The company is attempting to substantially modify the collective bargaining agreement by seeking major concessions on a whole host of issues including wages, health, dental and prescription benefits, management rights language, mandatory overtime, reduction of hours, attendance and tardiness policies, drug and alcohol policies, vacation pay and carry-over, severance pay, subcontracting, hours of work, job selection, holiday pay, productivity pay, short term disability and medical leaves of absence. In other words, the company is attempting to rip up the contract.

Since the start of the strike, the company has engaged in numerous union busting tactics including the use of inexperienced replacement workers (a.k.a. scabs or rats). "Dynamic Metal Forming should be ashamed of itself," Local 509 President Jeff Ulrey said. "Instead of dealing fairly and honestly with their employees...they have sought instead to do great harm."

In response to the company's actions, the union has erected a monument to stand as a symbol of the behavior of the company. On December 5, the union inflated a fifteen-foot rat in front of Dynamic Metal Forming, which has been nicknamed, "Perkie the Big Fat

Dynamic Rat" by the striking union members.

The union members have been very strong in the face of all the adversity, which included an attempt to run over Brother Ulrey by a pickup truck exiting the plant at high speed. He was hit by the truck and taken to the hos-

pital for treatment and released. Brother Ulrey is now proudly back marching on the picket line. Despite the pressure, poor weather and the holiday season the workers have vowed to remain strong until a fair and equitable contract is won!



"Perkie the Big Fat Dynamic Rat" lends his support to striking workers.



## Local 30 officers elected; new era begins

The campaigns are over, the ballots are counted and the members of Local 30, Los Angeles, California, have made their choices. Trustee Walter Allen Jr. has been elected to a three-year term as Local 30 Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer and Marianne Tegio has been elected President.

"All the candidates worked very hard to reach out to members in all of our units to inspire them to cast their votes and be involved," Allen said. "Getting more and more members involved has been our hallmark, and will continue to be."

"I believe the members have seen the changes in our Union and approve," Tegio said. "The election results certainly show that members have confidence in the current leadership, and these officers will not disappoint the members."

Cathy Evans, newly elected Vice President, added, "I have watched this Union completely turn around and become strong again. Walter Allen has provided the leadership needed at exactly the time we needed it most. I am very

proud to have the chance to serve again as Vice President and be a part of this team."

Congratulations to all newly elected Local 30 officers. They are Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer Walter Allen Jr.; President Marianne Tegio; Vice President Catherine

Evans; Recording Secretary Marion Ritchie; Executive Board Members, Los Angeles, Carol J. Cancino, Marcia Salazar and Eddie Taylor; Executive Board Members, San Diego, Carmen Corral, Hector Peralta and Susan Smith; Executive Board Member,

California Service Center, Josie Calhoun; Trustees, Kathleen Doyle, Iva Gathwright and Nelson LaPoint.

At the December 9 installation of officers, President Goodwin lifted the voluntary trusteeship, which was in affect since April 2001.



International President Michael Goodwin administers the Oath of Office to the newly elected officers on December 9, 2002.

## Local 4873 organizes Nonpareil potato factory

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Arrington also thanked Local 4873 Business Representatives/Organizers Maureen Alsheimer and Joe Serrano, who were also

instrumental in the organizing campaign.

The organizing win was front-page news in Blackfoot, as *The Morning News* reported Arrington as saying that "we're here to help

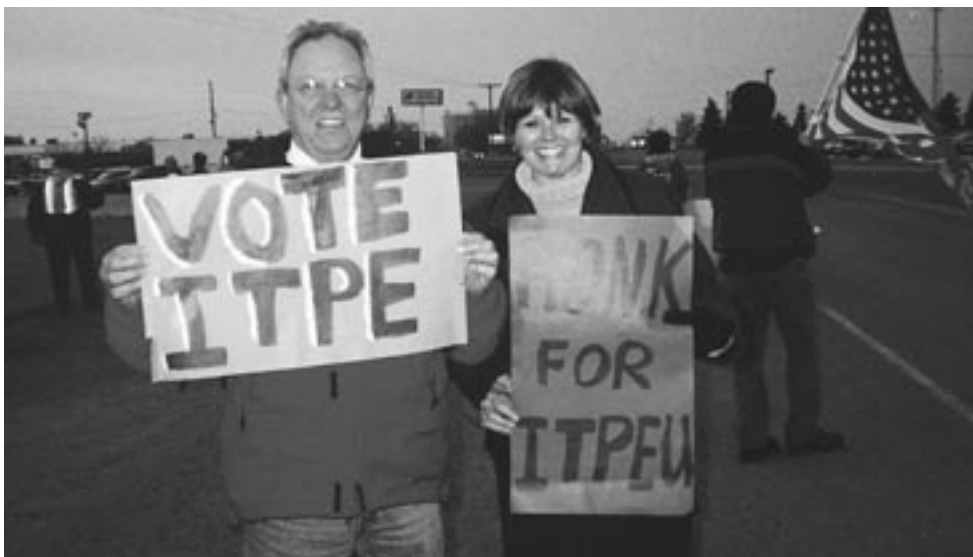
them build a negotiating foundation that will give them a voice in the workplace."

The article also reported Local 4873's recent organizing success for workers at the King B Jerky plant in Idaho Falls. Workers there voted 121-49 in favor of unionizing on August 9.

On the day of the vote, about 40 workers and ITPE representatives stood along the roadside near Nonpareil waving signs urging employees to vote in favor of representation and chanting, "Si, se puede," or "Yes, we can." Workers also honked their horns in support as they went in and out of the plant.

ITPE will now set a date for negotiations with the company. Issues will include better wages,

health insurance—the company currently offers workers insurance, but this insurance is inadequate—and better working conditions.



Arrington and ITPE Local 4873 Business Representative/Organizer Maureen Alsheimer at the demonstration.



Arrington and Sylvia Lora, an Nonpareil employee.



Cosme Sanchez, from the recently organized King B Jerky plant, supports the Nonpareil employees during their organizing campaign.



Liliana Gomez, an employee of King B Jerky, lending her support at the demonstration.

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Official Organ of  
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC  
<http://www.opei.org>

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WHITE COLLAR (ISSN 0043-4876) is published quarterly by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Subscription Price \$1 a Year

# West/Northwest and Northeast Educational Conferences stress organizing, effective negotiation techniques

OPEIU Educational Conferences continue to help our members gain valuable insights and information to help them in their organizing, negotiation and overall communication activities on behalf of their local unions.

The West/Northwest Area Educational Conference held in Seattle, Washington, October 4-5, offered training on organizing tactics and strategies. Sessions included a discussion of basic sources for corporate investigations led by Rick Rehberg from the AFL-CIO FAST Department; organizing/neutrality agreements led by Attorney Lawrence Schwerin and e-mail issues in organizing campaigns led by Attorney Robert Lavitt, both of the law firm Schwerin Campbell Barnard, LLP.

An orientation segment was also held on the benefits available to OPEIU members through the Union Privilege Benefits Program, along with a segment on what members can do to effectively participate in the political process. The Northeast Area Educational Conference was held in Providence, Rhode Island on November 23-24, and emphasized effective negotiation and communication skills through a discussion with Professor of Law Charles B. Wiggins of the University of San Diego School of Law.

As always, there was the opportunity at both conferences to meet with International President Michael Goodwin to discuss local issues and concerns. The International also provided \$600 to each local union that participated in the conference.



Members participate in the West/Northwest and Northeast Educational Conferences held in Seattle, Washington, October 4-5, 2002 and Providence, Rhode Island on November 23-24.



## Local 2 reaches out to young workers at Youth Fair

OPEIU, Local 2, Washington, D.C., was a major exhibitor at the third annual Labor 2 Youth Fair on Tuesday, November 26, 2002, hosted by FutureForce at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The labor youth fair was an excellent opportunity to share information about union membership and work opportunities with young people just starting to think about their future careers. The labor youth fair, sponsored by the Department of Employment Services, was the creative effort of the Community Services Agency and the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO. FutureForce is the workforce development program of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO that is implemented by the council's Community Services Agency.

The purpose of the Labor 2 Youth Fair is to provide high school students and out-of-school youth with information concerning a wide range of professional careers. The careers focused on unionized occupations,

organized labor and apprenticeships. The students were given Labor 2 Youth passports prepared for the fair by the FutureForce program. The attending youth were encouraged to visit all the exhibit areas and discuss their options when joining the workforce. Once the representatives were able to explain employment settings, technical and specialized terms and skills, and the emphasis of academic skills in today's work place, the students received a stamp for their passports. This was repeated at every booth that they visited and, for most students, this was part of a class assignment.

Local 2 Organizer Lou Wolf and Secretary-Treasurer Michael Cowan were on hand to represent OPEIU. They introduced the students to OPEIU, explained the nature of work of the modern office employee, the various professional careers within the International Union, and the new technical component of union work. In addition, the youth had the opportunity to ask questions about workplace environments, required skills

and concerns about applying their academic skills to tomorrow's workplace. Lou Wolf spoke with so many students that he started to resemble a customs officer with all of the

passports he stamped.

Local 2, which serves the entire Washington metropolitan area, has been involved in all of FutureForce's Labor 2 Youth Fairs.



Local 2 organizer Lou Wolf (right) discusses information about OPEIU with a group of Washington, D.C. high school seniors.



Local 2 Secretary-Treasurer Michael Cowan (left) entertains questions from students.



Local 2 member Geoff Palmer (left) and Local 2 Organizer Lou Wolf attend to the exhibit.

## Joan Anderson retires after 30 years of service

On August 31, 2002 Joan Anderson retired from the Office and Professional Employees International Union. Mrs. Anderson worked for the Secretary-Treasurer's office in Washington, D.C. for 30 years. She was the Welfare and Benefits Coordinator and oversaw all activity relating to OPEIU scholarships.

Throughout her career Joan witnessed the growth of the International from being a relatively small union in the early 1970s to its present expansion of more than 100,000 members in the United States and Canada. During this time period Mrs. Anderson was involved with two major office relocations, from the Continental Building on 14th Street in North West, Washington, D.C. to the AFL-CIO building, a block from the White House and finally to the Washington's office present location on L Street. From Washington, she supported conference personnel through ten triennial conventions and countless executive

board meetings. With the exception of the first International President, Mrs. Anderson worked during the administrations of all OPEIU's Presidents and Secretary-Treasurers.

During her employment with the International she had the opportunity to work with many co-workers and developed some great friendships. Over the years she worked closely with individuals such as Flo Davis, Joan Turner, and OPEIU's late Purchasing Agent Fred Toles.

Throughout the changes that have taken place in her career with OPEIU, there has been one constant: Mrs. Anderson's commitment and loyalty to her work that she demonstrated during her three decades with the Union. This has provided an example for the newer generation of workers in the Secretary-Treasurer's office.

When asked how she will spend her retirement time, Mrs. Anderson mentioned that she will have more time for friends and family, continue her involvement with her church and

various community activities, but mostly will enjoy her new state of relaxation. Joan

Anderson is loved and will be missed by her co-workers.



Joan Anderson on her last day of work in the OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer's office.

## The 107th Congress failed to complete legislation affecting workers and their families

**Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis**

The list of unfinished business in the 107th Congress is long and unsettling for thousands of workers. November 5, 2002 was a day when workers should have gone to the polls and voted for men and women who represented their interests, but the list of winners and losers tells the story: the 108th Congress may just be as non-productive for worker legislation as the 107th Congress.

Left on the battlefield are the following:

|                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Patients' Bill of Rights   | Health Care for the Uninsured         |
| Prescription Drug Benefits | Bankruptcy Reform                     |
| Minimum Wage Increase      | Energy Bill                           |
| Pension Reform             | Mental Health Parity                  |
| Unemployment Compensation  | Medical Malpractice Insurance         |
| Trade Issues               | Taxes (reincorporation/tax avoidance) |

The House and Senate will return on January 7, 2003. Will you write or visit your senator or congressperson's local office to ask for their support for legislation that affects you and your family? Your involvement is vital.

### *Getting involved*

Grassroots involvement significantly amplifies our Union's lobbying efforts. Phone calls and personal letters encouraging your congressional representatives to back labor-friendly measures are invaluable. Elected officials need direct feedback from our members, urging them to sponsor and support OPEIU-endorsed legislation. Every letter counts. Every phone call can make a difference. If you prefer to make written contact, OPEIU strongly advises you to mail all correspondence, as opposed to sending an e-mail. With your support, we can press for more immediate action on key bills awaiting hearings in both the House and Senate.

If you are not sure who your representative is, the following web sites contain links to congressional directories: <http://www.house.gov/writerep> and [http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn\\_faqs.html](http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn_faqs.html). The International Union can also provide a directory of the 108th Congress members.

### **Special mid-term election coverage**

## Republicans regain control of Senate; take control of House

### **Many labor-friendly candidates defeated; labor's future hinges upon membership involvement in political process**

November 5 was indeed a sad day for Democrats, as the Republicans maintained control of the House of Representatives, re-gained control in the Senate and won several key governors' races. President Bush now has an absolute mandate to push through his agenda—one that includes several anti-worker and anti-union initiatives. It is up to us as union members to contact our representatives in Congress and ensure that our voices can still be heard. Here's a quick rundown of key mid-term election results:

#### **GOVERNORS**

The Democrats actually fared quite well this year in governorship elections. The Democrats control governorships in 24 states, Republicans now control 26. This is a net gain of three for the Democrats and a loss of one for the Republicans. Democrats were buoyed by victories in traditional Republican states like Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Democrats also scored upsets in Oregon and Arizona. They took-over seats in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, thought of as key battleground states in presidential elections, and held on to the governorship in the biggest electoral state of them all, California. Republicans were thrilled with their hold on three of the biggest electoral states in the union, Florida, New York and Texas. Republicans scored upsets in traditional Democratic strongholds as Maryland and Massachusetts. They also upset incumbent Georgia governor, Roy Barnes.

#### **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Republicans now control the House of Representatives 228 to 204, with one independent and two members who are undeclared. They expanded their majority during a mid-

term election, which is highly unprecedented. Highly targeted Republicans such as Nancy Johnson in Connecticut, Jim Leach in Iowa, Shelley Moore Capito in West Virginia and Mark Kennedy in Minnesota all won re-election. Democratic incumbents Karen Thurman and Bill Luther were upset in Florida and Minnesota, respectively. Democrats picked up two seats in Maryland, as Christopher Van Hollen upset heavily entrenched incumbent Connie Morella. After the election, Minority Leader Richard Gephardt from Missouri resigned his position. California Democrat Nancy Pelosi won election to become the first woman to lead her party in the House.

#### **SENATE**

The Republicans completed their sweep of power with a strong showing in very high-profile Senate races. Two Democratic incumbents, Max Cleland of Georgia and Jean Carnahan of Missouri were defeated by their Republican rivals, Saxby Chambliss and Jim Talent, respectively. Norm Coleman, the former Mayor of St. Paul, Minnesota upset former Senator Walter Mondale for a seat that was recently vacated by the death of Paul Wellstone. Other key Senate victories for the Republicans included Elizabeth Dole in North Carolina, Lindsey Graham in South Carolina, John Cornyn in Texas, Lamar Alexander in Tennessee and John Sununu in New Hampshire. All was not lost for the Democrats as Mark Pryor upset incumbent Tim Hutchinson in Arkansas. Also, Tim Johnson in South Dakota survived an extremely tight race, and former Senator Frank Lautenberg beat Douglas Forrester in New Jersey to keep that seat Democratic.



# Work and Health

## Hazards of Working in Cold Conditions

By Phillip L. Polakoff, M.D.

**W**orking in cold conditions — whether seasonal or occupational — is a hazard. Outdoor work in winter months adds many more thousands of workers to those exposed routinely throughout the year in their jobs: In cold storage facilities, freezer plants and meat packinghouses.

How does the body respond to cold? What are the health effects of exposure to extreme cold? How can you protect yourself and be more comfortable?

The human body works best at the normal temperature of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. To keep it at this point, the body produces its own heat from chemical energy — by breaking down food and building up molecules in all tissues.

You can lose some of this body heat when you're in a cold situation. To minimize this loss, the body has a few tricks up its sleeve. Did you ever wonder why you shiver when you're cold? Shivering can increase the metabolic rate of heat production 5 to 7 times for short periods of time.

Do you "hunch up" your body when you are cold? That's a way your body is trying to reduce its surface area to help reduce heat loss.

These instinctive external measures, however, are relatively inefficient. The main way the body decreases heat loss is by constricting the blood vessels in the skin and underlying tissues. This "vasoconstriction" leads to a corresponding reduction in the volume of blood reaching the skin.

The nearer to the skin the warm blood gets, of course, the greater the chances of convective heat loss.

Hypothermia is one of the most serious hazards of working in cold conditions. This happens when the core body temperature drops to a level at which normal muscular

and cerebral functions are impaired.

Warning signs of hypothermia include numb hands, particularly to the point of losing fine motor coordination, such as trouble with buttons, laces, zippers and so on; shivering not under voluntary control; slurred speech; difficulty in thinking and irrational behavior.

These signs require immediate attention. Hypothermia can lead to unconsciousness and even death. Each year, more than 700 people die of hypothermia.

Frostbite is a freezing of tissue during exposure to temperatures well below freezing. Usually, the face, hands or feet are affected. The damage can range from mild, superficial tissue damage to massive damage and gangrene.

If you are out in the field, you can treat mild frostbite — frostnip — by firm but gentle pressure of a warm hand, or by placing the affected fingers in the armpit. If toes or heels are affected, take off the footwear, dry and re-warm the affected parts, and put on dry socks or other protective footwear.

Avoid dry heat. Use warm water instead. And never try that old myth about rubbing frostbite with snow. Rubbing of any kind will only increase the damage.

As with any injury, severe cases should be treated by your physician.

Dress in layers. Underwear should be able to trap the body heat, and at the same time, permit moisture to escape.

Next, the insulating layer — shirt, pants, jacket — should contain wool or some of the newer fiberfill materials that can insulate even when damp.

The outer protecting layer can range from nylon to waterproof suits or ponchos. The main purpose of this layer is to protect the other layers from the elements and serve as a windbreak.



## Washington Window

### The Coming War Against Us

**T**he mid-term election is over and labor's allies lost. Now labor's enemies — in and out of the Bush administration — will really launch a war against us.

Already, big business lobbyists are salivating over such things as making it harder for people to repay their debts when medical catastrophes or job loss force them into bankruptcy.

"This is a very bad bill in every respect. With more than eight million workers laid off, unemployment benefits about to run out for thousands and an economy that shows little sign of improving, GOP leaders — backed by the banking and credit industry — are trying ... to hurt thousands of hard-pressed working families at a time when they can least afford it," the UAW legislative department says.

And the bankruptcy bill includes a plan by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) to "jeopardize the ability of unions, civil rights and environmental groups to engage in legitimate picketing and protest," UAW adds.

The Chamber of Commerce wanted the GOP to bring up the final version of the bankruptcy bill in the lame-duck session of Congress last fall.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney says that other issues labor faces in the special session include: GOP President George W. Bush's push to ban unions; a big giveaway in "terrorist insurance" subsidies; and Bush's attempt to ban Davis-Bacon wages for construction workers on homeland security projects.

But all that pales compared to the schemes big business, Bush and the Radical Right may unveil when they go to war against us after the new Congress convenes. Some possibilities:

Davis-Bacon repeal. The anti-worker Associated Builders and Contractors will renew its push to completely junk Davis-Bacon, driving down construction workers' wages.

Company unions. This is a favorite of the Radical Right front group, the National Federation of Independent Business.

Minimum wage. Forget raising the minimum wage, but don't be surprised if

Bush pushes his plan to let states opt out from minimum wage laws.

Comp time for overtime. This is a pet cause of Sen. Christopher Bond (R-Mo.), who may again chair the Senate Small Business Committee. And now he'll have a Missouri ally, GOPer James Talent, who beat Jean Carnahan.

Paycheck deception. Hatch could not attach his plan, to choke workers out of the political process, to the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill last year. Big business loves it. Chances are Hatch will try again.

Privatizing Social Security. GOP operatives told their candidates to soft-pedal this one during the campaign, but it is notable that no Republicans signed an anti-privatization pledge, circulated by labor and its allies.

Now expect big business and its handmaidens to renew their drive to divert one-sixth of Social Security's revenues to the stock market — raking off billions in commissions in the process.

Of course, what the plutocrats and corporate criminals that back Bush and the GOP really want — and have even before it was established in 1935 — is to abolish Social Security entirely.

Even worse? We wouldn't be surprised to see even more radical plans from the Radical Right than we've outlined above.

After all, they pushed through the "Patriot Act," after last year's fatal terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. That law opened everything from church services to union meetings to federal snooping, spying, arbitrary arrests and indefinite jailing of anyone for being a "terrorist supporter."

They also pushed through a Homeland Security Department giving the president the right to negate the Collective Bargaining Agreement in the interest of National Security. This could potentially de-unionize 600,000 federal employees.

What's to prevent this crowd from trying to repeal the National Labor Relations Act? Or the entire minimum wage law? God forbid, that's what we may face.

## NLRB sustains Local 153's objections in Prudential case

*Continued from page 1*

affected the outcome of the election. The NLRB ruled that because of the voting unit's unique structure—employees located all over the country, with many not even working at an office—they do not have the same day to day interrelationships that most employees have at work. Therefore, the employees' access to one another is extremely limited. Contrast that with Prudential's situation during the campaign. They could communicate directly with employees when they were on the premises at any time, and they also communicated through their Intranet default page, making it impossible for any Prudential employee to not see anti-union communications when logging onto the Internet or checking e-mail. Because the outcome of

the election was relatively close, the ruling argued that these practices had a "foreseeable affect" on the election.

The ruling declared that the original election be set aside so that a new election could be held forthwith. The original tally was 748 votes in favor, 811 votes against, 17 voided ballots and 41 challenged ballots.

Local 153 began organizing Prudential representatives last year. The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) previously represented Prudential employees in collective bargaining but yielded representation rights to OPEIU, Local 153.

Congratulations to Carol Pennington O'Rourke of Colleran, O'Hara, & Mills for the excellent job she did in presenting Local 153's objections to the election to the NLRB.

## Canadian News

### Renaud-Bray employees join OPEIU

The employees working at Renaud-Bray bookstore branch located on Sainte-Catherine East Street in downtown Montreal have just signed their union cards with the SEPB 57, bringing the total Renaud-Bray members to more than 100. "Renaud-Bray employs young workers often ill-informed about their rights in

the workplace. The union sees that the working conditions and rates of pay are decent," Organizer François Champoux said. The ongoing organizing campaign at Renaud-Bray bookstores continues. Renaud-Bray is the largest French bookstore network in Québec, with more than 23 locations.

### La Magnétothèque employees sign up with SEPB 57

La Magnétothèque is a public library for Québécois who, because of a visual or physical disability, cannot use standard print materials. The 15 technicians and clerical employees who belonged

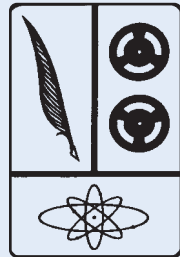
to a yellow company union decided to join a union capable of meeting the needs and expectations of the members it represents. Local 57 was granted the certification on September 27, 2002.

### Local 57, Montreal, Québec Desjardins employees choose SEPB 57

SEPB 57 is the top choice of Desjardins employees when it comes to choosing a union. In deciding to sign up with Local 57, the 17 non-union employees of the newly amalgamated caisse Desjardins Les Salines in St-Hyacinthe in the Richelieu-Yamaska region and the 34 of Caisse populaire La Petite Patrie in Montreal joined their fellow orga-

nized members of SEPB 57 by signing union cards. In the same time that a large process of mergers of caisses populaires is being carried out, Local 57 is working hard to consolidate its presence in the Mouvement Desjardins. Local 57 now represents about 5,000 members in the Mouvement Desjardins financial institutions network across the province.

**OPEIU**  
TRIENNIAL CANADIAN CONVENTION  
and  
Educational Conference on Organizing



AFL-CIO, CLC

#### SAVE THE DATE

April 26-27, 2003 and  
April 28-29, 2003

Marriott Château Champlain  
Montreal, Québec

Room Rate - \$165.00 plus taxes

Convention Call, Credentials and Reservation Forms  
Will Be Mailed Shortly With Appropriate Instructions

### Two new Canadian representatives sworn in

Liz Fong and Mireille Fillion were sworn in as representatives for Region X and Region I, respectively, at the Canadian National Committee's semi-annual meeting in November. Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis administered the oath.

Fong will now sit as one of five representatives from Region X in Ontario. Fillion, from Local 57, will represent Region I, Québec and the Maritime Provinces, along with five other international representatives.

### National Letter Carriers Association honors heroes of the year

Every year the National Letter Carriers Association (NALC) recognizes six employees who've demonstrated acts of courage while on duty. This year, Vincent Sombrotto, President of NALC, invited OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis to attend the award ceremony. "The acts of heroism were incredible," Dupuis reported. In one case, there was an individual among the six recipients who was involved in a remarkable kind of heroism. Paul Wagoner was awarded the "National Hero" award for donating a kidney to a customer on his route. After hearing that the man was having difficulty finding a donor match, Wagoner quietly went to get tested. He found out he was a perfect match for the customer. He discussed the matter with his wife and son, and together they decided that Paul should make the offer to donate his kidney. The customer's family members were shocked that a stranger would give such a gift. The operation was a success and both individuals are recovering well.



Paul Wagoner accepts the "National Hero" award from the National Letter Carriers Association. Also pictured is OPEIU International Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis.



# Notice To Employees Subject To Union Security Clauses

This Notice is for all employees working in the United States under an OPEIU contract containing a union security clause which requires, as a condition of employment, that an employee pay dues or fees to the Union. The obligation stated in this Notice is the only obligation under such clause regardless of the wording of the clause. Individuals who are members pay dues, while individuals who are nonmembers pay equivalent fees. These dues or fees, which are authorized by law, are your fair share of sustaining your Union's broad range of programs in support of you and your coworkers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process and thereby be obligated to pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process.

Only if you are not a member of the Union or if you resign your membership, and in either case, file an objection to the funding of expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process, may you pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process. However, if you resign your membership, the many rights and opportunities available to Union members will not be open to you. For example, if you resign your membership you will no longer be able to:

- Vote on the terms of your contract;
- Participate in strike votes;
- Participate in the development of contract proposals;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as an officer of your Local Union;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as a delegate to the International Convention; and
- Enjoy discounts and other benefits available only to members, including eligibility for OPEIU scholarships for you and your family.

Individuals who are employed by public employers in the states of New Jersey and

Minnesota are covered by the demand and return system applicable to them and are not covered by this procedure. Other individuals who elect to be nonmembers may object to funding expenditures which are not germane to the collective bargaining process. Expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process ("chargeable" expenditures) represent that portion of the Union's expenditures devoted to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievances, arbitration, and other matters affecting wages, hours and other conditions of employment. Examples of "chargeable" expenditures include: the costs of negotiations with employers; contract administration expenses; communication with employers in regard to work-related issues; handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance and arbitration procedure; lobbying on matters directly related to conditions of employment; and Union administration.

Examples of expenditures nongermane to the collective bargaining process ("non-chargeable" expenditures) include: expenses made for community services; for lobbying on issues that benefit represented employees and their families as citizens rather than as workers; for political purposes; for certain affiliation fees; and for benefits available only to members and their families. The fee reduction will represent these non-chargeable expenditures. The International Union's Voice Of The Electorate fund ("VOTE"), is an independent, segregated fund that receives voluntary donations and contributes to political candidates who support the needs of working men and women. No money received from dues or fees goes to the VOTE fund. Accordingly, the VOTE fund is not considered in the calculation of the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses.

Individuals who choose to file an objection will receive a rebate of their fees equal to the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses. This percentage is calculated separately for the International

Union and for the Local Union. The major portion of an objector's fee remains with the Local Union. Studies show that the percentage of reduction for the Local Union ranges between 0% and 8%. The remaining smaller portion of the objector's fee goes to the International Union. The percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union, which will be effective for the months of September 2002 through August 2003, is 16.38%.

Individuals who choose to file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process must file them in writing with the Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036, Attention: Carol Dupuis, Secretary-Treasurer. The objection must include the objector's name, home address, social security number, employer, job title, department, work location, local union number, and business telephone number.

In order for an objection to be recognized at this time, it must be postmarked during the month of June, except that newly resigned members must submit their objections postmarked within thirty (30) days from the receipt by the Union of the resigning member's letter of resignation. All objections must be renewed each year in writing and all renewed objections must be postmarked during the month of June. All objections will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the objection was received by the Union.

In addition to any other avenue of relief available under the law, an objector may challenge the International Union's and/or the Local Union's classification or calculation of expenditures before a neutral arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Any challenge a nonmember makes may be coordinated or consolidated with other challenges to the Local Union or International Union deter-

minations before a single arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association. Such challenges may also be coordinated or consolidated with challenges to other OPEIU Local Union classifications or calculations.

Challengers must notify Carol Dupuis, Secretary-Treasurer, at the Office and Professional Employees International Union at 1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036, in writing, within thirty (30) days of their receipt of the Objector Letter, of any challenge he or she wishes to make through this arbitration procedure. That challenge should specify which classifications and/or calculations of the International Union and/or Local Union are being challenged.

The Unions shall bear the burden of justifying their classifications and calculations. If a hearing at which the parties or witnesses may be present is held by the arbitrator, it will be held at a location most convenient to the largest number of involved challengers. The cost of any arbitration proceedings will be paid for by the Unions. However, a challenger will have to pay his or her own lost time and travel expenses, and the fees, costs, and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

Once a written challenge is received from an objector, the Local Union will place an amount equal to the challenged portion of the fee into an interest-bearing escrow account. It shall remain in that account until the arbitrator issues a decision. Should the decision lower the percentage of chargeable expenditures, the appropriate portion of the escrowed fees, plus the interest earned by that portion while in the escrow account, will be refunded to the challenger. All objectors in each Local Union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will then pay the adjusted fee amount determined by the arbitrator. If the arbitrator approves the Unions' classifications and/or calculations, the escrowed money and interest will revert to the Local and International Unions.

## Local 30 hosts first Family Fun Day

The first-ever function for members and families of Local 30 was held at Santee Lakes, California on Sunday, September 15. Local 30 member Iva Gaphwright from Nuclear Medicine best summed up the overwhelming response when she said, "We can't wait until next year for the second annual!"

More than 1,200 members of Local 30 and their families attended the event. "We have never tried anything like this before at Local 30," President Marianne Tegio said. "We were clearly taking a chance on this, but it obviously paid off. I have been a member for more than 13 years and this is the greatest number of members I have ever seen attend a Local 30 function," Tegio continued.

"Any time you get members together socially it's a good idea," Vice President Cathy Evans said. "Members need to know that their union is there for them, but they should also know that the union means more than representation."

"This was a brave attempt to try something new," Local 30 Executive Director/Chief Financial

Officer Walter Allen said. "We wanted to work to build union capacity in a really creative and fun way. This was a partnership activity, and I am pleased to say that it was very successful."

The event was free of charge for all Local 30 members and their guests, with the cost being covered by the LMP Trust Fund at the request of Allen on behalf of the subcommittee that

organized the event, which included Tegio and Evans. Special thanks for their efforts go to Local 30 Administrative Assistants Maria Perez and Kim Tyler in the San Diego office.



Local 30 Executive Director/CFO Walter Allen (left photo) joins members and their families in the Family Fun Day

## Editorial



### End one party rule in 2004!

By Michael Goodwin, International President

The November elections were certainly an eye-opener for organized labor. For the first time since 1952, control of all three entities responsible for enacting legislation is in the hands of one political party. For a bill to become law it must be enacted by the House and Senate and signed by the President. Over the last fifty years the opposite political party always controlled one of the three entities. This meant that legislation not in the best interest of working families could be blocked in the House or Senate, or vetoed by the President. In such cases, it would take a super majority or a two-third vote to override the veto. Not anymore! With control of all three entities in the hands of

***“Perish the thought of elimination of the National Labor Relations Act or a national right to work law!”***

the Republican Party, anything passed by the House and Senate will be signed into law by the President.

Everything is at stake! There is no part of the law that is safe from being amended, watered down or eliminated. Perish the thought of elimination of the National Labor Relations Act or a national right-to-work law! We all should be concerned about the fate of worker rights over the next two years. Anything can happen and some of it already has! Within days of the November election,

the Homeland Security Department was created, combining 22 federal agencies into one and granting the President the right to negate the collective bargaining agreement at any time in the interest of national security. This means that the union representing federal employees could be eliminated in the Homeland Security Department by a stroke of the pen! The President then demanded and got a commitment to release the nomination of two right wing federal judges out of a Congressional Committee, which was bottled up by the Democrats for months. These two anti-union, anti-working family judges will soon be confirmed. There was good reason for the Democrats to hold these nominations up, but they no longer have control!

The President also announced the freezing of wage increases for 600,000 federal employees scheduled to go into affect in January. Those needed wage increases are now gone with the explanation that they cannot be afforded despite the fact that millions of dollars in tax cuts were granted to the rich with more tax cuts planned for administration constituents and supporters. Once again, the working class takes it on the chin!

Just recently, the Bush administration proposed new pension regulations that pose a serious threat to working families and their future retirement. The new rules will make it easier for employers to switch from a defined benefit plan to a “cash-balance” plan that would shrink the employers’ pension liabilities and reduce some employees’ benefits. “The switch to a cash-balance plan is tantamount to a pension pay cut for older workers unless they get adequate transition protection,” said J. Mark Iwry, former benefits tax counsel at the Treasury Department during the Clinton administration. At least 23 million Americans work for companies that offer defined benefit plans. Fortunately, current retirees are not affected by this latest move, but middle aged and older workers who have been at their jobs for many years are most at risk. The proposed regulations follow a dispute at IBM in 1999 when older workers realized that the company was stripping them of anticipated retirement benefits — often worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to each worker. The issue still remains tied up in court. The IBM workers rallied, followed by Congressional hearings and age-discrimination suits. Amid the outcry, the Internal Revenue Service, which as part of the Treasury Department regulates corporate pension plans, stopped approving cash-balance plans while it studied the legal issues. Now that IBM has friends in high places (Washington, D.C.), the proposed regulations

will make it easier for companies such as IBM to make the conversion from a defined benefit plan to a cash-balance plan. What do we have to look forward to when we already have these changes that adversely affect workers even before the 108th Congress takes office? If they can do all this now, what are they going to do over the next two years?

I think it’s time for workers to wake up and realize that handing the federal government to one political party is not good for working families. Regrettably, many union workers, including OPEIU members, voted for this administration based on their views on other issues. It’s time we understand that one of the most important issues is how we are treated in the workplace. If you don’t have a job or a fair pension, you won’t have time to worry about the other issues because you will be preoccupied trying to figure out how to provide for your family.

It is so important that every OPEIU member and their family participate in the political process and vote. If we don’t vote, we can’t complain about the results. We have done it to ourselves. I look forward to speaking with the leaders of your local union and to you, the members, at educational conferences and union meetings about the impor-

tance of this matter. I know that once the members understand what’s at risk they will respond.

I urge you to get involved in the political process as quickly as possible. The fact is, the reason why working families are in this situation is because the Republican Party was able to get out 46 percent of their vote in November, while the Democrats were only able to deliver 38 percent. If we stay home and don’t vote, this will inevitably be the result.

You can help by getting involved in politics in your community by working with your local union. Please don’t believe that it doesn’t matter who is elected or that politicians are all the same. It certainly does matter and we hope and pray we see little else of new proposals that adversely affect working families over the next two years.

Despite the adversity that may lie ahead, I remain optimistic that these obstacles can be overcome. We need to organize now for the 2004 elections, making sure at least one of the three entities — the House, Senate or White House — is in the hands of the opposite political party. We must end one party rule in 2004!

Thank you and God bless working families!



International President Michael Goodwin with Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) at NAACP's 13th annual holiday gala honoring Sen. Schumer, John Gillis (UNITE), James Sweeney (SEIU) and prizefighter Larry Holmes. OPEIU is very proud of Dr. Annie B. Martin who is the President of the New York Chapter of the NAACP for the past 25 years. Dr. Martin is a proud member of OPEIU, Local 153.



Printed in USA

Photo courtesy of Dr. Annie B. Martin, NAACP