



# WHITE COLLAR

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

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## OPEIU receives recognition at AFL-CIO convention for organizing excellence

The OPEIU received special recognition for its successful commitment to organizing at the AFL-CIO biennial convention held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, Pa., from Monday, September 22 through Thursday, September 25, 1997.

Before the entire delegation, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney singled out the OPEIU as a leader in the labor movement's efforts to organize the unorganized sector of our industries. Attending the convention were OPEIU President Michael Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard, Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse, Direc-

tor of Organization Jay Porcaro and Vice Presidents Walter Allen, Richard Lanigan and Patrick Tully.

Among our members who received recognition for successful organizing activities — as well as for the diversity of the types of groups being organized — were Mickey Cody and Edwina Dunne, Catholic school teachers with Local 153; Terri Dobson-Garrett, a healthcare professional with Local 459; Dr. John Mattiacci, a podiatrist with Local 45; Dr. Phil Barone, a chiropractor with Local 64; and Jim Morgan, a helicopter pilot with Local 109.

During the convention, President Good-

win was also reelected to a full four-year term on the AFL-CIO Executive Council representing OPEIU and its members. Goodwin is the first OPEIU leader to serve on the Executive Council.

The convention was the first since the

AFL-CIO's new leadership team of John Sweeney, Richard Trumka and Linda Chavez-Thompson assumed office in 1995 in the first contested election in AFL-CIO history. The four-day meeting was an op-

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## Information vital to conducting of union elections

In connection with the International Union Convention in June 1998, OPEIU Officers, General Counsel Melvin Schwarzwald and representatives of Thomas Havey LLP traveled the United States on six recent weekends to discuss important election related procedures and to present information on the duties and responsibilities of Secretary-Treasurers and officers. In all, eleven meetings were held in the six OPEIU regions. They were:

Boston	February 7, 1998
Philadelphia	February 8, 1998
Fort Worth	February 14, 1998
Baton Rouge	February 15, 1998
Toledo	February 21, 1998
Milwaukee	February 22, 1998
Atlanta	February 28, 1998
Orlando	March 1, 1998
San Francisco	March 7, 1998
Los Angeles	March 7, 1998
Portland	March 21, 1998

Invited to attend were the principal officers of each local union along with any officers who will be involved in the process of

electing delegates and alternates to the convention. Many questions were asked and answered. The meetings were held in cities convenient to the majority of the local unions in the region.

It is already known that the positions of President and Secretary-Treasurer are being contested as well as at least one Vice Presidential position. Because this is the first time we have had contested elections for principal officers in twenty-four years, the International Union felt it was important that the election of delegates and alternates to the 1998 convention be done properly and that everyone understands the do's and don'ts regarding expenditures of union and employer funds.

There are 189 local unions comprising the OPEIU, each one with its own Constitution and By-Laws with different procedures regarding the election of delegates and alternates. In the absence of one set of procedures governing all OPEIU local unions, it was necessary to discuss these issues in person at the local level.

Letters were sent on January 15 and January 22, 1998.

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## 375 Seattle area workers vote Union Yes!

On October 10, 1997 nursing assistants, nurses, LPNs, housekeeping staff, food services, and clerical staff of Sea Mar Care Center voted nearly unanimously in favor of unionizing. Local 8 has represented the Home Care Workers at Sea Mar since 1990 and will be helping the remaining 400 clinic workers to become union over the next few months, said Local 8 Business Manager Maureen Bo.

### Visiting Nurse Services

In another landslide victory, home care workers at the Visiting Nurse Services of the Northwest (VNS) voted in favor of joining

Local 8 by a margin of 117 to 21 on October 31, 1997, after nearly a two-year struggle. Union home care workers from around the state were an important part of this campaign, sharing their positive experiences in organizing for a union. VNS organizing committee member Bonny Rios says, "I've talked to other home care workers and I know we have a lot to gain by going Union."

This campaign was a real challenge, said Local 8 Organizer Cindy Schu, because workers only occasionally saw one another. Several times the local requested a list of coworkers from the employer, but VNS re-

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Pictured here is the Visiting Nurse Service organizing committee who organized VNS, with help from OPEIU Local 8.

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Fast Track Defeated

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portunity for the AFL-CIO to discuss its new efforts to build a stronger voice for America's working families and to outline the organization's goals for the next two years. It was also a chance to highlight the many accomplishments that workers throughout the world have made in recent years. Hundreds of workers were present to participate in the convention program and to share their experiences — including our OPEIU members.

Organizing was a key theme throughout the convention. A special national conference on organizing titled, "Building a Movement of American Workers," was

held, with remarks from organizers, local and international union leaders, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. Other topics covered at the convention included ways in which we can make government work for America's workers, as well as how to compete in the global economy.

Among those addressing the convention were: President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, Senator Tom Daschle, Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator Arlen Specter, Congressman Dick Gephardt, Rev. Jesse Jackson, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume and Bill Jordan, general secretary of ICFTU.

# Letters to the Editor

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employee goes over the cap, they lose the time. In Michigan the ranks of state employees has been thinned by attrition, an early retirement program, and a labor hostile administration. The net result is that getting time off when you want it has become extremely problematic. Sometimes it's simply a matter of a bad boss denying leave time as a "pay back."

At this year's Compensation Hearings each union had a proposal concerning the issue of annual leave. All state employees at the supervisory or management level seem to be experiencing problems getting leave when they want it. Many complained of losing credits. Most asked that a mechanism be put into place by which employees could be compensated for over-cap hours. The State Employer replied with the position that as

losing time was a problem, perhaps employee accrual rates should be cut!

The point of this example is that the Michigan experience with annual leave should serve as a harbinger of what will happen on a national level with comp time. Employees will not be able to get the time off they want when they need it. Vindictive, mean-spirited bosses will routinely deny some workers leave. Further, they will eventually argue that since comp time has become the bone of so much contention, perhaps it shouldn't be paid at a time and one-half rate. The Working Families Flexibility Act is a bad idea with little benefit to already over-burdened workers.

Yours in Solidarity,

**Thomas James Katona**  
Member Representative  
OPEIU Local 512

# Seattle area workers vote Union Yes!

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fused. Fortunately, a window of opportunity appeared when workers had to go through mandatory training all summer. This way they were able to talk to coworkers who they normally would not see. Even so, the union didn't get the full list of workers until three weeks before the election when the employer is required by law to provide the union with a list. In three weeks a team of organizers made nearly 100 home visits.

## Group Health Center for Health Studies

This summer, 75 research assistants and customer service representatives from Group Health Center for Health Studies

voted through a card check to become Union with Local 8, as part of a unique internal organizing campaign with the largest HMO in the country.

Schu and newly recruited ROC Organizer Phyllis Naiad say that it is the "Voluntary Organizing Committee (VOC) that made the difference by sharing their positive union experiences with the non-union counterparts. Many thanks go to the Local 8 VOC: Lucinda Clark, Dave Westphal, Deanna Bell, JoAnne Kaye, Jean Honka, Bobbie Williams, Colleen Stern, Bernice Myers, Pat Hutto, Judy White, Patsy Vandel, Del Easter, Carlos Echevarria, Charlie Best, Michaela Markeson, Rose Hamann and Bev Klenk. The VOC is our key to success!"

# Through ups and downs, OPEIU comes out on top

Despite losses in membership experienced in the last few years by organized labor as a whole, recent organizing efforts by OPEIU has brought us out on top once again.

## OPEIU Membership Figures (June '95 — October '97)

New members (through organizing)	13,014*
Membership loss	7,042
Net membership increase	5,972

\*Does not include members organized but not yet reported



# Workers triumph as Frontier strike ends

**Solidarity brings victory; strikers hold out 'one day longer'**

*"As you return to work tonight, remember as you walk through those doors that all of labor is walking in with you with pride and dignity. We have all won. We have won. We have won."*

— OPEIU President Michael Goodwin

On February 1, 1998 — after more than 2,300 long and tiring days — the strike against the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev., came to an end as the five striking unions reached an agreement with the Strip resort.

OPEIU President Michael Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard, Vice President J.B. Moss and Director of Field

Services Kevin Kistler joined the jubilant workers and other national labor leaders in Las Vegas at a massive rally to celebrate the end of the six-year strike.

"What you have accomplished here has been noticed around the world," Goodwin said. "Every worker in every industry who seeks fairness and justice on the job will look to you as an outstanding example of union solidarity and strength."

The acrimonious strike — which began in September 1991 — ended after the owners, Margaret Elardi and her two sons, sold the resort in October to Kansas businessman Phillip G. Ruffin for \$165 million, who then turned it back into a union hotel. Ruffin

took control of the hotel on February 1. During the entire ordeal, the now victorious striking workers had vowed to hold out "one day longer" than the Elardi's, who steadfastly refused to sign a collective bargaining agreement with the unions.

Upon the signing of what has been described as the best contract in the industry, approximately 280 of the original 550 strikers represented by the Culinary Union and four other locals — Bartenders 165, Teamsters 995, Operating Engineers 501 and Carpenters 1780 — began to return to their jobs at the hotel. Terms of the contract, which matches those at other Strip hotels, include a starting wage of \$7.50 an hour for food servers, \$9.50 an hour for hotel maids and \$12 an hour for cooks. Strikers were averaging \$2 an hour less before the strike. The agreement also restores full seniority rights to all returning workers and commits management to work to resolve outstanding unfair labor practice issues.

At the celebration, President Goodwin praised workers for their tenacious spirit, and for their ability to stick with the strike even when many wondered if an agreement would ever be reached between the unions and the hotel. The strike — during which not one union member crossed the picket line — was the longest on-going work stoppage in United States history.

"Sometimes you wanted to give up,"



A sign outside the Frontier tells the whole story — the six-year strike is finally over.

Goodwin observed, "but you kept on going because you knew you were right and you knew that justice would prevail over evil."

"When you marched with your feet, you took a million tiny footsteps for yourselves, but you also took one giant step for all workers. You told the world that workers acting collectively have the power to fight injustice . . . in every workplace and in every community workers will remember the Frontier strikers as their heroes and as an inspiration that will keep hope alive," Goodwin concluded.



OPEIU President Michael Goodwin congratulates workers on their victory at the Frontier Hotel.

## Judith Butz elected vice president of Colorado AFL-CIO

Judith A. Butz, president of OPEIU Local 5, was nominated and elected a vice president of the Colorado AFL-CIO on September 26, 1997 at the federation's convention. Butz is one of three women of thirty-two vice presidents elected to the executive board.

"Judith's election continues the activism of women within the OPEIU to seek more responsibility and higher positions in the labor movement," OPEIU President Michael Goodwin said. "We're extremely proud of her achievements."

Butz has been a member of Local 5 since 1975. She has been president of the local for the past six years, serving as vice president for the four years previous, and on the executive board for many years before that. Butz has been employed for 22 years by Brauer, Buescher, Valentine, Goldhammer & Kelman, P.C. — the only organized law firm in Colorado.



Judith Butz, president of Local 5 and a vice president of the Colorado AFL-CIO.



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# Fast Track legislation puts working families on the wrong track

## Grassroots lobbying defeats job-destroying measure

Organized labor scored a major legislative victory recently when it successfully forced House Speaker Newt Gingrich to pull fast track — an expansion of job-destroying NAFTA — from the schedule in the House of Representa-

tives. President Clinton and Gingrich both admitted they didn't have enough votes to pass the fast track proposal — and that grassroots lobbying action by working people was the reason.

In a The New York Times article herald-

ing the win with the headline, "Labor Victory on Trade Bill Reveals Power," a Republican congressional aid involved in the effort to pass the trade bill was quoted as saying, "when big business goes head to head with unions, the unions clean their clocks."

More restrictive even than the fast track legislation used to approve NAFTA, the proposal failed to address the needs and concerns of working people here and abroad. It greatly restricted the president's ability to negotiate enforceable worker rights and environmental standards in trade agreements — even more than past fast track legislation had. Only the elimination of existing labor and environmental standards that might impede U.S. imports would have been permitted. Issues such as food safety, illegal drug trade, currency stability, human rights and religious freedom were also precluded from negotiation.

In simple terms, the proposed fast track legislation would have meant that the president could negotiate a trade deal and Congress could only vote it up or down — it couldn't make any changes or amendments. Fast track did little — if anything — to protect our jobs, wages, environment or public safety. It would have exacerbated the already dire situation — consider that since passage of NAFTA less than four years ago, this country has lost 420,000 jobs, and the threat of continued production moves to Mexico looms heavy over the heads of the American worker.

While fast track has been pulled from this session's legislative agenda, the threat of similar proposals remains a real possibility.

"Despite this immediate victory, fast track continues to be a threat," OPEIU President Michael Goodwin warned. "We have to continue to do everything in our power to ensure that similar measures don't make it back onto the Senate floor."

"We need to encourage support for a new trade policy that insures that labor's voice will be heard at the negotiating table," Goodwin concluded.

## Show your union strength with union-made checks

Want to display your union pride and membership with local merchants and others — every time you write a check? Well, now you can with union-printed personal checks offered through the OPEIU Union-Made Check Program.

And thanks to several recent program improvements, you may now also order loose-leaf ledger business checks and laser checks (checks that may be printed using a computer laser printer) through the program.

Union-made checks are union-printed and come complete with the "Buy Union, Buy American" logo and an insignia reflecting your OPEIU membership.

One order of checks costs only \$9.95 for 200, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling (\$3.50 for priority mail). These personal checks are competitively priced and are accepted by all banks and credit unions.

Members may also purchase return-address labels. These optional stickers, which come complete with the member's name, address and "Buy Union, Buy American" logo are \$6.95 (plus \$1.95 for postage and handling) for a quantity of 240.

Ordering checks and address labels is easy: Simply send in the order form along with your check or money-order payment, and one voided existing check from your bank checkbook (needed for encoded account numbers). Then allow three weeks for delivery. (If you wish to order the option return-address stickers, please fill out the appropriate area on the form and make sure your correct address is included). There is no need to change accounts, banks or anything else; the Union-Made Check Program will fill the order the same way your bank's printer would.

For more information, call the Union-Made Check Program at (888) 864-6625 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday. The Union-Made Check Program — another money-saving benefit brought to you exclusively through Union Family Savers.

## Want the hottest news?

### Sign up for the OPEIU MemberGram

Sometimes the news is too important. There's legislation coming up for a vote that will affect you and your families, and you have to contact your legislator quickly. There's a rally or march scheduled to fight an abusive employer. Or, a new court decision or governmental regulation that will have immediate effects on your job.

It's times like these when the new OPEIU MemberGram will be invaluable.

President Michael Goodwin will express the MemberGram to interested local union activists whenever important issues arise. Just sign the form below, which duplicates the MemberGram design, and watch the mails.

"It's important to improve our communications with you, the members, to involve you more actively in decision-making and in actions of the union. And communications should never be one-way. I, therefore, look forward to your responses on the effectiveness of the MemberGram as well as the subjects we cover," President Goodwin says, as he urges members to sign up.

### From the desk of President Michael Goodwin



# MemberGram

Yes, sign me up to receive the MemberGram whenever hot topics come up. I want to be kept informed on issues, activities, and decisions that affect me, my family and my local union.

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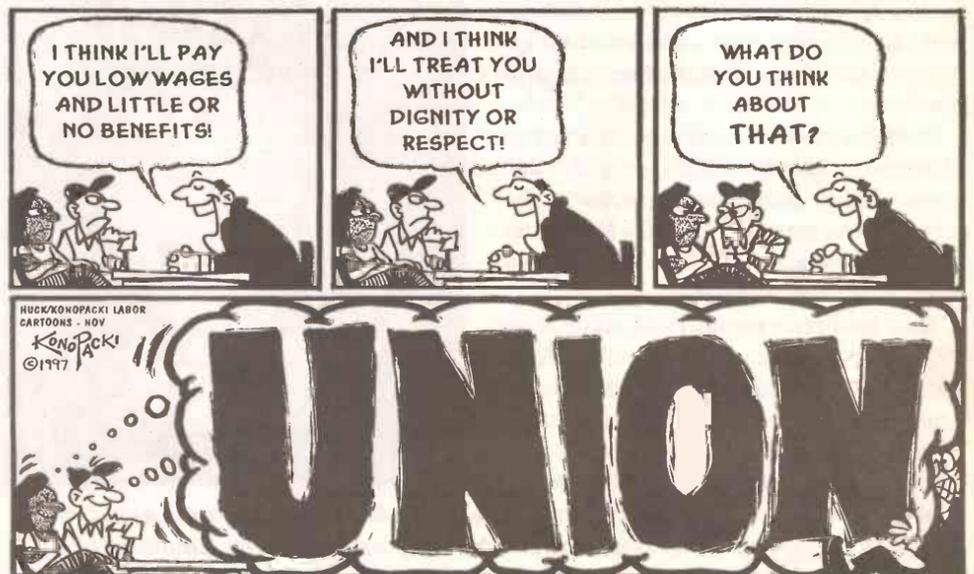


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## UNION FAMILY SAVERS



HK NOV 1997

## Doug Mitten receives George Meany Center Award for service to youth

Doug Mitten, OPEIU Local 29 member, received the George Meany Center Award in a ceremony at the AFL-CIO Sacramento Central Labor Council meeting in Sacramento, California. The award is organized labor's highest for service to youth, through the Boy Scouts of America program.

It is given by Sacramento CLC to recognize union members who perform outstanding service to youth as volunteer scouting leaders. Tom Lawson, United Way community liaison, made the presentation to Mitten, citing his 13 years of volunteer leadership in the Boy Scouts.

Mitten is currently the committee chair for Boy Scout Troop 562, which is sponsored by the Foothill/North Highlands Rotary Club. He has served as Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, Cub Master, WEBELOS Den Leader, and Order of the Arrow Chapter Advisor. He was a member of the Crazy Horse District Committee, Golden Empire Council Camping Committee, and is a merit badge counselor for the American Labor Merit Badge. Mitten has also received recognition for his service to Scouting by the Order of the Arrow and the National Eagle Scout Association, which awarded him the Scoutmasters Award of Merit.

Mitten has served his sisters and brothers in the labor movement as shop steward,



Local 29 member Doug Mitten receives the George Meany Center Award for service to youth from Tom Lawson, United Way community liaison.

Central Labor Council delegate, executive board member, and secretary-treasurer of OPEIU Local 29 in Oakland, Calif. In addition, he is coordinator of the regional organizing program for the union.

He has served the Sacramento community as a volunteer for the Sacramento AIDS Walk, American River Parkway Foundation, KXPR/KXJZ Radio Fundraisers, and the Sacramento Unitarian Universalist Society.

## Helen Hensler celebrates 58 years of service to OPEIU

Friends, co-workers and union brothers and sisters gathered in Milwaukee on January 16 to honor Helen Hensler as she retired after an amazing 58 years of service to OPEIU.

Hensler began her illustrious career in 1939 when she went to work for Smith Steelworkers Local 19806 and joined OPEIU Local 9. She worked as an office manager at Smith for 37 years before moving to Iron Workers Local 471 where she worked until 1992.

In her many years with OPEIU, Hensler served in a variety of positions. She started as a steward, then became recording secretary — a post she held for 23 years — and was then elected president.

She also served on OPEIU Local 9's Executive Board for many years, and was a delegate to the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, for decades.

Never one to rest on her accomplishments, Hensler became business representative of Local 9 in 1993, helping to negotiate more than 70 contracts.

Hensler has also been greatly involved in her community — particularly in promoting the interests of women, equal employment opportunities, and the protection of consumer and public interests — at one time serving as

an officer and leader in the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), for many years serving on Wisconsin's Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, and as a founding member of the State AFL-CIO's Women's Committee and, in 1970, helped organize its first statewide conference.

At her retirement dinner, Hensler received much-deserved praise and thanks for her contributions to the labor movement, and was awarded a plaque from the International Union as well as gifts from Local 9 and others.



International Representative Bonnie Strauss (left) presents Helen Hensler with a plaque commemorating her 58 years of service to OPEIU.

## Local 32's Antinozzi celebrates 50 years of membership

OPEIU Local 32 Business Manager Pat Tully and Business Agent Thomas Kirwan presented Rudy Antinozzi with an award marking 50 years of continuous membership in the Union, New Jersey local. Tully is also OPEIU International Vice President.

Antinozzi, Tully said, also celebrates his fiftieth anniversary as an employee of Dorr-Oliver Inc. of Hazleton, N.J. He began his employment as a clerk with the industrial infiltration equipment company in 1947 when it was known as Oliver United Filters. Through the years he advanced, ultimately to his present job of material specialist, which is the highest classification in the Local 32

bargaining unit.

He was born and raised in Hazleton. He graduated from Baltimore Poly Tech High School and served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the infantry division in Germany.

Antinozzi is married to the former Thomasina Conigliaro of McAdoo. They have two sons, Guy Antinozzi of Decatur and Joseph and Georgia Antinozzi of Forrest Hills, Md., and eight grandchildren.

Local 32 has more than 6,000 members. "Dorr-Oliver is actually one of the smaller units, out of 85, within our local," Tully said. "But they are very active in the union and community activities. We are very proud to have them as our members."

## Canadian Locals in the News

Continued from page 4

## Managers join union members, sign OPEIU petition protesting ICBC pension contribution increases

The stunning petition protest by OPEIU members at the Insurance Corporation has reversed the trend to increase pension contributions rates.

After thousands of ICBC employees, many of them managers and excluded staff, signed an OPEIU petition protesting pension contribution increases, ICBC canceled its previously-announced plan for the hikes.

"We successfully stopped ICBC from raising pension contributions by 0.5 percent in January 1998. ICBC also said the actuaries will decide whether the Pension Plan needs the additional increase announced for 1999," said Local 378 Vice President Bev Chevelday.

"Not only will the OPEIU work against the new increases being implemented, we hope to convince ICBC to rescind the last two increases totaling 1

percent. They have a \$40 million surplus, after all. This does not mean anyone will get a refund, but less money will be deducted from our paychecks in the future."

Our success is due to strong membership participation at ICBC. Everyone supported our position. This shows the power of collective action at work. "It is unusual for ICBC managers to sign OPEIU petitions," Chevelday said.

Members at ICBC can see how powerful we are when we stand united. It's possible to readjust the power balance between management and individual workers. Our pension success demonstrates the power of collective agreement.

Employees joining together and participating wholeheartedly are what make the OPEIU work.

## OPEIU Local 11 members achieve new contract at Clark County



Pictured here are Coral Benscoter, Local 11 shop steward, and Mary Simonsen, Local 11 Executive Board member and Local 11 Chief Shop Steward at Clark County, hard at work on contract negotiations.

Local 11 members working for Clark County, Washington, have won a new collective bargaining agreement. A majority of the membership voted December 1, 1997, to accept the settlement.

The contract is negotiated on behalf of the 650 county employees by a Joint Labor Coalition consisting of OPEIU Local 11, as well as the unions AFSCME, IFPTE, and IAM. OPEIU International Vice President Gary Kirkland, who is also Local 11 Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer, chairs that Coalition.

According to Vice President Kirkland, chief spokesman of all of the unions, the agreement "is the product of an open and constructive dialogue between the Coalition and the County."

Kirkland added, "Negotiations went well. We were able to overcome many obstacles in achieving a good agreement for all the parties involved. One obstacle was an extended hiatus period over the summer months to allow Clark County to research their budget situation."

Following is a summary of the key contract provisions:

### Wages:

- 3-year contract (July 1997 to July 2000)
- 1998: 2.5 percent
- 1999: 3.0 percent
- 2000: 3.5 percent
- Option to convert to a six-step range in year 2000 for public works, engineers and appraisers
- Step increases: Movement from step 1 to step 2 now occurs after 12 months at step 1, like other step increases

### Insurance:

- Add "80/60" Blue Cross PPO plan
- 9 percent per year inflation clause (was 7 percent)
- No employee contribution
- Insurance committee will be formed

### Other gains:

- Sick leave bonus day restored: grant one day off for 1 year of zero sick leave
- Sick leave payoff: reduce years of service threshold from 20 years to 10
- Vacation sell back: increases to 50 hours in 1998, 60 hours in 1999
- Attendance program continued with some restructuring
- Some "flexing" of hours within work week and work day permitted
- New alternative schedules possible allowing non-consecutive work days
- New callback language restoring two hours callback pay if short notice given
- Liberalized salary anniversary date rules



Chief negotiator for the coalition of unions at Clark County, Washington, OPEIU International Vice President and Local 11 Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer Gary Kirkland appears here during bargaining

- New rules on shift differential eligibility when it is included in pay while on leave
- Extended "grandfather" vacation schedule for 1984 to 1994 hires office worker unit (and cleaned up language)
- Clarified language regarding selecting comp time versus pay for holiday work
- New and clearer rules on county reimbursement for licenses and certifications
- Clarification of layoff bumping rights: between departments and job classes
- Discontinued bumping across department lines for courthouse departments
- Parking: possible future charge for downtown campus parking

## Local 17 uses unique organizing tactics to win victory at blood bank

Applying time-tested organizing techniques — as well as some modern negotiating tactics — members of Local 17, Parma, Ohio, won their organizing battle with the Lorain County Blood Bank/Lifeshare, Inc.

A long and acrimonious organizing battle began after the Blood Bank, led by Chief Executive Officer Inez Ferrante, waged an all-out anti-union campaign against the local, doing everything possible to ensure its workers voted against affiliating.

"She [Ferrante] promised to give trips to workers in an attempt to buy their votes," said Cathy Wittenbrook, Local 17 president and business manager. "She held mandatory meetings with her employees, sometimes three times a week, just to talk down the union."

The election was held on August 7, 1997. On election day, the Blood Bank changed its payroll process, making each employee pick up his or her paycheck at the election site. Attached to their paychecks were pink

slips that showed what their checks would look like if union dues were subtracted. Wittenbrook describes election day as a classic example of an employer using every scare tactic imaginable to defeat an election.

Unfortunately, Ferrante was successful. The unit, which encompassed 119 employees — drivers, lab technicians, telemarketers and those who draw blood — voted against affiliation.

Following the defeat, the union quickly filed fifteen different unfair labor charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Ferrante and the Blood Bank forgot one thing when they decided to fight the union — the very union members they were fighting were, in fact, the same people who had been the lifeblood of the agency for decades.

The labor community — led by Local 17 and the local AFL-CIO, which had now become involved — began to direct all blood donations that normally would go to the Lorain Blood Bank to the local branch of the American Red Cross.

Donations to the embattled Blood Bank fell by a whopping 35 percent, and the employer was forced to layoff several workers. The Blood Bank was starting to get the message that it had to bargain with the union — or face a continued drop in donations.

In September, the AFL-CIO presented its demands to the Blood Bank. First, Inez Ferrante would have to step down as CEO. Next, the Blood Bank would have to grant recognition to the unit, and finally, appoint a labor representative to the board of directors.

The first break came in October when Ferrante resigned. Richard Cluck was hired as her replacement. Realizing that if the blood bank did not secure the labor community's blood donations he would be forced to close down, Cluck came to the union and agreed to meet each and every one of its demands.

The union dropped all unfair labor charges. A contract was negotiated and rati-

fied by the membership.

Of the original 119 employees, only 85 are currently employed by the Blood Bank and are in the bargaining unit.

"We're now trying to convince the labor community to resume making their blood donations with the Blood Bank. That's the only way we can ensure this unit continues to be a strong group," Wittenbrook said.

"None of this would have been possible," Wittenbrook adds, "without the help of the ROC program (Regional Organizing Cooperative). Robert Garvin and Donna Ramsey of the ROC program both lent countless hours to this campaign. We couldn't have done it without them."

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**UNION FAMILY SAVERS**

# OPEIU welcomes new staff members

## Kevin Kistler appointed director of field services

President Michael Goodwin has appointed Kevin Kistler, the former Pennsylvania state director of the AFL-CIO, as OPEIU's director of field services. This new position will enable the International to increase supervision of field representatives and communication with our local unions.

Kistler brings more than 25 years of full-time union and political experience to the International. Prior to his stint with the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, Kistler served as a senior staff member of the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C., supervising servicing and organizing activities.

"I'm excited to join the OPEIU team," Kistler said. "The union is embarking on a number of wonderful projects that are going to put OPEIU at the forefront of the labor movement. I can't think of a better time to come on board and do my part in making these programs as successful as possible."

Kistler began his union career in 1967 when he joined the Seafarers International



Director of Field Services Kevin Kistler.

Union while working in the engine department of a freighter. He later became a member of the Service Employees Organizing Committee while serving as a Washington police officer.

In 1973, Kistler was appointed a representative of the Hotel Employees and

Restaurant Employees International where he was actively involved in organizing, bargaining and strike coordination. Two years later, he joined the AFL-CIO as a field representative, coordinating political and legislative activities.

## Gary Nuber becomes international representative

Goodwin has also appointed Gary Nuber, a business agent with Local 95 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., to serve as an international representative.

"Our people in the field are essential to the implementation of the union's organizing strategies," Nuber contends. "I'm so pleased to be asked to work with these wonderful men and women on the front lines of the OPEIU."

As a business agent, Nuber represents the union and our members in grievances, mediations, arbitrations, contract negotiations, organizing and public relations. In addition, he produces the local's newsletter, leads steward training, researches legal and



International Representative Gary Nuber.

arbitral precedence, and assists the union in all other necessary capacities.

Before joining the OPEIU full-time, Nuber worked with Foxmeyer Drug Company, and was chief steward and chief bargaining committee member.

## 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. This 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 co-workers, 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 you 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. 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 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;
- participate in strike votes; 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 and 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) are those 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"), an independent, segregated fund that receives voluntary donations, 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. The percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union, which will be effective for the months of September 1998 through August 1999, is 27.52%. Studies show that the percentage of reduction for the Local Unions ranges between 0% and 8%. The major portion of an objector's fees remains with the Local 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 determinations before a single arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association. Such challenge may also be coordinated or consolidated with challenges to other OPEIU Local Union calculations.

The Unions shall bear the burden of justifying their 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

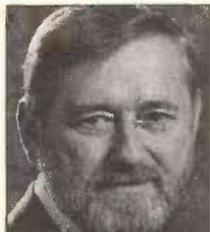
travel expenses, and the fees, costs, and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

Once a written challenge is received from an objector, the Local Union will place an amount equal to the requested reduction in 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 on the escrow account, will be refunded to the challenger. All reduced service fee payers in each Local Union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will then pay the adjusted amount as determined by the arbitrator. If the arbitrator approves the Unions' calculations, the escrowed money and interest will revert to the Local and International Unions.

Individuals who choose to file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process should file them in writing with the Office and Professional Employees International Union at 1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036, Attn: Gilles Beauregard, Secretary-Treasurer. The objection must include your 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 1998. This objection will be effective September 1, 1998 through August 31, 1999. All objections must be renewed each year in writing and postmarked during the month of June. All timely future or renewed objections will be effective September 1 through August 31 of each year thereafter for which an objection is filed.

## Editorial



# Fight Legislation That Attacks Workers Rights

by Michael Goodwin, International President

The right wing has stepped up to take on labor unions. They won't be happy until they see the day that labor unions no longer exist. This is a goal that they will never achieve. As we saw with the air traffic controllers, when the federal government decertified the union and replaced 13,000 employees with scabs — the replacement workers themselves formed a new union out of the ashes of the old. The latest attack is a bill in the House of Representatives called the Worker Paycheck Fairness Act — H.R. 1625, introduced by Representative Fawell (R-Ill.). As I have said in the past, the nicer the name of the legislation, the worse it is. This bill would prohibit the collection of any union dues money for non collective bargaining purposes without the "prior, voluntary, written authorization" of each worker. Isn't it interesting how the right wing singles out unions but does not address corporate spending or other membership groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the National Rifle Association or the Christian Coalition? Corporations outspent unions by a margin of 17 to 1 in the 1996 elections. Meaningful reform should address the problem of corporate spending rather than just targeting working families. Corporations do not have democratic procedures that allow shareholders, employees, and customers to vote on corporate political activities. In contrast, the AFL-CIO's political program and funding were approved in an open convention by delegates from affiliated unions.

The rights of workers to participate in the political process are well protected under current law. Unions are voluntary democratic organizations in which the majority determines union political activities. Unions and union members have a first amendment right to express their political views and to freely associate. We must be active in the

political process to represent our members because actions taken by Congress affect working families.

In 1996, the AFL-CIO and the OPEIU spoke out against attacks on Medicare, Social Security and education. The true purpose of this bill is really a payback to silence the vast majority from expressing their viewpoint.

Once again, we must mobilize our membership to fight H.R. 1625 and other legislation that attacks workers rights to freedom of expression. On the Senate side, Senator Lott has introduced an amendment to the McCain-Feingold campaign reform bill which would amend the Federal Election Campaign act to prohibit the use of union dues money in the same way as H.R. 1625 and includes a ban on "carrying on propaganda." It is interesting that the Lott amendment limits the collection of dues or fees from shareholders and employees "as a con-

dition of employment." Of course, we all know that no corporation raises money from its shareholders or employees by charging them dues or fees as a condition of employment, therefore, allowing corporations to continue to operate as they do now. There is a second bill in the House of Representatives — H.R. 2608 that attempts to accomplish the same restrictions on unions as H.R. 1625 and the Lott Amendment. In addition, the right wing has started initiatives in numerous states across the country such as California, Michigan, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Alaska.

In order to stem this tide, our members need to be more active by picking up a pen or a telephone and writing or calling their legislative representative and telling them that they oppose silencing working families. Any restrictions on the union's right to political expression should be equally applied to corporations or not at all. We urge you to

join the effort to protect the rights of working families and refuse to be silenced. Call your legislator today.

## Legal Ease



With Union Privilege Legal Service, expert advice is as close as your phone.

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*Se habla español*

### LOOK FOR THE PREMIUM-PRICED DRISCOLL STRAWBERRY

Then ask why strawberry workers struggle to feed their families.

TWENTY-THOUSAND CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRY WORKERS are struggling to improve their lives. In the strawberry fields, the average pay is \$8,500 a season. Workers have to fight for clean drinking water and bathrooms in the fields. They work backbreaking sunrise-to-sunset days amid pesticides, but their medical insurance is inadequate.

For just 5 cents more per pint of berries, worker pay rates could increase by 50 percent.

As the largest shipper of strawberries in the nation, Driscoll and its growers control fields employing 5,000 workers. Driscoll says it is proud of its oversized trademark strawberry and of being a leader by setting standards in the \$650 million-a-year industry.

Here's some more information: some Driscoll growers are charged in federal class action suits with sexual discrimination and withholding overtime pay, or under California law with illegally exposing workers to a cancer-causing pesticide. As thousands of strawberry workers join together to improve their conditions, the people at Driscoll are leading the charge to crush them.

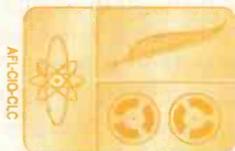
**Call Driscoll at 408-761-5995 and ask: What does sexual discrimination, environmental hazards and blocking workers' efforts to improve their lives have to do with being a leader?**

**Tell your supermarket: For Driscoll strawberries to be worth the price, Driscoll should let workers improve their lives.**

A message from The Strawberry Workers Campaign, a project of the UFW and AFL-CIO



STRAWBERRY WORKER  
VERONICA SANCHEZ



Printed in USA

## Letters to the Editor



Again, we reprint letters from our members on various issues. We invite our readers to continue to share their opinions with us, whether in support of or in opposition to our own. Debate is healthy and welcome in this union. Letters are edited for length only, not content. Remember: anonymous letters will not be printed. You can also reach us on the Web: <http://www.opeiu.org>

### Poetry empowers working people

Member Phyllis Mooney was kind enough to share with us, and you her poem "Awake and Realize."

#### Awake and Realize

When will you people awake and realize,  
You continue to fear and believe all the lies.  
You work and you work but it is never enough,  
Standing up for your rights is always tough.  
When the bonuses stop and your wages decline,  
When your future is layoffs and unemployment lines.  
You pack up the family to leave your home  
and your friends,  
Your job doesn't exist, the union you were  
afraid to defend.  
You were afraid to vote union, on that important day,  
And when your jobs are gone, what then  
will you say?  
Who will you turn to, the union you always  
blame,  
Remember the decision was yours, and  
there lies the shame.

Strength is people working together, speaking in one voice,  
Your future was there and you made your choice.  
What your grandfathers and fathers sacrificed and have built  
You have now turned your back on, you bare the guilt.  
The privilege and power was there in the palm of your hand,  
But you failed to walk forward and feared making a stand.  
So keep in mind what you have lost and never forget,  
The union was behind you and you forsake it.  
Phyllis Mooney  
Local 457  
Centerville, Pennsylvania

[All of our members are welcome to send us their original poems, short stories, drawings for possible inclusion in White Collar.

### Dear President Goodwin:

I am in total agreement with your editorial, "What's in a Name? Deception." The Working Families Flexibility Act is nothing more than the proverbial "wolf in sheep's clothing." Workers will not be happy with this bill of goods they are being sold. Let me offer you an example.

Supervisory and Management staff employed by the State of Michigan do not have

gain for wage and benefit increases. They must appear before a Civil Service Compensation board and present issues for consideration. OPEIU Local 512 represents a portion of the supervisory employees and, along with several other unions, is part of

this annual process.

The State of Michigan grants vacation credits or annual leave accruals on a bi-weekly basis. There is a cap on the amount of hours an employee can accrue. If the em-

Continued on page 10

### OPEIU offers greeting cards

International Vice President Nick Kapell, besides being a union leader, is an excellent photographer specializing in scenes of nature. OPEIU has created greeting cards — sympathy and congratulations on a new baby — using a couple of Kapell's photos. The designs appear here and we offer them to you at 70 cents each. Contact the Secretary-Treasurer's office, 1660 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 393-4464 to place your order.



Sometimes hope for  
a new tomorrow  
can help you get through  
the sorrows of today

Condolences from people who care  
OPEIU



Our Family would like  
to Congratulate you  
on the New Addition  
To Yours

Best Wishes from OPEIU

Photos by Nick Kapell, Local 397, Regina, Saskatchewan

### Positions available at CUNA Mutual (Madison, WI)

Kent Cramer, president of Local 39 in Madison, Wisconsin, wrote to share with us the availability of excellent union jobs at CUNA Mutual Insurance Society. Specifically, Cramer says:

CUNA Mutual, insurer of credit unions and their members worldwide, needs computer/information technology employees. The main office of CUNA Mutual is located in Madison, Wis. You would enjoy an excellent starting salary and benefit package, negotiated by OPEIU Local 39.

For more information, you can contact either:

- OPEIU Local 39 at phone (608) 257-4734 or fax (608) 257-1155, or
- CUNA Mutual at (800) 562-2862 or visit them at <http://www.cunamutual.com>

[You are also welcome to call the International Union at (212) 675-3210 and we will fax job descriptions to you.]

Kent Cramer  
President, Local 39  
Madison, Wisconsin

### Free airtime for Local 100 (and food) thanks to member Lebovich

Hi, my name is Tammy Lebovich. I am the secretary who works in the Broward office for Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF)/OPEIU Local 100. I am sitting in my office with all kinds of fabulous food in front of my eyes. I can't believe how it got here. I am sure that the people I invited to join us to partake in all this good food can't believe it either.

A couple of days ago, during my lunch break, I was listening to my favorite radio station, 99.9 KISS country, with all-too-funny disc jockeys RJ Macoy and Sandi Ames. I learned, to qualify to win a free lunch for the office by Joel's Catering, I had to fax on our company letterhead three of my favorite songs to the radio station.

It took a couple of days before the three songs that I listed were played and the Government Supervisors' name was announced. That was yesterday. One hour after my office was qualified for the free lunch by Joel's, I got the phone call I was waiting for. The person who called said that Joel's Catering was going to come to my office. I was told that Joel's Catering would be calling to ask how many people would be present so that he could know how much food to bring.

I invited the Miami GSAF office and a special invitation to our President Ed

Darcy, as well as all the people on my hall...

At 11 a.m., Joel's Catering came with their big truck and grill and proceeded to cook some marvelous and tasty food. Ed Darcy, president of OPEIU Local 100, came to our office party and some pictures were taken of the whole affair (see below). That's how I ended up with great food, laughs and really good company.

Tammy Lebovich  
Miami, Florida



Pictured (from left to right) at the free catered lunch are 99.9 KISS disc jockey Sandi Ames, winning member Tammy Lebovich and Local 100 President (and OPEIU Regional Director) Ed Darcy.

### WHITE COLLAR

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

MICHAEL GOODWIN  
President

GILLES BEAUREGARD  
Secretary-Treasurer



GWEN WELLS  
Managing Editor

CALM  
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## Work and Health

# Questions and Answers about Prostate Cancer: the risks, symptoms and testing

**W**hat is the prostate? The prostate is a male sex gland, part of a man's reproductive system. The prostate is about the size of a walnut. It is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum.

**What is prostate cancer?** Cancer of the prostate is the most common malignancy in American men. It is estimated that this year in the United States nearly 250,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, and about 40,000 men will die from this disease. In the majority of men with prostate cancer, it is very slow growing, and most of these men die with prostate cancer and not from it. Early prostate cancer is localized (confined) to the gland, and the majority of patients with localized prostate cancer have a long survival after diagnosis.

**Who is at risk for prostate cancer?** All men are at risk. The most profound risk factor is age. The average age at diagnosis is 65, and the lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer for a 50-year-old is about 10 percent. African American men have a 30 to 50 percent higher risk of prostate cancer than white Americans. Dramatic differences in the incidence of prostate cancer are seen in different countries, and there is some evidence that a diet higher in animal fat may, in part, underlie these differences in risk. Genetic factors play a role, particularly for families in whom the diagnosis is made in men under 60 years of age, and the risk of prostate cancer rises with the number of close relatives who have the disease.

**What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?** Prostate cancer often does not cause symptoms for many years. By the time symptoms occur, the disease may have spread beyond the prostate. When symptoms do occur, they may include:

- frequent urination, especially at night
- inability to urinate
- trouble starting or holding urination
- pain during ejaculation
- a weak or interrupted urine flow
- pain or burning feeling during urination
- blood in the semen or in the urine
- frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs.

**Can other prostate conditions cause these symptoms?** The above symptoms may be caused by prostate cancer or by a variety of other conditions. Only a doctor can tell for sure. As men get older, their prostate may grow bigger and block the flow of urine or interfere with sexual function. This common benign prostate condition, which is not cancer, can cause many of the same symptoms as prostate cancer.

**Can prostate cancer be found before a man has symptoms?** Yes. Two tests are

commonly used to detect prostate cancer in the absence of any symptoms. One is the digital rectal examination (DRE), in which a doctor feels the prostate through the rectum to find hard or lumpy areas. The other is a blood test used to detect a substance made by the prostate called prostate specific antigen (PSA). Together, these tests can detect the majority of silent prostate cancers, those that have not caused symptoms. Currently, the National Cancer Institute is supporting research to learn more about screening men for prostate cancer. This research will determine whether the blood test for PSA along with DRE can help reduce the death rate from this disease.

**How reliable are the two tests?** Neither of the screening tests for prostate cancer is perfect. Most men with mildly elevated PSA do not have prostate cancer, and some men with prostate cancer have normal levels of PSA. Also, the DRE does not detect all prostate cancer.

**How is prostate cancer diagnosed?** The presence of prostate cancer is suggested by either an abnormal DRE or when levels of PSA in the blood are high. But the diagnosis can be confirmed only by a microscopic examination of prostate tissue. This is done by a biopsy performed in the doctor's office.

**Should men have regular prostate cancer exams?** Thus far, we do not know if screening and early detection make a difference. Clearly, however, anyone with the symptoms (mentioned above) should have a DRE and PSA test. Most physicians and physician groups (e.g., U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and American College of Physicians) do not endorse annual exams for asymptomatic males. The American Urological Association, on the other hand, recommends that all males of 50 years or older have an annual prostate examination comprised of DRE and PSA tests. AUA also recommends that all males of 40 years or more with a family history of prostate cancer have annual DRE and PSA tests. The American Cancer Society's guidelines fall somewhere between the two and emphasize that anyone in a high-risk population (see #3), should begin annual screening at age 45.

For more information, you can contact the Cancer Information Service (CIS) which is the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) national information and education network. The CIS is the source for the latest, most accurate cancer information for patients, the public and health professionals. CIS staff can answer questions in English or Spanish and distribute NCI materials. Toll-free phone number: 800-4-CANCER (800-422-6237).



## Washington Window Figures Don't Lie

**W**e have to keep beating the same drum, but figures don't lie: Despite economic growth, low inflation and declining unemployment since 1992, the rich get richer, the poor get poorer and the middle class is losing ground.

That's the message of "Income and Inequality," a new analysis from the labor-supported Americans for Democratic Action. ADA warns the widening gap between the rich and the rest of us threatens both our economy and our society.

"Beyond today's headlines about economic growth and . . . the balanced budget, the foundations of a democratic society are cracking," said ADA President Jack Sheinkman in releasing the report in late October.

"Equal opportunity, our sense of community and other traditional values are being eroded. Economic and political power continue to shift to multinational corporations and the very rich, while workers and their families are put at risk," added Sheinkman, former President of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers. "America needs more than a dialogue on race," he said. "It needs a dialogue on income inequality. Americans must tell the government: 'It's still the economy, stupid.'"

The report paints the portrait we know, but that President Clinton and the business-dominated GOP-run Congress ignores:

- Since 1979, 98 percent of the nation's gains in household income went to the wealthiest fifth of Americans. Everyone else shared the rest. But the poor didn't really share it: the income of the poorest fifth of households declined by about one-fifth.

"The income gap between the richest and the poorest is larger than it has been since the Depression," the report noted.

- In 1979, the average hourly worker earned \$8.25, after taking out inflation. In 1996, that same worker earned \$7.50. That's a ten percent cut.

- The richest of the rich gained the most. The top five percent of the nation's families saw their incomes, after inflation, rise from \$144,942 in 1979 to \$217,355 last year. That's a 50 percent jump. That minority of families takes home one of every five dollars in income

in the entire country, about equal, ADA says, to the amount taken home by the bottom half of all working families.

- Millions of working families are poor. "Because of low wages and the difficulties finding full-time year-round jobs . . . of the 9.6 million poor who worked in 1996, 2.3 million were on the job full-time year-round," ADA pointed out. The rest worked full-time for part of the year.

The minimum wage increase which organized labor and President Clinton pushed through the Republican-run Congress lessened the gap, but not much. Before the hike, a minimum-wage full-time worker earned \$8,500 yearly — \$4,000 less than the poverty threshold for a three-person family. Now that worker earns \$10,300. That's still \$2,200 below the poverty line.

- The number of millionaire households increased seven-fold from 1979 (13,500) to 1996 (almost 100,000). CEO compensation — including stock options and other perks workers don't get — skyrocketed from 40 times an average worker's compensation to 217 times an average worker's compensation.

Why the dismal record? Government policies — led by Reagan's tax cuts and GOP attacks on Social Security and Medicare — aided and abetted by corporate union-busting, "contributed to growing inequality and poverty," ADA says. Clinton's trade policies hurt, too, the report adds.

So how can workers and their allies reverse the growing gap between the rich and the rest of us? Besides fighting for social safety net programs, ADA specifically suggests fighting for ourselves. That's the crusade the AFL-CIO is leading: To make workers' rights civil rights.

"Unions' vital role in fostering economic democracy must be recognized. Federal action must be taken to encourage collective bargaining and to reform labor law so workers' rights to organize and bargain are guaranteed and enforced."

That's because collective bargaining gains help non-union workers, too. "Union-won wage increases 'spill over' to many non-union workers as employers raise wages" to try to avoid union wins, ADA dryly notes.

## Canadian Locals in the News

### Local 378 organizing:

### **Indian Band and business machine industry workers unionize**

**L**ocal 378 has 33 new union members from Pacific Business Equipment, a British Columbia company that sells and services business machines in Victoria, Nanaimo, Campbell River and Port Hardy.

"The organizing campaign took just five days and employee involvement was intense. Seven days after we filed the application, certification was granted by the B.C. Labour Board," said Union Organizer Gordon Eccles.

Local 378 has also filed a certification application for 57 employees at Danka Business Systems, photocopy company in Richmond, Victoria, Kamloops, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Nanaimo, Kelowna and Prince George. "We expect to receive a ruling from the Labour Board in mid-November," Eccles said.

"The 57 employees joined our union because they wanted better wages and benefits. They were seriously underpaid, as are workers in the rest of the photocopy industry."

Local 378 has also filed applications at the federal and provincial Labour Boards to represent workers at the Skeetchestn Indian Band. The Skeetchestn band, located along the Number 1 highway between Cache Creek and Kamloops in B.C., is a small municipality with the powers both of a provincial and federal government in terms of enterprises and activities.

Two certifications have been filed. The provincial certification covers eight workers in a convenience store on the Reserve. The federal certification covers about 50 employees in the Skeetchestn Indian Band office, administration employees in the Reserve school, social workers, recreation department, forestry department, fisheries and maintenance workers.

"Under the Indian Act, the Chief and Band Council have an enormous amount of control over the workers. The Skeetchestn Indian Band workers decided to form a union because they are underpaid. Many were not even earning minimum wage and had no job security," explained Eccles who expects the Labour Board rulings in November.

## **Local 378 wins communications awards**

**O**PEIU Local 378 has won two 1997 awards in Editorial Excellence, including the Saul Miller Award for political reporting, from the International Labour Communications Association (ILCA), AFL-CIO, for work produced last year. The local also won a 1997 award for "Best Photograph" from the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

Local 378 has won either national or international communications awards every year for the past 10 years.



Local 378 Communications Director Paula Stromberg attended the ILCA conference in Pittsburgh where she received two communications awards. In this photo, she chats with Dr. Elaine Bernard, executive director of the Trade Union Program at Harvard University and a former Vancouverite, who gave a speech about the role of unions in promoting civil society and democracy to labor communicators at the awards banquet.

**More Canadian News on page 13.**

## **Local 378 contract talks slow, but progress made in job security**

**L**ack of a mandate from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) senior management has made negotiations painfully slow for Local 378 members trying to reach a contract settlement with the corporation. ICBC is the largest bargaining unit in Local 378 with 4,100 members.

Contract talks have been underway with ICBC since August 1996, one month before the last local 378/ICBC contract expired. The two sides have been in mediated talks since late spring.

Despite the frustrations over the slow progress, the OPEIU has made several gains important for members. In June 1997, for example, the local reached agreement with ICBC that provides protection from layoffs.

The local also has unprecedented new

language from ICBC, known as the 'Transition Accord' that provides job security. Once the new contract is signed and ratified by OPEIU members, members will have protection from layoffs for the entire contract term.

There are other advances as well. The local finally received an arbitrated decision about pay equity at ICBC that saw a number of traditionally lower-paid, female-dominated jobs get a raise in pay. The arbitration decision finalized both our new job evaluation plan and an expedited appeal procedure to address future disputes.

A mediator is expected to make recommendations by the end of April 1998. Then Local 378 negotiators and ICBC will study the recommendations before it's decided whether to put it to a membership vote at ICBC.

## **SEPB-57 holds 1997 Biennial Convention**

### **Organizing — Equity, Unity, Justice, Power and Security**

#### **The Biennial Convention opens with timely theme**

More than 250 SEPB-57 delegates gathered in Montreal on October 24-26, 1997 for the Biennial Convention to discuss the importance of union organizing to the future of the labour movement in Canada and throughout the world.

The convention stressed that unionization must and will be Local 57's priority in the next few years. Delegates were shown — in a very unique way — that unionization is first and foremost a question of equity, unity, justice, power and security.

"We invited a theater company to our convention to give us a show on the theme of 'union organizing' and encourage interaction on the topic," President Maurice Laplante explains. "Our delegates took part in the sketches and very much enjoyed the role-playing which tackled several aspects, such as how to bring up the topic of organizing.

"This was a very dynamic and inspiring convention," President Laplante concludes.

#### **The new image of SEPB-57**

At the SEPB-57 convention the delegates adopted a resolution making the new SEPB-57 logo the official signature of the union.

"The decisively modern forms, the lumi-

nous colors, the movement and direction of the design, and the choice of fonts evoke the dynamism of our organization as well as its fidelity to the traditional values that make the labour movement," President Laplante said.

#### **Getting stronger at Desjardins**

The *caisse populaire de Montreal-Est* employees have decided to act and applied for certification to the Labour Department, with the support of SEPB-57. They wish to be unionized to improve the quality of their life at work and to be in a better position in the face of the reengineering process at Desjardins.

The *caisse populaire de Montreal-Est* employees have understood that only a union and their solidarity will allow them to expose and solve difficult situations.

SEPB-57 already represents more than 100 *caisses populaires* in the province of Quebec.

#### **Settlement of the strike at the *caisse populaire de Cacouna***

On strike since October 10, 1997, the *caisse populaire de Cacouna* employees finally reached an agreement with their employer. The new collective agreement was signed on November 14 after reaching a back-to-work settlement.

# Tennessee Valley Authority Employees Scholarship

Eight scholarships are awarded each year to the employees and families of OPEIU members working for the Tennessee Valley Authority — the public utility serving eight states in the South. There is a limit of one scholarship per family. We are pleased to announce the 1997 winners of the award, which carries a maximum value of \$500:

**H**ollen Barner currently attends Christian Brothers University, planning to graduate in the year 2000. She is the daughter of Local 119 member William Barner Jr. from Germantown, Tennessee. Date of birth: August 12, 1978.



Johnson, member of Local 119, living in Harri- man, Tennessee.

**R**uth Malone is a member of Local 268 and works for the Tennessee Valley Authority. She graduated from Corenant College in May 1994 and has chose the George Meany Center for Labor Studies to further her education. She lives in Jasper, Tennessee.



**K**imberly Pitts graduated from Wilson High School in May 1997 and now attends UNA. Her mother Elizabeth Pitts is a member of Local 119. They live in Florence, Alabama. Date of birth: June 1, 1979.

**K**imberly Westfelt, daughter of Local 119 member Billie Pemberton, lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Date of birth: September 17, 1964.



**J**ason Farmer, son of Local 119 member Linda Farmer, lives in Rising Fawn, Georgia. He currently attends Berry College and plans to graduate in May 2000. Date of birth: October 9, 1976.



**V**alerie McMillan attends Emory University, following her graduation from Waverly Central High School in May 1997. She is the daughter of Local 268 member Paul McMillan. They live in Waverly, Tennessee. Date of birth: September 6, 1979.



**L**ori Lee Whitaker graduated in May 1997 from Dickson County High School and planned to attend Tennessee Technological University. Her father Dewey Whitaker is a member of Local 268. They live in Dickson, Tennessee. Date of birth: September 17, 1979.

**S**tephani Johnson is attending the University of Tennessee at Knoxville with intentions to graduate in December 1999. She is the daughter of Jacqueline



## Looking back at Labor Day celebrations

Just a few of the many celebrations OPEIU locals took part in were those of Local 17 and 1794 in Cleveland and Lorain, Ohio; and Locals 153 and 32 in New York and New Jersey. "This is the labor movement's day, a day to celebrate the working men and women of America, their right to join labor unions, to unite for dignity



In Lorain, Ohio's Lakeview Park (front row, standing left to right) are Anne Mancine, Vice President Cathy Wittenbrook and Eve Masor. Standing (second row, left to right) are Rick Meyer, Angie Smith and Donna Ramsey. Katie Wittenbrook is sitting.

and living wages and benefits," OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin said. "We are happy as always to be a part of this event and the struggle for economic justice for all working Americans."

### Cleveland, Ohio

Members of Local 17 and 1794 participated in the Labor Day festivities that heralded the theme, "the family." The parade route. Vice President Cathy Wittenbrook reports, ended at the Cleveland Zoo, where all 3,000 marchers and their families enjoyed "a beautiful outing after the parade with free admission. The feeling of unionism and celebration of labor was felt wherever one went." Members of Local 17 carried a banner featuring the new AFL-CIO Partnership with Kaiser Permanente Health Plan.

### Lorain, Ohio

Labor celebrated its second annual Labor Day family picnic at Lakeview Park in Lorain, Ohio. It was sponsored by the Lorain County AFL-CIO and its participating

unions as well as local merchants. Picnickers could view displays from more than 200 local unions. There were rides for the children and food booths galore. A crowd of more than 30,000 people attended the day's festivities.

Special guest speaker Ohio AFL-CIO President Bill Burga addressed the upcoming battle in the state to defeat legislation that would repeal the workers compensation bill and strip workers of protection from workplace injury.

### New York, New York

Tens of thousands of trade unionists and their families turned out to celebrate. Thousands of New Yorkers lined the Fifth Avenue sidewalks to watch.

Local 153, New York, N.Y. members were out in force. Prior to the parade, they feasted on hot dogs and heroes, ice cream and cupcakes, soda and bottled water, while the children enjoyed 153's traditional clown who made them balloon animals. The delegation then marched, danced to the 153 Dixieland band, and rode one of the two

Local 153 floats — one dedicated to the new Local 153 members, the Federation of Catholic Teachers.

### Paterson, New Jersey

Locals 32 (Union, N.J.) and 153 (New York, N.Y.), both of which have substantial numbers of New Jersey members, marched, danced, rode floats through the streets of Paterson, N.J. — site of a long and colorful labor history. It is also the site of the Botto House, the only labor museum in the region, for which OPEIU President Michael Goodwin is the president.



Local 17 and 1794 members in Cleveland, Ohio.

# AFL-CIO constituency groups inject new spirit, enthusiasm into organizing

## Women: Labor's Future: Theme of CLUW Convention

Nearly 1,000 attended the Convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), which was held November 6-9, 1997 in Seattle, Washington. "Women: Labor's Future" was the convention's theme, recognizing that women are the fastest growing group of unionized workers in the country today.

A health fair on women's issues preceded the Convention. Keynoting was Ann Richards, former governor of Texas, who stressed the need for women's health research, as well as the need for women to take responsibility for their health care. In the afternoon, workshops took place on everything from breast cancer to stress re-

duction, from tai chi to aerobic exercising. A Power Walk took place in the early morning, with proceeds going to benefit a Seattle women's shelter. OPEIU sponsored the walk and five walkers: Neysa Griffith and Sedora Villa from Local 153 (New York); Mary Quinn, Local 3 (San Francisco); Jearlean Fleming, Local 391 (Chicago) and Sandra Ellison, Local 28 (Chicago), although other OPEIU delegates walked as well. OPEIU also had a health fair booth, distributing information on women's health issues as well as health care units the union represents.

A major highlight of the convention was keynote address by OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin who told



Jearlean Fleming from OPEIU Local 391 serves as CLUW Sergeant-at-Arms and escorts Ann Richards, former governor of Texas, following her remarks during the CLUW Convention Health Fair Conference.



OPEIU's CLUW delegates volunteer for an early morning Power Walk with proceeds going to a women's shelter in Seattle, Washington.

## Pride at Work and AFL-CIO form historic partnership

by Sarah Clark, Local 3 (San Francisco)

On August 23, 1997, at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting, Pride at Work (PAW), the national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender trade union organization, became an official constituency group of the AFL-CIO. At the AFL-CIO Convention in Pittsburgh, PAW was recognized as the newest such group in the labor federation.

The AFL-CIO's constituency groups are labor's bridge to diverse communities, creating partnerships to benefit the standard of living for all workers and their families. The groups also ensure that the labor movement hears and responds to the concerns of the communities they represent. Pride at Work currently represents workers in 33 different unions and has 15 regional chapters. It fights discrimination based on sexual orientation by educating and sensitizing the labor movement to the needs and concerns of the lesbian and gay community and assists in organizing lesbian and gay workers into unions.

PAW works closely with gay and lesbian civil rights and human rights groups, as well as the civil rights movement in general. Its members are active in union organizing drives around the country.

Nancy Wohlforth, Local 3's Business Manager, is the National Co-Chair of Pride at Work and was invited to attend the AFL-CIO Convention by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. While there, she met with unionists from around the country to discuss various organizing campaigns, as well as to discuss specific organizing campaigns for Local 3.

If you would like more information on Pride at Work or would like to join a local chapter, you can call either the Local 3 office (415) 777-3444; or Howard Wallace (415) 861-0318 or (415) 284-7519.

CLUW delegates how the union had historically represented the interests of women and minorities, and how under his leadership the officers and staff have diversified, now better reflecting the faces and voices of OPEIU members.

He also pointed out how the labor movement and OPEIU had made a difference in legislative and electoral politics, how the union is organizing members in ever greater numbers — including women and people of color — as well as many nontraditional workers.

Another highlight at the Convention was the Saturday afternoon Young Working Women's Forum at which young working women and older, more experienced working women held a dialogue about the issues and concerns of young women. Several young OPEIU members were panelists:

Gwen Wells, OPEIU's Research and Education Director, was reelected unanimously as CLUW National Vice President. At the

union caucus, OPEIU participants elected Mary Quinn of Local 3 in San Francisco and Janet Graham of Local 8 in Seattle to represent them as CLUW National Executive Board delegates. Theresa Horner, Local 42 (Detroit) and Jearlean Fleming, Local 391 (Chicago) were elected as union alternates.

Many other OPEIU members attended as convention delegates from OPEIU, their chapters or as state officers, including International Vice President Kathleen Kinnick, Local 3 (San Francisco); Pat Agostino, Maureen Bo, Cindy Schu, Norma Kelsey, Phyllis Najad, all from Local 8 (Seattle); Claire Collins, Local 11 (Portland); Sandra Ellison, Local 28 (Chicago); Edith Withington, Local 29 (Oakland); Cynthia McCaughan, Local 30 (Los Angeles); Neysa Griffith and Sedora Villa, Local 153 (New York); Nancy Rising and Susan Fuldauer, Local 277 (Ft. Worth); Millie Hall, Evelyn Brooks and Ethel Schwartz, all from Local 494 (Detroit).

## National APALA convention

by Beverly Umehara, California Labor Federation, Local 3

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) held its national convention in San Francisco, August 7-10, 1997. More than 425 delegates attended, representing international unions and APALA chapters from all over the country.

This APALA convention was unique and non-traditional in that the delegates received training to serve as organizers for their unions. "The unprecedented effort to develop volunteer Asian-American organizers comes at a time when the American labor movement is making new efforts to reach out to women and people of color. Every unionized worker in the United States has to take responsibility for bringing the power of unions to organized workers," commented Guy Fujimara, APALA's newly elected president. He continued, "Unless we help unionize, Americans will continue to see a decline in their real income and job security."

Convention delegates, inspired by a call to action from Richard Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, marched on H&N fish Company at San Francisco Fisherman's Wharf to protest the company's treatment of immigrant workers and the firing of employees who had been involved in union organizing activities.

Convention delegates also rallied at the downtown Marriott Hotel in support of workers seeking medical and retirement benefits and other rights in their first contract.

OPEIU now has two members on the National APALA Executive Board: Imelda Mehlert of APALA's Washington, D.C. chapter, who was appointed by President Michael Goodwin as the national OPEIU representative. And I [Beverly Umehara] was reelected to a second term.

# Information vital to conducting of union elections

Continued from page 1

ary 30 to all local unions informing them of the procedures to be followed. These letters are reprinted in this edition of *White Collar*.

January 15, 1998

**TO:** All OPEIU Local Unions, International Officers and International Staff, in both the United States and Canada.

**RE:** Prohibition of Expenditure of Union and Employer Funds in Campaigns of 1998 Election of International Union Officers.

The Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (Landrum-Griffin Act) (LMRDA) applies to the election of International Union officers and to the election of delegates and alternates to the 1998 Convention. The United States Department of Labor (DOL) very strenuously enforces these provisions of the law, so the prohibitions of expenditures of Union and employer funds outlined in this letter should be carefully observed.

## I. BASIC LAW

Section 401(g) of the LMRDA sets out the basic prohibition of using union and employer funds in election campaigns. That section states:

No moneys received by any labor organization by way of dues, assessment, or similar levy, and no moneys of an employer shall be contributed or applied to promote the candidacy of any person in an election subject to the provisions of this title. Such moneys of a labor organization may be utilized for notices, factual statements of issues not involving candidates, and other expenses necessary for the holding of an election.

This provision covers the funds of not only the OPEIU itself, and its Local Unions, but the funds of any other union, both international, and locals. This prohibition also covers "moneys" of any employer, not just an employer with whom the OPEIU or any of its Local Unions has a collective bargaining relationship, or even just an employer with which any other labor organization has a collective bargaining relationship. It covers all employers.

In addition, Section 302 of the Labor Management Relations Act makes it a crime for any union representative to request or accept "any payment, loan, or delivery of any money or other thing of value . . ." from any employer or any representative of an employer. Although the issue is not fully settled, the statutory language is broad enough to include such requests or acceptance of anything of value from an employer or any employer representative even though the union has no collective bargaining relationship or organizing campaign with that employer. Anything of value received from an employer in connection with the election of any person to union office could be construed to be a violation of this criminal section of the law as well as violation of Section 401(g). The OPEIU has to be especially careful as many other unions are employers of OPEIU represented employees. Violations that ex-

ceed \$1,000 are felonies punishable by imprisonment of not more than five years and a fine of not more than \$15,000. Violations under \$1,000 are misdemeanors punishable by imprisonment of not more than one year and a fine of not more than \$10,000.

## II. CAMPAIGNING ON UNION TIME

No employee of the International Union or any Local Union may campaign during their work time for any International Union Officer, or delegates or alternates, as that is an improper expenditure of Union funds, unless such campaigning is clearly incidental to otherwise regular (required) union business. Time spent campaigning paid for by an employer other than the International or a Local Union is also prohibited.

## III. USE OF FACILITIES OR EQUIPMENT

The offices, meeting halls, or facilities of any international or local union, or of an employer, may not be used for campaign meetings, unless the campaign reimburses the owner or entity controlling the facility at the rate charged to community groups for use of that facility. No signs favoring any candidate may be posted on any union or any employer property.

No equipment of any union or any employer may be used in any campaign. The DOL has processed and won lawsuits over such expenditures totaling as little as \$6.40. Equipment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Telephones
2. Computers or word processors
3. Typewriters
4. Copiers
5. Fax machines
6. Paper
7. Letterhead
8. Envelopes
9. Office supplies of all kinds
10. Union paid automobiles

No union gasoline, telephone or other credit cards may be used to cover any campaign expenses.

## IV. UNION PUBLICATIONS

No campaigning in any publication is permitted. This includes newspapers or newsletters, official membership and stewards' publications, letters, and all other printed material of the International or a Local Union. No endorsements may be made in any such publication. No subtle campaigning is permitted. For example, increased coverage of incumbents or other candidates through stories or photographs, in terms of frequency, size, and placement within the publications are not allowed. All stories about union accomplishments should be timely and worded normally. It is permissible for a union to sponsor candidates' debate or publish candidates' statements in a newspaper, provided all competing candidates are informed timely and are afforded equal treatment.

If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

Fraternally,

**Gilles Beauregard**  
Secretary-Treasurer

January 30, 1998

**TO:** All OPEIU Local Unions, International Officers and International Staff in the United States.

**Re:** Election of Delegates and Alternates to the 1998 International Union Convention.

This letter reviews the major steps that Local Unions must take in the election of delegates and alternates under the OPEIU Constitution and the law.

The requirements spelled out in this letter are drawn from the Constitution, the regulations adopted by the United States Department of Labor (DOL) which regulates the election of international union officers under Title IV of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (Landrum-Griffin Act) (LMRDA) and cases that have been decided by courts construing the LMRDA.

These procedures apply to the selection of BOTH DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES, and it is imperative that they be followed carefully, as it is expected that some International Officer's positions may be contested at the 1998 Convention.

The OPEIU Constitution provides in Article VI, Section 6 that: "Each delegate shall be selected by vote of the Local Union."

If the Constitution of a Local Union provides that an elected officer or officers are to be delegates or alternates to OPEIU Conventions, such officers have already been elected as delegates or alternates and will not need to run in the elections to be held before the 1998 Convention. However, any person who fills a vacancy in such an office by appointment or any process other than a secret ballot election that meets all LMRDA and DOL requirements, was not elected as a delegate or alternate and must be elected before the Convention to serve as a delegate or alternate.

## I. NOTICES OF NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION

The Notices of Nominations must give members reasonable, timely notice that nominations for the position(s) of delegate(s) and alternate(s) to the 1998 International Convention will be held at the specified time and place(s), and the form in which nominations are to be made (i.e. nominations will be made at the meeting, or in writing, etc.). Notices of Nominations do not have to be mailed, but may be conspicuously posted at each place of employment of Union members and at the Union office.

However, notices of election must be mailed to the last known address of each member at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of the election. The Notice of Election must state that it is an election for delegate(s) and alternate(s) to the 1998 Convention, and must also specify the date, time, and place of the election. It will probably be easiest for most Locals to do what is most often done in the election of officers situation, that is to combine the Notice of Nominations and the Notice of Election in a single mailing to the last known home address of each member.

If your Local has a publication that goes to each member's last known home address the Notice(s) may be disseminated in that publication so long as each Notice appears on the front page, or there is a prominent statement on the front page indicating that the Notice of nomination and/or the election appears inside, and that statement specifies where the Notice appears.

Nominations and elections may be held at the same meeting so long as the appropriate notice is given. Because the DOL requires a reasonable period during which members will have a sufficient opportunity to campaign before an election, it is suggested that such a combined notice be mailed at least thirty (30) days before the combined meeting.

In recent years, the DOL has taken a very strong position that Unions must take whatever steps they can to make sure that their list of last known home addresses of their members is as up-to-date as possible in connection with sending out notices of nominations or election. Local Unions should review their current procedures and make every effort to be sure that membership lists are up-to-date and accurate prior to sending out notices of nominations and election for delegates and alternates. Associate members and Beck objectors are not members eligible to vote and should not receive Notices of Nominations or Elections, or ballots.

## II. QUALIFICATIONS FOR AND ELECTION OF DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

The election of both delegates and alternates must be conducted by secret ballot. Each delegate, or alternate "must have been in continuous good standing with the Local Union such delegate represents for at least twelve (12) months prior to the convening of the convention, . . ." "unless the Local Union has been functioning for less than that one-year period, as stated in Article VI, Section 6 of the OPEIU Constitution. If two or more Local Unions have merged, each member is considered in good standing for the time the member was in good standing in any of the Locals involved in the merger.

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Local Union, or any other official designated in the Constitution or By-Laws of the Local Union, must preserve the ballots and all other records pertaining to the election for at least one year.

## III. NUMBER OF DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

The number of delegates for each local is as designated in Article VI, Sections 1 and 3 of the International Constitution. No Local Union may have more than five delegates present at the convention. Local Unions are entitled to one alternate for each delegate to which the Local is entitled.

Any Local Union bringing more persons to the Convention than the number of delegates and alternates the Local is permitted, may have those persons observe the Convention proceedings on a closed circuit television broadcast in another room.

To the extent that this letter does not answer any of your questions, you should contact the undersigned.

In solidarity,

**Gilles Beauregard**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

## Participants at one conference speak out

In speaking to a few of the activists at the Northeast Regional Education Conference in Secaucus, N.J., the *White Collar* found the following to be fairly representative of feelings about the training or what it means to be union and actively involved.



I continue to be impressed with the many things about the labor movement, including Union Privilege. As members, we have access to these and many additional benefits and discounts. It pays to be union in many ways.

**Ed Serino, Anheuser-Busch**  
Local 6, Boston, Mass.



As GHI chief shop steward and now Local 153 vice president, I work on behalf of our members on a daily basis. Yet, I never tire of it or of learning more to improve my skills. And I never get tired of meeting new people in the union and the labor movement who can share their experiences with me.

**Neyssa Griffith, GHI**  
Local 153, New York, N.Y.



We need to organize to increase the numbers in the local unions. It gives the workers and the locals more power and strength. For example, we will have more resources (people and financial) to fight the employer in arbitration or negotiations.

**Melissa Corbett, Georgia-Pacific**  
Local 295, Woodland, Maine



Management can always change, that is, take back benefits. The union protects workers' rights, ensures fairness. I am proud to be part of it.

**Karen Whetzel, Brownsville General Hospital**  
Local 471, Brownsville, Pa.



I think this kind of training is perfect. We're able to mingle with other locals. It's well organized. We met many people in Vancouver [at the OPEIU Convention]. This is a good chance to get reacquainted.

**Gloria Hunter, Blue Cross/Blue Shield**  
Local 32, Newark, N.J.



We don't get enough opportunities to exchange ideas with other locals in the region since we [in Puerto Rico] are so far away. I always gain from the experience, as well as any training offered by the International.

**Idamis Cabra, PRMMI**  
Local 402, Santurce, Puerto Rico

## Regional conferences provide service training

Full 1997 saw a continuation of OPEIU regional conferences, providing arbitration and steward training/grievance handling training to OPEIU local union activists. The subject matter proved to be very popular as all conferences drew larger than normal attendance. High praise for instruction and teachers was received from participants at all of the conferences.

Local union activists additionally were impressed that International President Michael Goodwin chose to spend so much time getting to know their issues and problems. In a newly created "Meet the President" program, he met with interested members and local unions throughout the weekend, before and after training sessions, sometimes late into the night. Many expressed their appreciation on evaluation forms.

A Vice Presidential Breakfast for the first time was held on Sunday mornings to enable regional locals to become better acquainted with their Vice Presidents and International staff members — both representatives and ROC organizers. It was a great success.

In his luncheon speech to delegates, President Goodwin pointed to the "unprecedented growth in OPEIU" which was honored at the AFL-CIO Convention for organizing helicopter pilots, health care workers, Catholic school teachers, physicians, chiropractors and podiatrists. He commended the region for organizing: Residential Treatment of West Michigan, Michigan Capital Medical Center, St. Vincent's Home, Elyria Public Library, Mt. Clemens Hospital and Dominion Linens Co.

Chuck Eikel from Local 39 in Madison, Wis., explained to delegates that banks are attacking credit unions and trying to eliminate them as competitors. He urged them to contact their congressional representatives and ask for support of HR 1151. (See insert for a description of the legislation.) This is especially important since OPEIU repre-

sents thousands of employees of credit unions. In addition, as Eikel pointed out, credit unions are a benefit to our members as consumers because of their low fees and loan rates, as well as higher savings rates.

### Erie Conference

Volunteer Organizing Committee (VOC) members Doug Kiger (Local 19), Donna Ramsey (Local 17) and Nancy Holle (Local 1) were honored for their hard and successful organizing work. See photo below.

Locals from the Erie Region met in Cleveland, Ohio from September 17 to 19, 1997. Instructors from the Penn State University's Department of Labor Studies and Industrial Relations — Eric Momberger and Howard Harris — taught respectively the basic arbitration and stewards' classes.

The following local unions participated: Locals 1 (Indianapolis, Ind.); 17 (Cleveland, Ohio); 19 (Toledo, Ohio); 40 (Mt. Clemens, Mich.); 339 (Akron, Ohio); 393 (Flint, Mich.); 422 (Chillicothe, Ohio); 457 (Centerville, Pa.); 459 (Lansing, Mich.); 494 (Detroit, Mich.); 502 (Oberlin, Ohio); 513 (Elyria, Ohio); and 1794 (Cleveland, Ohio).

In addition to International President Goodwin, the following attended on behalf of the International: Vice President Cathy Wittenbrook, Director of Organization Jay Porcaro, Director of Education and Research Gwen Wells, International Representatives Pat Priloh and Sandy Naples, and ROC Organizer Rob Garvin.

### Northeast Conference

The Northeast Regional Conference took place September 26-28, 1997 in Secaucus, N.J. Jim Mastriani led the basic arbitration class, while Carla Katz and Ron Cirignano taught steward training. All three are on the faculty at Rutgers University's Union-Leadership Academy.



Three Volunteer Organizing Committee members are honored by the Erie Conference participants for their organizing and success. They appear with Regional Organizing Cooperative (ROC) Organizer Rob Garvin, far left. Left-to-right, they are Nancy Holle (Local 1, Indianapolis), Doug Kiger (Local 19, Toledo), and Donna Ramsey (Local 17, Cleveland.)



More group work took place at the Northeast Regional Conference in the Steward Training class. Here members of Locals 6 (Boston), 32 (Newark) and 153 (New York) work on a problem.

The following local unions participated: 6 (Boston, Mass.); 32 (Union, N.J.); 106 (Groton, Conn.); 153 (New York, N.Y.); 212 (Buffalo, N.Y.); 295 (Woodland, Maine); 402 (Santurce, Puerto Rico); 471 (Brownsville, Pa.); 453 (Boston, Mass.); 555 (Bucksport, Maine); and 600 (Boston, Mass.).

Vice Presidents Richard Lanigan, Patrick Tully, Walter Allen and Gerry Skrzeczkowski, Director of Organization Jay Porcaro, Research Director Gwen Wells, Representative Dan McShain and ROC Organizer Virginia Levesque represented the International, in addition to Goodwin.

#### North Central Conference

Minneapolis, Minn. was the site of this year's conference, held October 17-19, 1997. John Remington, professor and director at the Labor Education Service of the University of Minnesota, taught the basic arbitration training, while Tony DeAngelis, program coordinator and director of public sector programming at I.E.S., taught steward training.

Locals 9 (Milwaukee, Wis.); 12 (Minneapolis, Minn.); 28 (Chicago, Ill.); 35 (Milwaukee, Wis.); 39 (Madison, Wis.); 95 (Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.); 167 (Lincoln, Ill.); 391 (Chicago, Ill.); 444 (Galesburg, Ill.); 512 (Lansing, Mich.); and 787 (Milwaukee, Wis.) all sent delegations.

In addition to President Goodwin, Vice President Anita Roy, Organizing Director Jay Porcaro, Research Director Gwen Wells, OPEIU Chairperson of Broader Participation of Women Committee Carolyn Combs, ROC Organizer Rob Garvin, and Representatives Bonnie Strauss and Jerry Ashlock represented the International Union.



International Representative Pat Priloh and Vice President Cathy Wittenbrook hold a Vice President's Breakfast that is becoming a regular feature at the regional conferences — allowing regional local unions to become better acquainted with their union officers.



Local union participants at the North Central Conference in Minneapolis.

## Don't let bankers take away your right to choose a credit union

Since 1982, the federal government has allowed credit unions to enroll members from more than just one group. This has allowed employees of many businesses that are too small to support a credit union of their own to have access to credit union membership. Many state-chartered credit unions are also allowed to enroll "multiple groups."

#### What's happening in the courts?

A banker's lawsuit to sharply restrict credit union membership has reached the U.S. Supreme Court. On February 25, the court ruled for bankers — throwing out a 15-year-old government policy that has let credit unions accept new members from outside traditional membership pools. With this ruling, more than 10 million credit union members will be at risk of losing their memberships and future generations will be denied access to credit unions. It will also greatly affect employees of credit unions such as CUNA, a major employer of OPEIU members.

#### What's happening in Congress?

With the Supreme Court ruling, the situation is now urgent. A bipartisan

coalition of Members of Congress has introduced the Credit Union Membership Access Act (H.R. 1151) to preserve the American consumer's choice to join a credit union. The banks want to stop the clock, and force credit unions to cancel memberships outside their original "core group." Bankers complain that credit unions' tax-exempt status gives them unfair competitive advantage. They have asked Congress to repeal the exemption. If America's 70 million credit union members stand up for each other, we can beat the bankers!

The OPEIU strongly supports this measure, and has lobbied vigorously for its passage — including sending a letter urging all 435 Members of Congress to vote in favor of H.R. 1151.

#### How can you help?

Congress needs to hear from credit union members like you that preserving consumers' choice of credit union membership is important to the American people! OPEIU members should write and call their Representatives and urge them to support the Credit Union Membership Access Act. Write to the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

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