



# WHITE COLLAR

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

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## Local 100 wins overwhelming victory in Broward County

### 1,000 new members join OPEIU

The Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 100 members in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida have won a stunning victory that will bring an additional 1,000 professionals into the OPEIU ranks.

In an election vote count on April 25, 2000, the 1,091-unit of Broward County workers voted overwhelming for OPEIU representation. The final vote was 741 cast ballots for the OPEIU, and 125 against.

The unit includes professionals in more than 120 job classifications, such as librarians, engineers, accountants, social workers, senior grant contract administrators, and construction managers. All positions require a

four-year advanced degree.

"The unit sought involvement with the OPEIU because of the success we have achieved in Dade County," Florida Regional Director Ed Darcy Sr. said. "This win in Broward makes OPEIU the largest union representing professionals in the state of Florida. We now have 3,000 professionals in Broward and Dade alone."

Many people, working together, are to be credited with this win. Among them are International Union Organizers Vince Menditto and Ed Darcy Jr.

"This was a classic way to organize," said Darcy Sr. "We had a twenty-member com-

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Verifying eligible ballots are several PERC officials, International Union Organizers Vince Menditto and Ed Darcy Jr., and several employer representatives.

## OPEIU women were there!

### 5,000 working women gather in Chicago

The AFL-CIO's Working Women's Conference was a huge success as 5,000 women — the majority of them union members — gathered in Chicago, Illinois on March 9-12 to discuss issues of importance to today's working woman. More than 100 OPEIU women were on hand, participating in the plenary sessions as well as workshops and roundtable discussions that left them armed with much information about collective bargaining strategies and political initiatives to pass on to their local union membership. According to many who attended, the highlight of the conference was confirmation that women are going to play a big part in the November presidential election.

"The OPEIU attendance at the Working Women's Conference was excellent, and a first for our organization," Assistant to the

President and International Vice President Kathleen Kinnick said. "How exciting it was to see more than 5,000 women assembled for the purpose of implementing a program of action to further the goals established as a result of the 'Ask a Working Woman' survey undertaken by the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Department."

The survey, which was distributed to union members last year, asked women to identify issues of importance to them. These issues were then used to develop a program for the March conference. Working women who responded to the survey identified several priorities including: equal pay and higher pay; paid leave; child care and after school care; control over work hours to help balance work and family responsibilities; affordable, quality health care; and a secure retirement.

A conference highlight was the "Working Women's Vote — A Strong Voice in the 2000 Election" program. Vice President Al Gore was welcomed with great enthusiasm by the

participants, and pledged his strong commitment to support and carry forth the objectives voiced by working women.

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Conference participants flock to the OPEIU display tables.

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Local News

# Canadian News

## Local 219 ratifies new agreement with Town of Marathon

OPEIU Local 219 ratified a new agreement with the Town of Marathon early in the new year. The agreement, which will run from January 1, 2000 to September 30, 2002, provides wage increases of 2.25 percent effective January 1, 2000, 2.5 percent effective October 1, 2000, and a further 3 percent effective October 1, 2001.

Other highlights of the agreement include: an increase in shift differential; a new provi-

sion that will allow an employee up to six paid working days per year to care for an immediate family member who is ill — such days would be deducted from the employee's annual sick leave entitlement; an increase in vision coverage; and an increase in safety/clothing allowance.

"Overall, the members of the bargaining unit were pleased with the deal," outgoing President Joan Johnson said.

## OPEIU activist turns 80 60 years of trade-unionism celebrated

The Executive Board and members of the General Council of Local 463 representing office workers and sales representatives at Gaz Métropolitain in Montreal hosted a party on December 16, 1999 for brother Phil Lamoureux's 80th birthday and 60 years of trade unionism with Local 463.

The still very active Lamoureux, who is a founding member of Local 463, is President of the "25-Year-Service Club," an organization regrouping retired Gaz Métropolitain employees with 25 years of service or more. Lamoureux is also secretary of the Union Retirees Committee of the Montreal Regional Labour Council.

# OPEIU women were there!

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As a means of promoting participation in the Conference and the CLUW National Executive Board Meeting held the following day, the OPEIU hosted a reception on Thursday, March 9 for OPEIU delegates and friends. International President Michael Goodwin addressed the gathering, as did Gloria Johnson, President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. Margaret Blackshere, President of the Illinois State AFL-CIO and Karen Nussbaum, Director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department also addressed OPEIU members.

International Vice President Kathleen Kinnick, who was responsible for the recep-

tion program and arrangements, also introduced OPEIU Vice Presidents Elizabeth Alonso, Janice Best, Mildred Hall, Theresa Horner, Jerri New, Anita Roy, Judy Solkovits and Julie Weir who were on hand for the reception and other events throughout the three days.

Virginia Kerr, Recording Secretary of Local 28, Chicago, Illinois hosted the OPEIU display table to promote membership and interest in the OPEIU — we were one of only a handful of International Unions to have information available to conference participants. The OPEIU Midwives Guild 54 from Barrington, Illinois also had a display table. By using ingenious methods — such as a

labor-oriented "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" game, both displays attracted much attention from conference participants.

The CLUW National Executive Board Meeting was also scheduled in conjunction with the conference, and was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago on March 10. Half a day was devoted to labor's political action program, followed by a plenary session at which delegates and alternates elected at the last CLUW convention were installed. We are pleased to announce that the following OPEIU delegates and alternates — who were overwhelmingly elected by our OPEIU caucus at the CLUW convention — were installed:

| Delegates  | Alternates                                       |
|--|--|
| Jearlean Fleming<br>Local 391<br>Chicago, Illinois | Mary Mahoney<br>Local 6<br>Boston, Massachusetts |
| Neysa Griffith<br>Local 153<br>New York, NY        | Sedora Villa<br>Local 153<br>New York, NY        |
| Theresa Horner<br>Local 42<br>Detroit, Michigan    |  |

Congratulations to all. We are confident that OPEIU will be well represented by these outstanding union leaders.



At the OPEIU display table, Local 28 President Izzy "Regis" Diaz asks a question about the history of the labor movement to a contestant ready to play the "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" game. The inventive game, devised by Local 28 Recording Secretary Virginia Kerr, caused a great deal of excitement among conference participants and helped raise awareness of OPEIU.



The OPEIU Midwives Guild 54 booth.

## Building Member Ownership — the Iron Rule of Organizing

### NEVER DO FOR PEOPLE WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES

You can apply this to the smallest things. When you hold a meeting, don't bring all the food and drinks yourself. Ask others to bring what you need.

It takes longer at the beginning and it sometimes falls through. But it drives home the point that the union belongs to the members and if they want refreshments, it is their responsibility!

An organization that empowers is not like McDonalds. It does not "do it all for you." It uses the "Iron Rule" — "Never do for people what they can do for themselves."

Sometimes you may want to do some tasks for others to free them up to do more significant tasks. Don't take the Iron Rule to ridiculous extremes. The Iron Rule is meant to empower people, not to bog them down in busy work.

## Family Values

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**UNION FAMILY SAVERS**

## Local 8 holds strike against Providence

On May 3, 2000, approximately 1,000 workers at Providence Everett Medical Center in Everett, Washington participated in a one-day strike against Snohomish County's biggest hospital and trauma center — the first strike in the hospital's 100-year history.

The members of the unions — the OPEIU Local 8, representing 750 hospital clerical staffers, and the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1001, representing 250 technical workers — voted by 85 percent to take on their employer after 20 months of trying to get a first contract. The workers rejected the administration's contract offer on March 19, particularly dismayed by the hospital's failure to offer longevity increases. As a result, many jobs are left vacant as experienced staff leave for other institutions and management cannot attract new employees.

"A new employee doing a similar job is making \$1.15 more an hour than me, even though I've worked at the hospital for seven years," said Rebecca DeMessemaker, Nursing Assistant.

DeMessemaker is proud to work in the heart unit but thinks the strike is necessary. "I want the administration to know we mean business."

"We also want a union shop, which would give us a strong voice for ourselves and for our patients," said Sharon Pope, a housekeeper.

More than 800 workers actively picketed during the 24-hour strike. An aggressive internal organizing campaign of phone banks, workplace visitations, member-to-member contacts have kept the unit strong and unified.

A second vote on whether to approve preparation for a second two-day strike if needed was approved by 80 percent of the workers. No date has been set for this action.

The two unions — which represent about 40 percent of the total hospital staff — say that workers are seeking: a set pay scale that rewards seniority with wage steps workers can count on; a one-time pay equity adjustment that rectifies past inequities; higher pay for working weekends and evenings; and a strong union shop for a strong worker voice in the workplace. Ray Crerand, Providence CEO, has vowed absolute opposition to a union shop stating his concern for "worker's choice."

Bargaining Team members say that without union shop and a strong voice at work, employees would be back in the same position of falling behind in wages and other working conditions. Many note that SPEEA members who won a fair contract from Boeing have been an inspiration and a lesson in the need to unite for strength. Providence employees joined SPEEA members on the picket lines in March. [See page 5 of this White Collar for further on the SPEEA's successful strike at Boeing.]

Community support of the strike was strong; a community campaign has been in progress for months garnering support of local legislators, consumers and other unions. OPEIU Local 8 has been working in a coalition with five other unions who face similar struggles with Sisters of Providence hospitals in Washington State. The coalition, internal organizing and community campaign have empowered workers against this intractable employer. The unions also held an informational picket on April 4 in an effort to build community support.

No further mediation dates are set. The Unions have requested bargaining dates.



Carrying signs that say, "We're Standing Together," OPEIU Local 8 members strike Providence Everett Medical Center on May 3, 2000.

## American Guild of Appraisers, OPEIU Guild 44, lobbies for stricter guidelines



William Sentner, President of the American Guild of Appraisers, Guild 44 of the OPEIU (left) and Peter Vidi, Mid-Atlantic Vice President, meet with Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois) to discuss H.R. 3901. The Congresswoman's measure would amend the Truth in Lending Act and would safeguard consumers by imposing strict penalties on lenders that try to influence the appraisers' value given to a property.



Members of OPEIU Guild 44 at the founding meeting of Chapter 3 in Illinois on April 20, 2000 at the Marriott Courtyard — the beginning of the organization of appraisers in Illinois. Appraisers have begun to organize against pressure that is exerted against them to falsify values on properties and upcharging consumers on the fee for an appraisal. In many cases the lenders cut the appraisers' fee and charge the consumer more, resulting in more profit for the lenders. Pictured from left to right are: Dennis Dillman, Acting President, Chapter 4, Indiana; Frank DeGiovanni, Trustee, Chapter 3, Illinois; Bob Gorman, President, Chapter 3, Illinois; David Hundrieser, Vice President, Chapter 3, Illinois; and Paul Dickelman, Secretary/Treasurer, Chapter 3, Illinois.

## Editorial



# Vice President Gore — The Right Choice

By Michael Goodwin, International President

The AFL-CIO endorsed Vice President Al Gore for President of the United States at its biennial convention in October 1999 in Los Angeles. At the time, several of the 68 International Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO believed that the endorsement of any candidate for President of the United States was premature. Other unions had an internal process wherein an endorsement would take place at a later date. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, however, said that an endorsement had to take place at that time or the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process would be lost.

I was very pleased that President Sweeney took the time at the convention to meet with OPEIU delegates and give his assessment of the race. He pointed out that many states have moved up their primary election schedule to the extent that he believed the nominee would be known by March 7, also known as "Super Tuesday." He pointed out that he believed that Vice President Gore was the right choice and would become the nominee of the Democratic Party and elected President of the United States in November 2000. So far, all of President Sweeney's predictions have been true. As we all know by now, Vice President Al Gore has won every primary that he participated in and has secured enough delegates to guarantee the nomination at the Democratic National Convention in August. It is also apparent that the Republican nominee will be George W. Bush, Governor of Texas. Now the choice is clear.

Vice President Gore has stood up for working families and has fought against the regressive policies of the Republican extremists. He fought against the "Contract with

*Vice President Gore has stood up for working families and has fought against the regressive policies of the Republican extremists. He fought against the "Contract with America" which would have set back workers' rights 60 years. Joining with President Clinton, he has fought for the Family Medical Leave Act, increases in the minimum wage, workers' right to strike, and he has resisted congressional efforts to pass the so-called "TEAM Act" by supporting a presidential veto.*

America" which would have set back workers' rights 60 years. Joining with President Clinton, he has fought for the Family Medical Leave Act, increases in the minimum wage, workers' right to strike, and he has resisted congressional efforts to pass the so-called "TEAM Act" by supporting a presidential veto.

The Clinton-Gore administration has brought about seven years of prosperity benefiting working families. You may recall from the 1992 campaign the statements of "putting people first" and "it's the economy, stupid." The administration has carried out its 1992 vision with low rates of inflation and unemployment. They certainly have put people first and fixed the economy.

Do we need to return to the policies of the 1980s of "trickle down economics" and high tax breaks for the rich? Do we need to put a halt on the great economy that Clinton-Gore has established? Do we need regressive legislation limiting workers' rights? Well, anyone who is considering voting for a candidate that supports those issues is going to get just that. Workers who are educated on the issues, however, have traditionally voted in the best interests of themselves and their families. They vote for basic issues such as saving Social Security and Medicare, good public education, health care for all American citizens and fair trade. They are for tax fairness, the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively, and fair distribution of the country's wealth.

I am sure that once workers examine the issues and how they affect themselves and

their families, they too will make the right choice. That is why it is important for every OPEIU member to be sure to register and vote. OPEIU will be active this spring in registering our members throughout the country and those of voting age in our members'

households. Become involved and join your local union's GOTV (Get Out The Vote) committee and help to register all our members.

The AFL-CIO's endorsement is right on the mark. Vice President Al Gore — the right choice!

## Be involved in Get-Out-The-Vote efforts

Someone once said, "What is the first part of politics? Education. The second? Education. And the third? Education."

We must not underestimate the importance of being educated about the candidates running for President of the United States this November, and particularly where they stand on issues of importance to working people. Take the time to learn about Al Gore and George W. Bush — learn their positions on issues such as international trade relations, minimum wage, Social Security and Medicare, and others important to the labor movement.

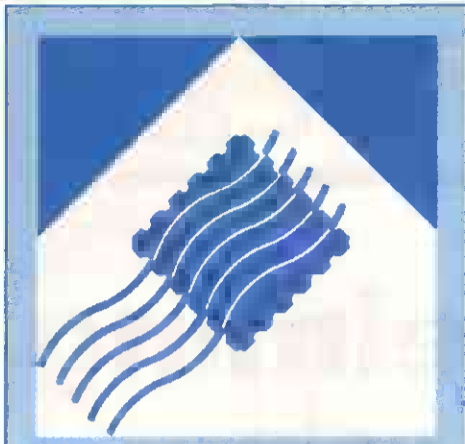
Then take what you've learned and put it to work helping others become educated about the candidates. Become a part of your local area's Get-Out-The-Vote efforts — man phone banks, make door-to-door visits, and do whatever is necessary to ensure that working people in your area are registered to vote, and that they vote in November.



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REMEMBER: ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH.

## 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.opel.org>

Dear OPEIU:

As I mail my last tuition receipt I thought it would be only fitting if I mailed off a letter of thanks. Without organizations such as the OPEIU post-secondary education would be inaccessible to many students, including myself. The knowledge and experiences the university has provided me with are invaluable and I shudder to think that many students can't afford to partake in post-secondary education. With your help I have been able to experience university as well as emerge from four years of schooling relatively debt free. Thank you once again for your support and be commended on an excellent scholarship program.

Regards,  
Soon to be university graduate,  
Adam Moir

## Guild 45, Podiatrists, discuss benefits of OPEIU

International President Michael Goodwin and his staff held a two-day meeting in Baltimore, Maryland on May 6-7 with the Executive Directors and Doctors of Podiatric Medicine of the First National Guild for Health Care Providers of the Lower Extremity, Guild 45. It was a lively meeting; full of debate in which the parties discussed ways OPEIU is assisting the Guild since its inception.

Many state success stories were cited, and Guild leaders discussed how affiliation with the OPEIU has helped to further connect the providers with labor leaders in the states. OPEIU has also helped the Guild in its lob-

bying efforts, effectively blocking negative legislative initiatives and helping to pass those that would benefit the Guild.

Also discussed was the addition of staff to better service the Guild, as well as ways in which the staff could facilitate better communication between the Guild and the OPEIU; a set of by-laws and a special committee has been formed for that purpose.

The meeting was adjourned with a renewed commitment from the OPEIU to make the partnership even more effective, as well as plans for a follow-up meeting in Philadelphia in August.



The meeting of the Executive Directors and Doctors of Podiatric Medicine of the First National Guild for Health Care Providers of the Lower Extremity, Guild 45, May 6-7, 2000. Among those attending are, left, Guild 45 President John Mattiacci and OPEIU President Michael Goodwin.

## OPEIU helps Clinical Social Work Federation reach goals

OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin spoke at the annual meeting of the Clinical Social Work Federation (CSWF) in Washington, D.C. on May 6, 2000, and outlined several OPEIU initiatives aimed at helping the Clinical Social Work Guild 49 achieve their goals in the coming year. The CSW Guild 49 is a parallel organization with the CSWF, sharing common goals and objectives.

Goodwin spoke about the progress OPEIU has had in New York coordinating benefits with many Taft-Hartley funds. He told Guild members of the many resources available to

them at the OPEIU and the AFL-CIO to aid in lobbying efforts associated with key initiatives of importance to the Guild. Goodwin also identified OPEIU staff members available to service the needs of the Guild, and the strength the organization will gain by uniting with other clinical professionals affiliated with OPEIU.

Jay Porcaro, OPEIU Director of Organization, gave a demonstration of the Labor Provider Organization (LPO) that is currently being developed by OPEIU to make provider information available on the Internet for members who wish to get service from a Union provider.



Members of the CSWF at work.



International President Michael Goodwin addresses the annual meeting of the Clinical Social Work Federation. CSWF Guild 49 President Luba Shagawat is seated to Goodwin's left.

## Work and Health

# A Case of Fat Getting a Bad Rap

By Phillip L. Polakoff, MD

**F**at has been getting a lot of hard knocks — some deserved; some not. Too many Americans are carrying around too much weight, much of it excess fat. And in that sense, fat is something to be avoided.

On the other hand, when it comes to fat in our diets, we can take fat avoidance too far.

All fats in food are not bad for you. In fact, some fats are vital for good health. We need them to regulate key body functions.

Their importance is reflected in the name. They are called essential fatty acids. Technically, they are known as omega-3s and omega-6s.

Unlike cholesterol (another substance with a partially undeserved bad reputation), fatty acids are not made by the body. We must get them from foods.

Trouble is, the typical diet in our part of the world today is high in omega-6s and low in omega-3s. That's the opposite of what we need.

Too little omega-3 and too much omega-6 can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer and arthritis.

This imbalance can be changed for the better by making dietary changes that will give us more of the good omega-3 fatty acid.

More fish in the diet is one way to get more omega-3. Fatty fish are especially rich in this essential nutrient: salmon, mackerel, herring, trout, tuna and lake whitefish.

But according to a recent survey, only

about a third of Americans eat fish regularly.

If you're not a fish eater, green leafy vegetables are another good source of omega-3 fatty acids: Swiss chard, mustard greens, collards, kale, with arugula, chicory and the like tossed into your salad.

Seed oils such as canola and flax seed are also good sources. Walnuts contain both omega-3s and omega-6s in almost the perfect proportions of each. Walnuts can be added to salads and main dishes.

Some of the benefits of omega-3s were listed in the medical publication *Epidemiology*. They can reduce the "stickiness" of blood. This means the blood is less likely to form clots and plaques that can plug up an artery. They may reduce the risks of heart attacks and stroke.

Omega-3s may also reduce the risk of inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

A study at the University of Washington found that women who ate one or two servings a week of fish rich in omega-3s were 22 percent less likely to get rheumatoid arthritis.

Women who ate more than two servings cut their risk by 43 percent.

A word of caution: Diet and nutrition are complicated subjects. They also appear to be endlessly fascinating subjects for the popular media, often leading to fad diets and questionable claims.

Eat a balanced diet. If in doubt, ask your doctor or a qualified nutritionist.



## Washington Window

# HMO Means "Hand the Money Over"

**T**his past October turned out to be a nightmare for the managed care industry. Three different class action suits charging violations under ERISA, the law governing health care plans and pensions, and RICO (that's right, racketeering) were brought against Humana, Inc., and Aetna US Healthcare and Aetna, Inc. Since October, another nine class action suits against managed care have been filed. And this past February the U.S. Supreme Court heard the first suit, the Pegram case, brought against the managed care industry.

So what's going on? Perhaps, what many Americans have suspected for a long time. Managed care is containing costs by denying patients the care they need. But an even darker revelation has emerged from these class action suits: managed care offers financial incentives — money bonuses — to doctors to deny care for patients.

For example, a suit against Aetna in a California Superior Court disclosed that Aetna gives its primary care physicians, who are responsible for giving patient referrals to see specialists, financial incentives when they lower the number of referrals they hand out.

But that's not all. The suit also alleges, "This financial incentive to reduce patient care, resulting from Aetna's system and other financial arrangements, is exacerbated by Aetna's policy of paying financial bonuses to PCPs, based on their ability to keep medical costs down." Doctors then are not only rewarded for denying referrals but also for denying other ancillary care. Aetna, of course, is not the only HMO to do this.

In a class action suit against Humana, Inc. in a Florida Circuit Court, it was revealed the HMO had a secret agreement with doctors which created "fiscal disincentives to provide any treatment whatsoever to the members (i.e. patients)" and fiscal disincentives in referrals for specialty care. So doctors are financially penalized if they provide care at all!

And this secret agreement prohibited doctors from discussing medical treatment or procedures "Humana would not or did

not want to cover regardless of whether the treatment or procedure might be medically advisable or unnecessary." In other words, Humana implements the "gag" clause at the direct expense of a patient's health, and possibly, her life. That's called malpractice.

At issue in that specific case is not just the content of Humana's agreement with its doctors, but that it is secret. Thus the suit charges Humana with fraud because members are "tricked and misled through a scheme of material omission" that "ultimately resulted in the unjust enrichment of Humana," the suit claims.

Critics of these suits say these cases will just make money for the lawyers. While that may be inevitable, it doesn't get managed care off the hook.

Richard Scruggs, a lawyer involved in several HMO class action suits, says "We're acting today to fix the broken promises the HMO industry has made to the people who entrust their very lives to these companies."

And all of this raises the larger question of what is health care doing as a for-profit industry that measures the bottom line before all else?

Certainly, the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago, whose decision sent the Pegram case to the U.S. Supreme Court, denounced the current HMO system as essentially buying doctors off.

"With a jaundiced eye focused firmly on year-end bonuses, it is not unrealistic to assume that the doctors rendering care under the plan were swayed to be most frugal when exercising their discretionary authority to the detriment of their membership," the Seventh Court stated.

But perhaps it was in the *Tunner v. Foss* decision in Florida's Fifth District Court that stated the implications of these HMO practices the best: "Pitting a medical doctor's economic self-interest against the welfare of patients creates a classic conflict of interest situation, and is a breeding ground for distrust, harmful to the traditional doctor-patient relationship."

And it makes for bad health care for everyone.

**For more information  
about the OPEIU,  
visit our website at  
<http://www.opeiu.org>**

# Union Cities kicks off in Chicago



The Union Cities program is thriving in Chicago, Illinois, fueled by member volunteers and support from the International. Pictured is a meeting of the Union Cities Volunteer Organizing Committee: (left to right) Virginia Kerr, Local 28; Jerri Fleming, Local 391; Pat Wilkes, Local 28; Valarie Roberts, Local 391; Norma Moore, Local 391; and Linda Beno, Local 28.



Members of the Union Cities Volunteer Organizing Committee learn how to use the Internet to obtain information for an organizing drive.



Virginia Kerr, Local 28, demonstrates using the Internet while Norma Moor, Local 391, and Pat Wilkes, Local 28, look on. Jerri Fleming (on phone), Local 391, answers a member question. All volunteer organizers are deeply committed to the Chicago Union Cities project.

## Maritime Trades Department recognizes OPEIU's organizing efforts

At its February 2000 Executive Board Meeting in New Orleans, La., the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO recognized the OPEIU's outstanding efforts to organize helicopter pilots, saying that we have "taken on the responsibility for fulfilling [these pilots' and the community's] needs by developing a successful organizing

strategy for this industry. "OPEIU has organized the second largest helicopter employer in the U.S.," said a statement by the Maritime Trades. "It has successfully affiliated an independent union representing pilots working the largest helicopter training facility in the country. In addition, it has campaigns underway with most of

the largest industry employers. In its first contract at Air Logistics, OPEIU raised real wages and significantly increased pension and other benefits while providing the basics on job rights and protections long absent in this industry. Moreover, OPEIU has helped the entire labor movement by introducing the benefits of collective bargaining to a segment

of the workforce that had been unorganized. "The Maritime Trades Department wants to recognize the efforts of the OPEIU and commit all the necessary assistance possible for the successful completion of these organizing endeavors. We ask the executive board ... to join in active support of OPEIU in its organizing of helicopter pilots throughout the U.S.," the statement concluded.



Seafarers' International Union of North America President Michael Sacco, International President Michael Goodwin, and American Maritime Officers President Michael McKay.



International President Michael Goodwin receives a special honor at the 8th Annual Dinner Dance of the Greater South Florida Maritime Trades Council, Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO.

# United bargaining underway at Kaiser Permanente through new Common Issues Committee

After more than a year of planning, the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, AFL-CIO — of which several OPEIU locals are members — and

Kaiser Permanente kicked off common issues bargaining the week of April 14, 2000 in Pasadena, Calif. Union negotiators came away from the first round of talks optimistic

## Local 100 wins

*Continued from page 1*

mittee totally dedicated to this campaign. We had people in the field — eyeball to eyeball communication is what did it. Personal contact made the difference.”

Local 100 has been campaigning to organize the public sector professionals in Broward County since 1995. The process was delayed as the Florida Public Employee Relations Committee (PERC) decided whether an election to organize under OPEIU would be held.

The organizing campaign escalated as Broward County Administrator and County Commissioners suspended employees' civil service protection. Citing budget restrictions, county officials no longer allowed employees to challenge a firing through a hearing process. As the process dictates, an attorney was appointed to make a recommendation to PERC as to their next step. A recommendation to go forward with an election was given and PERC deliberated for more than a month.



Top photo: Certifying signatures of eligible voters are (left to right) an employer official; International Union Organizer Ed Darcy Jr.; another employer official; International Union Organizer Vince Menditto; and several Public Employee Relations Committee (PERC) officials.



Many OPEIU members worked long hours to ensure a victory in Broward County. Among them are (left to right): Don Slesnick, General Counsel to OPEIU Local 100; Ed Darcy Jr., International Union Organizer; Ed Darcy Sr., Florida Regional Director; and Vince Menditto, International Union Organizer.

about setting common issues for as many as 33 contracts covering 60,000 members of 26 local unions.

“We underwent intense training, developed groundrules and formulated a set of issues to be addressed by the Common Issues Committee,” said Peter diCicco, Executive Director of the Coalition of KP Unions. “We are recommending the issues to our union steering committee, which is made up of representatives from all of our unions, as well as to the Kaiser Permanente Partnership Group.”

The Common Issues Committee is made up of 15 union leaders and 12 management leaders. Other participating unions include SEIU, AFSCME, IFPTE, AFT, UFCW and USWA.

The week of April 24, the Committee met for two days in Chicago to write “charters” (broad statements of responsibility) for seven labor-management Task Groups that have gone to work researching the issues, developing options and making recommendations to the Committee.

If sufficient progress is made by June, local unions will begin independent negotiations over local issues in July. At the conclusion of negotiations — the first of September if all goes well — members of local unions will vote, by union, to accept or reject tentative agreements.

Common issues bargaining is the outgrowth of the United Bargaining Plan, which was designed by the Committee last year to strengthen all of the unions by sharing

resources, actions, research and communications during the 2000-2002 contract negotiating cycle.

More than 95 rank-and-file union members — including representatives from all participating unions — will serve on the Task Groups. An additional 250 members, again from all involved unions, will be members of a Bargaining Council that will advise the union representatives on the Common Issues Committee. Members of Task Groups and the Bargaining Council are now being recruited by their respective local union officers and, after being trained, will be put to work.

A key component of common issues bargaining is that at any point, either labor or management may choose to withdraw. In that event, the parties will revert to their existing bargaining structure, with local unions undertaking separate, independent negotiations as their existing contracts expire.

Dr. David Lawrence, CEO of Kaiser Permanente, spoke to the Common Issues Committee and outlined his vision for a new relationship between Kaiser Permanente stakeholders. Dr. J. Francis Crosson, Executive Director of the Kaiser Federation, helped the negotiators get down to work by restating the commitment of the medical groups to common issues bargaining. “I believe the satisfaction of employees and physicians directly affects improvement in member perception and satisfaction,” he said. “I pledge the full support of the medical groups in this Partnership effort.”

## Largest white collar strike in history ends in victory

After being on strike against the Boeing Company for forty days, the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, IFPTE Local 2001 members have returned to work. On March 17, the negotiating teams for SPEEA/IFPTE Local 2001 and Boeing reached a tentative agreement; the agreement was then ratified on March 18 by 71.5 percent of the engineers and 70.7 percent of the technicians.

The largest white-collar strike in history has brought about significant changes to the SPEEA/IFPTE Local 2001 contract. The Boeing Company and SPEEA/IFPTE Local 2001 have entered into an historic partnership. With the assistance of AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, the Union and the company put together a framework for a joint labor-management Leadership Council co-chaired by IFPTE President Paul Almeida and Boeing CEO Phil Condit. The Leadership Council will involve Union representatives, employees and managers at all levels. Through this partnership the parties have committed to work together to make the Boeing Company a world class workplace and an even stronger global competitor.

The IFPTE says solidarity was the key to success. President Almeida says that these workers' efforts will be judged not just by the collective bargaining agreement they negotiated but by the millions of white collar workers they inspire to organize. Together, Almeida continues, the workers have shown that no company can operate successfully unless it respects, honors, and fairly compensates its professional and technical work force.

Since its inception in 1918, the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) has been affiliated with the AFL-CIO. IFPTE also represents engineers and technicians throughout the Department of Defense, NASA, General Electric, Lucent Technologies, Lockheed and other private and public sector concerns.

### WHITE COLLAR

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# OPEIU continues to honor and support labor's past

Remembering where you come from is one of the most important characteristics of a strong person or organization. As you grow and prosper, it is imperative not to forget the people or the ideals that started you on your road. Look at any organization or movement that hides from its past or lets it slip out of sight and mind, and you will be looking at a dying and floundering institution. Fortunately, the leaders and members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union understand this. OPEIU realizes that it is essential to honor the struggles of the past and never to forget how the North American Labor movement started and prospered through the decades. Nowhere is this more evident than in OPEIU's support of The Botto House National Landmark.

The Botto House National Landmark is the home of the American Labor Museum and is located in Haledon, New Jersey. Proving its commitment to honoring the labor struggles of the past century, OPEIU has been a strong supporter of the museum since its incorporation in 1981. Currently, OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin is the President of the American Labor Museum.

"This museum is a reflection of the spirit, goals, and dedication of America's workers and their unions," said Goodwin. "It is a vital reminder of our determination to put the American Dream within reach of working families and to create a stronger, more prosperous society."

The Botto House is a natural fit for the museum. The House has a glorious history and represents both triumphs of the labor movement and of the American Dream. The house was built in 1908 by Pietro and Maria Botto, immigrants from Italy who had settled in West Hoboken, N.J. They dreamed of leaving the crowded city and moving to a place where they could raise their four daughters in open space and peace. They worked for 15 years in the silk mills, saving their money and dreaming of the day they could move. Finally, they were able to save enough money to buy the land in Haledon and build their dream house. Little did they know that in five years' time, their home would play a major role in the history of America's labor movement.

The mill where the Bottonos worked was typical of the mills in the area. The conditions were deplorable. Air ventilation was horrid, lighting was poor and the noise from the machinery was deafening. Dye workers also had to contend with the vats of boiling chemicals. Dye houses had toxic vapors in the air and steam that caused the floors to be constantly wet. Workers were burned almost every day from the mixtures, and even were expected to taste the dye to determine if it was mixed correctly. Hours were long and the pay was minimal. Protesting and job actions were a common occurrence in the region, but in 1913 the disputes had come to

a head. The largest mill in the area, The Doherty Mill, tried to implement a speed-up system. Weavers, who formerly had two looms to work, now had to operate four. Half of the workers would lose their jobs and those remaining would be grossly underpaid for their higher production. That was the last straw and the workers of the area turned to Local 152 of the Industrial Workers of the World for help.

In the winter of 1913 the workers, more than 24,000 men, women, and children marched out of the mills and went on strike. They wanted improved conditions in the mills, an end to child labor, an eight-hour workday and improved wages. From January to July the workers were harassed, arrested and threatened by hostile city authorities as they walked the lines and tried to find places to meet. It was in this hostile atmosphere that Pietro Botto offered his house to the strikers as a meeting place. Famous labor leaders Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Carlo Tresca, Big Bill Haywood, along with the novelist Upton Sinclair and others spoke from the Botto House balcony to the assembled strikers. Gurley Flynn called the Botto home "the little oasis of free speech in a desert of suppression." After nearly six months of amazing unity, the strike was settled. This strike helped win reform in the American workplace, including the acceptance of the eight-hour day, minimum wage standards and other benefits enjoyed by all Americans.

The house itself continued to be owned by the Botto family until 1974 when it was bought by the Textile Workers Union of America under the leadership of Sol Stetin. He worked tirelessly to have the house recognized as a national landmark. Finally, in 1982 the Botto House was placed on the Department of the Interior's list of the nation's most distinguished historical sights. There are only 2,220 national landmarks in the country. The following year, on May 1, the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark opened its doors. Its mission is to educate people about the American labor movement's history and the contributions of workers, many of whom, like Pietro and Maria Botto, were immigrants.

The museum has grown by leaps and bounds and today has more than 1,000 supporters all across the nation. The museum is open to the public and anyone can visit the house to see the restored period rooms, study in the lending library of books and cassettes or take a walk in the Old World Gardens.

The Botto House has an annual awards dinner that honors people who have dedicated their lives to helping and fighting for America's working families. Past honorees include John Sweeney, our President Michael Goodwin, Pete Seeger, Gene Upshaw and the Botto's granddaughter, Bunny Kuiken. The Museum is there for America's workers and their children to ensure that no one forgets how hard-won today's benefits were, and how we must still fight to ensure that

they remain for future generations.

"The Botto House can't survive on its own," Goodwin said. "We must cherish it and all lend a hand in preserving and honoring our past." Whether it is by volunteer work provided by different unions or individual contributions from working families across the country, the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark

must continue to grow and thrive in the next millennium. While the Labor Movement is alive and strong, it is imperative that we continue to remember and celebrate our past struggles. OPEIU and the American labor movement will never be one of the organizations that ignores, hides or forgets its roots. For it is only with strong, solid roots that a great tree can continue to grow and prosper.



The Botto House National Landmark in Haledon, New Jersey.

## Dr. John Mattiacci addresses graduates



OPEIU Vice President Dr. John Mattiacci, who is a podiatrist and Dean of Temple University's School of Podiatric Medicine, addresses the school's 87 graduates at the commencement ceremony held at Philadelphia's Academy of Music on Sunday, May 21, 2000. OPEIU President Michael Goodwin attended the ceremony.

## Local News

### Local 277 wins three-year contract at Lockheed Martin

Local 277 Business Manager and International Vice President J.B. Moss has announced a new three-year contract for 700 employees covered by the bargaining unit at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, Fort Worth, Texas.

General wage increases totaling ten percent (3 percent effective May 8, 2000; 3 percent on May 7, 2001; and 4 percent on May 6, 2002) were negotiated along with a \$.15 per hour prepaid COLA and a COLA formula for the remaining years of the contract. The employees will now receive 37 holidays over the term of the agreement. In addition to the generous terms, upon ratification of the new contract a bonus of \$900 and a COLA bonus of \$1,200 was provided to each employee in the bargaining unit and on the active payroll as of May 8, 2000.

Other provisions included improve-

ments in seniority rights, a 25 percent increase in retirement benefits, hourly savings plan, medical benefits, life insurance and per diem payments. Employees will also be able to take vacation and sick time in one-hour increments.

The contract also incorporated recommendations from the Joint Union and Company Job Study Committee resulting in beneficial job revisions. Also negotiated were improvements in the Flex-Shift Program; establishment of a procedure to correct misassignment of bargaining unit work to non-bargaining unit employees; and the option of a "9/80" work schedule. The negotiating committee consisted of J.B. Moss, Business Representative Becky Turner, Secretary-Treasurer Margo Peel, President Ronnie Jones, and Chief Stewards Marty Schmoker, Jackie Curry and Gene Patton.

The contract expires May 11, 2003.

### Local 459 wins elections at McLaren Medical Management, Inc.

Local 459 Business Representative Bonnie Strauss reported that the Local, which is based in Lansing, Michigan, has won three elections by a six to one margin at McLaren Medical Management, Inc.

The victory covers a total of 114 employees at the various locations. Job titles covered include RN, LPN, Radiographer, Medical Assistant, Billing Specialist, Receptionist, Float, Team Leader, Clerk and others.

In order to clear the way for these elections, the International Union filed successful Article XX and XXI charges against AFSCME. The Local is awaiting official certification from the National Labor Relations Board and hopes to be at the bargaining table soon.

Congratulations to Local 459 President Jeffrey Fleming, Business Representative Bonnie Strauss and all of the staff and volunteers who contributed to these great victories.

### Local 6 settles contract with Massachusetts Trial Court

Local 6 President Mary Mahoney has announced the ratification of a new three-year contract between the union and the Massachusetts Trial Court. The three-year deal, which covers 3,600 members, is currently before the State Legislature awaiting approval for funding. Once funded, the agreement will be retroactive to March 1, 2000.

"The unique thing about this contract is that it is the first collective bargaining agreement completed prior to expiration in the unit's 20-year history," Chief Negotiator and Local 6 Business Manager Walter Allen Jr. said. "These agreements have historically concluded several months or even years after expiration and have included retroactive payments. This is remarkable."

The contract includes numerous progressive language changes, expan-



Pictured are several members of the Negotiating Committee: (left to right) Gloria Dotson, Patricia Santamaria, Anne Marie Lyons, Donna Barrette, Local 6 President Mary Mahoney, Leann Malo, and Chief Negotiator and Local 6 Business Manager Walter Allen Jr.

sion of employee benefits including sick time, overtime and shift differentials, and wage increases of at least three percent per year. The agreement also includes a comprehensive reclassification plan that covers every position in the bargaining unit.

The package was presented to the membership in early February and was ratified by an overwhelming majority.

"The negotiating committee worked very hard on this agreement and as a result we have accomplished some gains for the employees. We accomplished some things that have never occurred before," President Mary Mahoney said.

Negotiating committee members were Brenda Barbosa, Donna Barrette, Gloria Dotson, Anne Marie Lyons, Leann Maio, Mary Putney, Patricia Santamaria and Joyce Speliotis.

## Canadian News

# Carol Dupuis named International Vice President

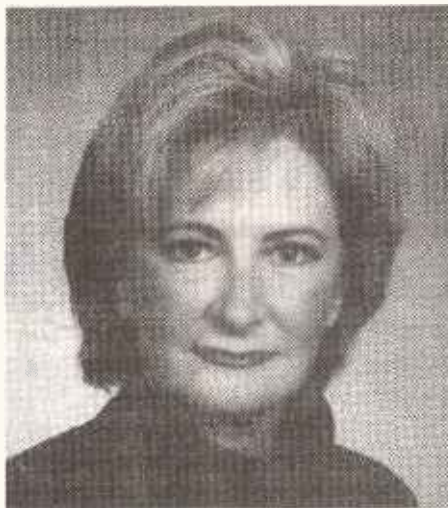
Carol Dupuis, a full time Staff Representative with the OPEIU Central Ontario Council, and a member of Local 343 in Toronto, has been elected International Vice President of the Office and Professional Employees International Union at the Canadian Convention. Dupuis replaces retiring Vice President Janice Best.

"We are very fortunate to have Carol assume the void left by Janice's retirement," International President Michael Goodwin said. "Carol brings with her a wealth of experience working in the labor movement and with our members in Canada. She has a real determination to make our locals in Canada the strongest they can be, and to organize new members like never before."

Dupuis has been a member of OPEIU

since 1979 when she began working for the Union of National Defense Employees in Ottawa, Ontario. She became the Steward of her bargaining unit and went on to a leadership position in Local 225 shortly thereafter.

In 1992, Dupuis left U.N.D.E. to become a full time Staff Representative for the OPEIU Central Ontario Council (COC), where she continues to work today. As a Representative



Carol Dupuis

for the COC, she services a variety of locals in central and northern Ontario. She is fluently bilingual and represents members in both official languages at the bargaining table, labor board, and other key areas.

In November 1999, Dupuis was elected Vice President for Small Affiliates at the Ontario Federation of Labour where she represents the interests of some

50,000 members from 35 unions.

In addition to her work with the Union, Dupuis continues to pursue her studies and is currently enrolled in the Masters' Degree Program through the University of Baltimore at the National Labor College at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies. She hopes to graduate in July 2001.

"I'm thrilled to be given the opportunity to serve our members in my new position with the OPEIU, and am looking forward to the many challenges this expanded role will bring," Dupuis says. "Our goal over the next few years is to organize as many new members as possible. As Vice President, I'm committed to working with our organizers to reach our objective."

Dupuis is married and expecting her first child in September.

## OPEIU members in Canada meet for convention

The Eighth Triennial Canadian Convention of the Office and Professional Employees International Union was held April 1-2, 2000 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto, Ontario.

The convention attracted more than 150 delegates, alternates and observers from 36 different locals across Canada.

The delegates were welcomed by the President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, Linda Torney, who thanked OPEIU members for their continued involvement in the fight against the right-wing agenda of the Harris government.

Guest speakers included OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin, who delivered a speech on the ongoing fight for social justice and outlined labor's priorities in the new millennium, and International Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beaugard.

Hassan Yussuff, Canadian Labour Congress Executive Vice President, spoke to the convention and thanked the OPEIU for its strong support of human rights and of the fight against racism. Irene Harris, who is Executive Vice President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, delivered a speech on the World March of Women in the Year 2000 and of its importance in the ongoing fight to eliminate poverty and violence against women.

In a speech that drew loud applause from the delegates on several occasions, Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse reported on the numerous struggles waged by OPEIU members to oppose their reactionary employers and safeguard their dignity as workers.

### Organizing: constant preoccupation, primary activity for Canadian locals

Canadian Director Lajeunesse also spoke about the importance of union recruitment, noting that our organizing activities have slightly increased everywhere in the country in recent years. Cited was Local 378 in British Columbia and its continuing organizing drive of the BCAA service centers, as well as Local 57's important breakthrough at Renaud-Bray.

Lajeunesse mentioned some of the greatest organizing successes in the last year, including the gain by Local 57 of 1,300 members in the Québec school board sector.

"Unionization is facing new situations, and we must rethink our organizing approaches," Lajeunesse said. "Other forms of recruitment exist. Local 434 had to wage a fierce battle against the Laurentian Bank to successfully organize the 200 or so financial advisors. The union is now engaged in a similar battle to bring the 150 telebanking employees within its ranks."

### Communication that benefits local unions

"Communication has become of vital strategic importance in all the challenges that lay ahead for the labor movement," Lajeunesse said. Increased communication has also been a priority of the OPEIU. The CNC will continue to work on developing its labor publication *Leader* to better inform the locals and provide them with updates in bargaining news and other labor-related matters. Lajeunesse also spoke about the International Union subsidy program that

allows all local unions to become greater connected by use of the Internet.

He concluded by thanking Goodwin and Beaugard for their invaluable support and friendship, as well as the numerous activists within our ranks for their commitment and solidarity to our organization.

### Elections held

Following the new Canadian structure that was adopted at the 1998 International Convention in Chicago, Illinois, the Eighth Triennial Canadian Convention, for the first time, elected the Canadian Director and the Canadian Vice Presidents.

A new Vice President for Ontario and three new regional members were elected by acclamation to the Canadian National Committee.

The new Vice President for Region X (Ontario) is Carol Dupuis from Local 343 in Toronto. Also re-elected for new terms of office were: Michel Lajeunesse, Canadian Director; Claude Grenier, Vice President (the vice presidency reserved for women); Jerri New, Vice President, Region VIII (British Columbia and the Yukon); Nick Kapell, Region IX (Prairies and NWT); and Maurice Laplante, Vice President, Region I (Québec and the Maritimes).

Delegates also elected the following CNC officers: Doug Hill from Local 378 in Vancouver (British Columbia) who will represent Region VIII; Karen Werlin from Local 458 in Edmonton (Alberta); and Judy Boehmer from Local 397 in Regina (Saskatchewan) who will represent Region IX.

CNC officers who were re-elected include: Don Talarico (Local 219, Marathon, Ontario);

Lynda Penney (Local 96, Thunder Bay, Ontario); Ruth Workewich (Local 429, Timmins, Ontario); Suzan Fergus (Local 225, Ottawa, Ontario) for Region X; Barry Hodson (Local 15, Vancouver, B.C.); Sheila Morrison (also from Local 15); Karen Rockwell (Local 378, Vancouver, B.C.) for Region VIII; Jannick Desjardins (Local 57, Montreal, Québec); and François Bisson (Local 463, Montreal, Québec) for Region I.

Delegates at the Convention also voted on constitutional amendments that related to the new structure. Resolutions were adopted recommending support of the method of elections based on a regional vote — similar to the one that was adopted by the 1998 International Convention — instead of an at-large vote among Canadian delegates for the election of the CNC officers.

### Retiring Janice Best honored

A banquet dinner was held during the convention giving an excellent opportunity to Canadian Director Lajeunesse, Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beaugard and CNC officer for Ontario Ruth Workewich to pay an informal tribute to Janice Best. Best stepped down as International Vice President — a position she held for more than a decade. Workewich praised Sister Best's dedication and presented her with a silver brooch. Best also received a gold bracelet, a gift from the CNC. In his tribute, Lajeunesse credited Best for being a seasoned trade unionist dedicated to the rank-and-file. A more formal presentation will take place at the upcoming International Executive Board meeting to be held in June 2000 to which Sister Best has been invited.

## Canadian News

### Rally of Caisse Centrale Desjardins strikers in Québec City

The thirty SEPB-57 members at the Caisse Centrale Desjardins' Centre for International Services have been on strike since November 26, 1999.

The employees went out on strike mainly because they want to renew the job security provisions in their collective agreement. The employer however has turned a blind eye on the settlement on job security that was signed elsewhere in the Mouvement Desjardins.

The Caisse Centrale Desjardins' Centre

for International Services handles transfers of funds from other banks and financial institutions around the world.

In an effort to denounce the employer's bad faith, the striking SEPB 57 members at Caisse Centrale Desjardins and strike supporters demonstrated loudly outside the Hilton hotel in Québec City where delegates of the Mouvement des Caisses Desjardins gathered on February 19, 2000 to choose a new top leader to Québec's dominant financial institution.

### More caisses populaires join Local 57

Local 57 in Québec has organized five new groups, caisses populaires workers from the caisse populaire Sainte-Odile in Rimouski; the caisse populaire Sainte-Félicité in Matane; the caisse populaire Saint-Donat in Montreal; the caisse pop-

ulaire Desjardins du Quartier Latin also in Montreal; and the caisse populaire de l'Auvergne in Charlesbourg near Québec City.

OPEIU Local 57 represents some 5,000 members in the Mouvement Desjardins financial institutions network across the province.

### No subcontracting clause in first contract at Regina Open Door Society

On November 30, 1999 OPEIU Local 397 in Regina, Saskatchewan, obtained a first collective agreement for the Regina Open Door Society.

The Regina Open Door Society employs approximately 30 employees and is a non-profit organization that provides settlement services, host programs, English as a second language instruction and support services to refugees and immigrants.

The three-year agreement will expire March 31, 2001. Some highlights of the contract include the appointment of two members with observer status at the Board of Directors meetings, no contracting-out during the life of the collective bargaining agreement, a comprehensive technological change clause which includes a workplace

adjustment plan and dispute resolution process and the right to have an observer present during all aspects of bargaining unit competitions.

Under the terms of the new agreement, permanent full-time staff will work reduced hours. In addition, the union is entitled to have two representatives to review the components of the benefit plan package.

The contract also provides signing bonuses, based on years of service, ranging from 2 percent to 5 percent effective April 1, 1999 and again December 1, 1999.

"The negotiating committee worked very hard," OPEIU Local 397 Representative David M. Miller said. "I want to thank Haile Behre and Janice Dumba for their commitment to achieving the first collective agreement."

### Superior Credit Union becomes union

As credit unions merge with organized credit unions, employees are seeing the value of being represented by the OPEIU. Twenty new non-union employees of the newly amalgamated Superior Credit Union in Thunder Bay

joined fellow organized members of Local 236 by signing union cards and a voluntary recognition agreement was reached with the employer. Local 236 also represents employees of Provincial Papers Inc. in Thunder Bay.

### OPEIU Local 378 members back at BCAA under Section 55 of British Columbia Labour Code

After striking one year for a first collective agreement, OPEIU Local 378 members reported for work at BC Automobile Association Service Centres on January 31, 2000, under Section 55 of the British Columbia Labour Code. Most often, under the terms of Section 55, striking employees return to work while an arbitrator meets with the parties and then renders a binding first union contract.

The Labour Relations Board has appointed a mediator-arbitrator and the process is under way. "We're hoping a collective agreement is put in place quickly," OPEIU 378 President Jerri New said.

"A collective agreement is a vital component in building a working relationship with BCAA."

On January 27, 2000, Local 378 members at BCAA voted to accept the recommendations of Special Mediator Stephen Kelleher. BCAA rejected Kelleher's recommendations and said they wanted no part of binding arbitration — even though it agreed to the identical measure in dealing with a separately certified group, its Emergency Road Service workers.

In June 1999, BCAA avoided a strike by its Emergency Road Service (ERS) workers by making a Section 55 application under the Labour Code.

"We want to cooperate at the Service Centres the same way we did at ERS. BCAA fought us every step of the way for more than a year to thwart a settlement and we're convinced they don't want one. We are glad to have processes like Section 55 that will guarantee a first agreement," New said.

Approximately 85 workers at BCAA Emergency Road Service (ERS) and 180 at BCAA Service Centres are separately certified groups with Local 378. Workers at 10 BCAA Service Centres had been on strike for a first contract since February 2, 1999. This yearlong strike was the longest ever experienced at Local 378.

On January 25, 2000, mediator Kelleher handed down his recommendations to settle the yearlong labor dispute between OPEIU members who work in BCAA Service Centres and their employer.

Kelleher recommended the adoption of many terms in the BCAA Emergency Road Service (ERS) settlement imposed recently by Arbitrator Mark Thompson under Section 55 of the Labour Code.

Kelleher's mandate was to assist the parties to conclude a first collective agreement under Section 76 of the Labour Relations Code. If the parties were unable to agree on terms, the Labour Minister asked Kelleher to provide non-binding recommendations for settlement. "Unfortunately, BCAA rejected Mr. Kelleher's recommendations so we have applied for an imposed settlement," New said.

### Local 474 receives long-awaited arbitration decision

OPEIU Local 474 has finally received a decision in their contract negotiations with the Sioux Lookout District Health Centre.

As hospital employees, the members of Local 474 were forced to take their contract negotiations to arbitration under the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act. A hearing in this matter was held on May 13, 1999 in Thunder Bay.

Chair of the arbitration board, Mr. Gerald J. Charney, released the decision on January 19, 2000.

The decision, which calls for a two-year agreement that will expire on March 30,

2000, provides for general wage increases of 2 percent effective April 1, 1998, and a further 2 percent effective April 1, 1999.

In addition to the general wage increases, the award also provides wage adjustments of \$1.00 per hour effective April 1, 1998 and a further \$1.00 per hour effective April 1, 1999, to the RPN's and laboratory technicians.

A new classification of Paramedic II was also created, that will provide wage increases of 11 percent over the life of the contract to the current Paramedic I rate.

This agreement covers 45 full-time, 31 part-time and 33 casual employees, for a total of 109 members.