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 counted on April 25, 2000, the 1,091-unit of Broward County workers voted overwhelmingly 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 involuntarily 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 committee."
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, and further 3 percent effective October 1, 2001. Other highlights of the agreement include: an increase in shift differential; a new provision 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

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!

Continued from page 1

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 Blackshear, 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 Kintick, who was responsible for the reception 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
Jeanelean Fleming
Local 391
Chicago, Illinois

Neyssa Griffith
Local 153
New York, NY

Theresa Horner
Local 42
Detroit, Michigan

Alternates
Mary Mahoney
Local 6
Boston, Massachusetts

Sedora Villa
Local 153
New York, NY

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

Family Values

Your union offers savings on Hertz car rentals, hearing aids, flower deliveries and more.

To start saving today call: 1-800-452-9425

Se habla español
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 employers.

“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 90 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 Creerand, 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.

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.
T he 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 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.

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Be involved in Get-Out-The-Vote efforts

S omeone 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.
Letters to the Editor

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

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 CSWF 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 Pecora, 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.

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.

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

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.
A Case of Fat Getting a Bad Rap

By Philip L. Polakoff, MD

Fat 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. In fact, some fats are vital for good health. We need them to regulate key body functions. 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.

Problem 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 clot 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.

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

HMO Means “Hand the Money Over”

This past October turned out to be a nightmare for the managed care industry. Three different class actions 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 HealthPlan 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 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 consent 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 medical information—‘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 more frugal when exercising their discretionary authority to the detriment of their membership,” the Seventh Court stated.

But perhaps it was in the Turner 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.
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.

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

“We underwent intense training, devel-
oped 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 rep-
resentatives from all of our unions, as well as
to as 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, UPOCW 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, devel-
op ing options and making recommendations to
the Committee.

If sufficient progress is made by June,
local unions will begin independent negoti-
ations over local issues in July. At the con-
closure 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 out-
growth 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 communi-
cations during the 2000-2002 contract nego-
tiation cycle.

More than 95 rank-and-file union mem-
ers — including representatives from all
participating unions — will serve on the
Task Groups. An additional 250 members,
again from all involved unions, will be mem-
ers 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 offi-
cers and, after being trained, will be put to
work.

A key component of common issues bar-
gaining is that at any point, either labor or
management may choose to withdraw from
the process. In that event, the parties will revert to their existing
bargaining structure, with local unions under-
taking 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 improvements in
member perception and satisfaction,” he said.
“T pledge the full support of the medical
groups in this Partnership effort.”

Local 100 wins

The organizing campaign escalated as
Broward County Administrator and County
Commissioners suspended employees’ civil
service protection. Citing budget restric-
tions, 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 recom-
mandation to PERC as to their next step. A
recommendation is expected from PERC 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.

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, C.I.O.
http://www.opeiu.org

MICHAEL OGDEN
President

GAILLE BRADFORD
Secretary-Treasurer

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

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 mem-
ers have returned to work. On March 17, the negotiating teams for SPEA/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 SPEA/IFPTE Local 2001 contract. The Boeing Company and SPEA/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 successful-
ly 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 engi-
niers and technicians throughout the Department of Defense, NASA, General Electric,
Lucent Technologies, Lockheed and other private and public sector concerns.
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 at least 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 Union International understand this. 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 families,” 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 Bottos 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 take 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 went on strike.

In the winter of 1913 the workers, more than 24,000 men, women, and children marched out of the mills in strike. They 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 line 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 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 Stein. 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 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.](image)

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 in 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 improvements 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 Rocky Turner, Secretary-Treasurer Margo Peel, President Ronnie Jones, and Chief Stewards Marty Schmoker, Jackie Curry and Gene Patton.


Local 459 wins elections at McLaren Medical Management, Inc.

Local 459 Business Representative Bonnie Strauss reported that the local, which is based in Lanting, Michigan, has won three elections by a 9/80 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, expansion 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 Barrett, Gloria Dotson, Anne Marie Lyons, Leann Maio, Mary Putney, Patricia Santamaria and Joyce Spelios.

Pictured are several members of the Negotiating Committee: (left to right) Gloria Dotson, Patricia Santamaria, Anne Marie Lyons, Donna Barrett, Local 6 President Mary Mahoney, Leann Maio, and Chief Negotiator and Local 6 Business Manager Walter Allen Jr.
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 United Nations in New York City. 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). Dupuis continues to work today. As a Representative for the COC, she services a variety of locals in central and northern Ontario. She is fluent in French and English 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 Area Authorized Committees of Labor (SAACL) for the COC. In her new position, 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 I 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 looking forward to 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.

Guests 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 Beauséjour.

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 Quebec 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 exist. Communication is an immediate priority," said Canadian Director Lajeunesse. Increased communication has also been a priority of the OPEIU. The CNC will continue to work on developing its labor publication, better to 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 Beauséjour 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). She also received the following 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 Laplanite, 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); Susan Ferguson (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; Janine Desjardins (Local 57, Montreal, Quebec); and François Bisson (Local 463, Montreal, Quebec) 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 Beauséjour 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.
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 recommendation 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 Montréal; the caisse populaire Desjardins du Quartier Latin also in Montréal; and the caisse populaire de l’Auvergne in Charlevoix near Québec City.

The three-year agreement which includes a non-binding 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 for International Services handles transfers of funds from other banks and financial institutions around the world. The Caisse Centrale Desjardins’ Centre for International Services handles transfers of funds from other banks and financial institutions around the world. 

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 for International Services handles transfers of funds from other banks and financial institutions around the world. The Caisse Centrale Desjardins’ Centre for International Services handles transfers of funds from other banks and financial institutions around the world. 

Superior Credit Union becomes union

As a credit union merger 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.

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 on this matter was held on May 13, 1999 in Thunder Bay.

Chair of the arbitration board, Mr. Gerald J. Charnay, 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 RN’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.