



WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 484

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Pilots at Air Methods vote for OPEIU representation

Helicopter and airplane pilots who perform life-saving emergency flights to medical treatment centers have cast their votes for OPEIU representation, affirming that those who save lives also deserve fair pay, good benefits, and reasonable working conditions.

In a "yes" vote of 298, the hard work of the pilots at Air Methods Corporation (AMC) and OPEIU organizers resulted in a strong vote. According to rules of the National Mediation Board, the union needed a majority (50 percent plus one) of eligible voters, or 271 votes. With a voting group of 540, this goal was already challenging, but the union-busting tactics of AMC resulted in even greater challenges.

In a move that confirmed their stance on unions, AMC hired the infamous union-busting firm, Mountain State Employer's Council, Inc. Throughout the union campaign, they engaged in tactics such as anti-union meetings, one-on-one meetings, pilot questionnaires geared to their agenda, anti-union letters from the CEO of AMC, and more. To counteract these tactics, OPEIU Senior Organizer Jeff Rusich brought in the heavy

artillery—Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. pilots Stephen Ragin and Mike Dorsett—who are also President and Vice President of OPEIU Local 108.

"We were really helped out by the work of Stephen and Mike, as well as the constant work of the substantial pilot committee that we had," Rusich said. "Because these men are pilots too, they bring a level of trust along with them naturally. Stephen was instrumental in reaching out to pilots that were shaky, and visited them at the bases. Mike took a union leave of absence from PHI so that he could take the lead on phone calls, and reach out to pilots that hadn't decided yet. They made a huge difference in this campaign."

As the pilots at PHI also encountered a difficult union-busting campaign when they were organized by OPEIU, Ragin and Dorsett were ready to take on the challenges of this drive.

"I visited with many AMC pilots in an effort to help this election be successful," Ragin said. "I have been astonished to learn that in some locations their salaries are as low as \$25,000 per year, and that a salary of \$38,000 is very common. This compares with a union stan-

dard for pilots of two and three times their salaries. These pilots maintain high professional standards, and they deserve all the help we can give them to bring up their low salaries. A win here is ultimately beneficial for pilots everywhere," he said.

Because Rusich had been involved in similar campaigns in the past, he knew that AMC would engage in heavy union-busting tactics. Although it took a while for those tactics to kick in, Rusich kept preparing the AMC employees for it to take place.

"When the union busting started, we were prepared for it," he said. "Mountain State Employer's Council knew how tough this fight was going to be, and they brought out everything they had. Because we were prepared for it, we were able to bring out everything we had and win the vote."

The pilots at AMC were given five weeks to cast their vote. The vote, overseen by the National Mediation Board, was done by a telephone call-in process. The phone method, which is done with an 800 number, a six-digit voter identification number that each pilot is

given, and the last four digits of each pilot's Social Security number, gives additional security that their votes will remain anonymous.

Although the phone-in vote seems easier, it also creates another obstacle. Failing to call the National Mediation Board counts as a "no" vote. Therefore, the organizer's campaign had to concentrate not only on turning no votes into yes votes, but also on getting the pilots who would vote yes to phone in their votes. The combined resources and hard work of OPEIU and the enthusiastic pilots at AMC were able to overcome these hurdles, and they will now begin to negotiate a contract.

Instrumental in the victory were the leadership of PHPA, including President Butch Grafton. Also key was an organizing committee of 42 AMC pilots, including Robert Box, Dan McDade and Troy Montanez.

"These pilots are heroes who get injured people the medical attention they need before it is too late," President Michael Goodwin said. "We are proud to welcome them as brothers and sisters, and to help them win the contract terms they deserve."

OPEIU and PSEG ring the bell — on separate occasions!



OPEIU President Michael Goodwin joins with other New York labor officials in ringing the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Friday, August 29, 2003 in commemoration of Labor Day. Also pictured are: (third from left) Dr. Annie B. Martin, President, NY Chapter NAACP; Goodwin; Catherine Kinney, Co-President, NYSE; Brian McLaughlin, President, New York Central Labor Council (NYC-CLC); Ted Jacobsen, Secretary, NYC-CLC; Richard Lanigan, OPEIU Region II Vice President; and Frank Ashen, Senior Vice President, NYSE. (Right photo) Also, OPEIU Local 153 Executive Board member Linda Port Vliet (second from left) and PSEG CEO James Ferland rang the bell at the NYSE on June 3, 2003. PSEG celebrated 100 years as a publicly traded company on the NYSE. OPEIU has represented workers at PSEG for more than 50 years.

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

- I** 3 OPEIU Executive Board meeting
- N** 5 OPEIU organizes!
- S** 6 Lobbyist Corner
- I** 9 Scholarship applications



Office and Professional Employees International Union John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund

Office and Professional Employees International Union John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund Application Form Application Deadline: March 31, 2004

Name of Applicant _____
Last First Middle

Home Address _____
Street

City State Zip Code Telephone Number

Date of Birth Social Security Number Sex M F

Applicant Employed By _____

OPEIU Local Union Number _____

* Must be a member of an OPEIU Local Union

Name of School you are currently attending _____

Date of Graduation _____

What College, University, Technical, or Vocational School do you plan to attend?

First Choice Location _____

Second Choice Location _____

Third Choice Location _____

Have you been accepted by a College, University, Technical, or Vocational School, as of this date?

Yes No

If you answered yes, at what College, University, Technical, or Vocational School were you accepted?

The applicant must be either an undergraduate or graduate in one of the following areas of study.

Please mark the area of study.

- _____ Labor Studies
- _____ Industrial Relations
- _____ Social Science
- _____ Other Related Field (describe) _____
- _____ Non-degree programs sponsored by the National Labor College at the George Meany Center or similar institution.

If selected for this scholarship, I fully agree to adhere to the rules that have been established by the Scholarship Committee of the OPEIU John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

STATEMENT OF INTENT

If selected for this scholarship, it is my intent to remain within the OPEIU for a period of at least two (2) years.

Signature of Applicant _____

Signature of Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer: _____

Local Union Number _____ Date _____

(Print Name of Signing Officer)

Send application to: **John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund**
Office & Professional Employees International Union
1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 393-4464 Fax: (202) 347-0649

ELIGIBILITY:

Ten (10) scholarships per year will be awarded on the basis of at least one (1) per region and not to exceed one (1) per family for a lifetime. Applications are open to members or associate members in good standing for at least two (2) years. All applicants must meet the eligibility requirements and comply with the Rules and Regulations as established by the OPEIU Executive Board. Each scholarship has a total maximum value of \$2,000.00.

The applicant must be:

- a member or associate member of OPEIU in good standing; and
- either an undergraduate or graduate in one of the following areas of study:
 - Labor Studies
 - Industrial Relations
 - Social Science or a related field
- Non-degree Programs sponsored by the National Labor College at the George Meany Center or similar institution

PROCEDURES:

Each applicant must file an official John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund application. Application forms must be endorsed by the Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer attesting that the **MEMBER or ASSOCIATE MEMBER** is in good standing. Such endorsement must be obtained before the application is submitted.

FORMS:

Application forms may be obtained at your Local Union office or at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union.

REQUIREMENTS:

High School Transcript: All applicants are required to submit their High School transcript. Does not have to be an official transcript; copies are acceptable.

Rank in Class: High School Transcript must show rank in class or rank in class must be provided. **In the event the High School does not rank students, approximate rank or percentile and class size must be provided.**

College Transcript: If presently enrolled in a College, University or a recognized Technical or Vocational Post-Secondary School, applicant is required to submit College transcript, along with their High School transcript. Does not have to be an official transcript, copies are acceptable.

Essay: All applicants shall be required to submit an essay on their occupational goals (300 to 500 words). This essay should be double-spaced and typed on 8½" x 11" paper.

Statement of Intent: All applicants shall be required to execute the Statement of Intent to remain within the OPEIU for a period of at least two (2) years.

APPLICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

All applications, High School transcripts, Rank in Class or approximate rank or percentile and class size must be provided, College Transcripts (if applicable) and Essays must be received at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union, 1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036, no later than **March 31** of each year.

SELECTION OF SCHOLARSHIP:

The selections shall be based on recommendations of an academic scholarship committee. Announcement of the winners will be made during the month of **June** of each year.

Office and Professional Employees International Union Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund

ELIGIBILITY:

FULL-TIME SCHOLARSHIPS

Twelve (12) full-time scholarships will be awarded on the basis of at least one (1) per region and not to exceed one (1) per family for a lifetime. Applications are open to members in good standing, associate members, or to their children, all of whom must meet the eligibility requirements and comply with the Rules and Regulations as established by the OPEIU Executive Board. Each scholarship is \$1,250.00 per year for a total maximum value of \$5,000.00.

PART-TIME SCHOLARSHIPS

Six (6) part-time scholarships will be awarded on the basis of at least one (1) per region in order to reach a greater number of members, as full-time scholarships are generally awarded to children of members, and not to exceed one (1) per family for a lifetime. Applications are open to members in good standing, associate members, or to their children, all of whom must meet the eligibility requirements and comply with the Rules and Regulations as established by the OPEIU Executive Board. Each part-time scholarship is \$500.00 per year for a total maximum value of \$2,000.00.

Part-time scholarships are defined as a minimum of three (3) credits and no more than two (2) courses.

If a part-time student does not attend a college/university each semester, they have two (2) years maximum to use the part-time scholarship.

If the student becomes a full-time student, while receiving a part-time student scholarship, the scholarship will be revoked, and they will be able to apply for a full-time scholarship.

Part-time scholarship awards shall be subject to all other eligibility rules under this Scholarship Fund.

An applicant must be either:

- A member or an associate member of OPEIU in good standing on the date of award, unless a member loses employment to study on a full-time basis, has retired as a member in good standing, becomes disabled or terminated from employer layoffs and plant closing.
- The son, daughter, stepchild or legally adopted child of an OPEIU member in good standing or an associate member.
- High School senior or High School graduate entering a College, University or a recognized Technical or Vocational Post-Secondary School as a full-time or part-time student.
- Presently in a College, University, or a recognized technical or Vocational Post-Secondary school as a full-time or part-time student.

PROCEDURES:

Each applicant must file an official OPEIU scholarship fund application. Application forms must be endorsed by the Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer attesting that a member, a parent of an applicant, or an associate member is in good standing on the date of award. The application form must also be endorsed if a member loses employment to study on a full-time basis, retires, is disabled, or is terminated from employer layoffs and plant closings. **Such endorsement must be obtained before the application is submitted.**

FORMS:

Application forms may be obtained at your Local Union office or at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union.

REQUIREMENTS:

High School Transcript: All applicants are required to submit their High School transcript. Does not have to be an official transcript; copies are acceptable.

Rank in Class: High School transcript must show rank in class or rank in class must be provided. In the event the High School does not rank students, approximate rank or percentile and class size must be provided.

College Transcript: If presently enrolled in a College, University or a recognized Technical or Vocational Post-Secondary School as a full/part-time student, applicant is required to submit College transcript, along with their High School transcript. Does not have to be an official transcript; copies are acceptable.

Test: All applicants are required to take a Scholastic Aptitude Test - SAT - (the admissions Testing Program Examination of the College Entrance Examination Board), American College Testing Program - ACT - or equivalent examination by a recognized Technical or Vocational Post-Secondary School. If you have already taken any of the above tests, you should request your school to forward the results of your test to the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union. Does not have to be official test scores; copies are acceptable.

APPLICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

All applications, High School Transcripts, Rank in Class or approximate rank or percentile and class size, College Transcripts and Test Scores are due in the Secretary-Treasurer's office no later than **March 31** of each year.

SELECTION OF SCHOLARSHIP:

The selections shall be based on recommendations of an academic scholarship committee. Announcement of the winners will be made during the month of **June** each year.

Office and Professional Employees International Union Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund Application Form Application Deadline: March 31, 2004

I AM APPLYING FOR A FULL-TIME SCHOLARSHIP YES ___ NO ___
I AM APPLYING FOR A PART-TIME SCHOLARSHIP YES ___ NO ___

PLEASE NOTE: MUST BE FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME, CANNOT APPLY FOR BOTH

Name of Applicant _____
Last First Middle

Home Address _____
Street

City State Zip Code

Date of Birth _____ Sex M ___ F ___

Social Security Number _____ Telephone Number _____

Member/Associate Member Name _____
Last First Middle

Home Address _____
Street

City State Zip Code

Member/Associate Member Employed By _____

OPEIU Local Union Number _____

Relationship to Member/Associate Member: Son ___ Daughter ___ Other ___

Name of School you are currently attending _____

Date of Graduation _____

What College, University, Technical, or Vocational School do you plan to attend?

First Choice _____ Location _____

Second Choice _____ Location _____

Third Choice _____ Location _____

Have you been accepted by a College, University, Technical, or Vocational School, as of this date?

YES ___ NO ___

If you answered yes, at what College, University, Technical, or Vocational School were you accepted? _____

If selected for this scholarship, I fully agree to adhere to the rules that have been established by the Scholarship Committee of the OPEIU Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Signature of Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer: _____

Local Union Number _____ Date _____

(Print Name of Signing Officer)

Send Application to:

Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund
Office & Professional Employees International Union
1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 393-4464 Fax: (202) 347-0649



The Employee Right to Choose Act

By Michael Goodwin, International President

The most important labor legislation in recent memory was introduced in the U.S. Senate this month. The bill is S-1513 and it has been introduced by New York's Senator Charles Schumer. This historic legislation is aptly called "The Employee Right to Choose Act."

Many of you are already aware from either personal experience or the experiences of others that union organizing has become a very difficult task in recent years. The reason is that during organizing drives management is often able to engage in legal roadblocks that stall negotiations or in actual violations of the law that have mild penalties or no penalties at all. Each year thousands of workers are fired for engaging in union organizing or other union activity. Other workers active in union drives suffer more cleverly disguised retaliation from employers such as layoffs or reductions in work schedules. Often, even after a union is recognized by an employer, further legal maneuvering by management can greatly delay or completely deter the attainment of a first contract. All of these maneuvers occur because of loopholes in the National Labor Relations Act, a law that is supposed to guarantee workers the right to join unions and is supposed to guarantee collective bargaining in good faith.

Sen. Schumer's bill proposes changes in the National Labor Relations Act that would eliminate the loopholes. For starters, the bill would grant neutrality card check rights to workers across the country. If passed it would require that when a majority (50 percent plus one) of employees in a work unit has signed union authorization documents the NLRB shall automatically certify that union as the

bargaining agent for the workers and negotiation between the union and management would begin immediately.

Another great provision of the Schumer bill is this: Employers would not have the opportunity to see the list of union supporters (those signing union authorization cards, petitions or some other document) while the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) certification is in progress. The NLRB alone would have access to the list and it alone would determine the validity of the signatures. This provision, quite obviously, would reduce opportunities by management to threaten or intimidate workers that support a union.

Another problem with the present system of unionizing elections is that employees have to suffer through a long waiting period after the NLRB determines that enough of them have expressed interest in joining a particular union. During the waiting period before the official election management often engages in fierce anti-union activity. Just as often, management will engage in stalling tactics to delay the election for as long as possible. In some cases workers have had to wait more than seven years to have an NLRB vote to join a union. Sen. Schumer's bill addresses these problems by closing the loophole.

Another game that employees play in union organizing drives is called "surface bargaining." What happens is that after the union is certified by the NLRB and negotiations begin with management the com-

pany does not bargain in good faith. By stalling negotiations and frustrating the workers, management is often able to use the time to fire union supporters or sponsor campaigns to decertify the union. Senator Schumer's bill will stop this illegal activity. It would do so by setting hard time limits by which the union and management must begin and complete the negotiation of the first contract. If a contract is not reached within that time limit and federal mediation fails, the bill calls for a third party arbitrator to force a first contract between the union and management.

I was proud to be among the many representatives from organized labor at Sen. Schumer's press conference on September 3 in Washington, D.C. when the introduction of "The Employee Right to Choose Act" was announced. I was joined by Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler, Local 512 President John Strachen and Local 512 Recording Secretary Aaron Sanders. At the press conference, reporters asked the Senator if he expected the bill to be a topic of the ongoing U.S. presidential campaign. I think union members themselves should answer that question. And I think the answer is that unions and union members must do everything possible to make this bill not only a national issue but a legislative priority.

Highlights of the bill are summarized as follows:

Simplifies Workplace Organizing. The bill replaces our current union election system, directing that if a majority (50 percent plus one) of employees in a work unit have signed authorizations — a card, a petition, or some other document — selecting a union, the NLRB shall automatically certify that organization as the union for that unit.

Limits Employers' Abilities to Thwart Unionization Efforts. Under the current system, once the NLRB has certified employee interest in organizing, the workers must wait for a period before participating in an election. Many employers currently utilize that time to engage in anti-union activities, such as "mandatory" work sessions and harassment. Sen. Schumer's legislation would essentially close that window for employers.

Facilitates First Contract Negotiation. This legislation sets hard time limits by which parties must begin and complete their negotiation of the first contract after union certification. If the parties fail to meet those deadlines, the bill would authorize involvement of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and, if necessary, a third-party arbitrator to force a first contract between the union and the employer. This would eradicate the delaying tactics often used by employers during contract negotiations.

As we follow this legislation through Congress, please look to future editions of *White Collar* for more information about its progress.



(Left to right) Local 512 Recording Secretary Aaron Sanders, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler, President Michael Goodwin, Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan and Local 512 President John Strachen. Sanders and Strachen were also in Washington, D.C. to attend another meeting.



Letters to the Editor



Again, we reprint letters from our members on various issues. We invite our readers to continue to share their opinions with us, whether in support of or in opposition to our own. Debate is healthy and welcome in this union. Letters are edited for length only, not content. Remember: anonymous letters will not be printed.

You can also reach us on the Web: <http://www.opeiu.org>

Dear Michael:

Earlier this spring, I offered the first bold policy idea of this campaign – a plan to ensure that every American has access to health care. I am proud to say that my idea has acted as a catalyst in the Democratic presidential race: if we are to be successful in defeating George Bush next year, we have to offer bold, creative ideas that capture the public's attention and make it clear that we are ready to respond to the problems they face.

To address the problems facing your members, and hard-working people all across this country, we need comprehensive solutions. Piecemeal, incremental approaches will not solve the problem. We all know that the public has waited far too long for a comprehensive solution to our health care insurance crisis. No Congressional leader worked harder or longer with the Clinton Administration than I did to pass universal healthcare reform. To me, its defeat was not a signal to retreat, but a call to arms.

Providing affordable access to health care for every American is a national imperative. And for me, it is also a moral imperative. My son Matt developed cancer as a child and it was only through the grace of God, the care of his medical team, and health insurance that allowed us to pay for his experimental treatments that he survived. Today he is healthy, married and is campaigning on my behalf – and on behalf of the millions of Americans who want, and deserve, health care coverage.

You know all too well the impact that health care has on your membership. Union leader after union leader has told me that the majority of the issues at the bargaining table are about health care insurance. We cannot turn this economy around until we solve the health care crisis for every worker. My plan will relieve the pressure of skyrocketing health care costs on every employer, every union, and every working family – while also helping to stimulate the

economy, create jobs and reinvigorate growth.

By comparison, my opponents for the Democratic presidential nomination are trying to take the easy way out by taking “baby steps.” Their plans try to achieve universal coverage by patching holes. But for each person they cover, another will be left wondering if their employer will drop their health care, increase the cost of their monthly premiums, or refuse to offer them a raise because of rising health care costs.

As a labor leader, there is one fundamental difference you should know: My plan is far better for union members. Most people receive their health insurance through their employers, and unions have done a great job at negotiating the best possible coverage for their members. My plan would give employers a 60 percent tax credit for their health care expenses—more than double what the average company now gets. The 60 percent tax credit would cover both current employees and retirees. Every dollar of this help must be used for health care. Additionally, as health care costs for employees are reduced, workers will be able to collectively bargain for higher wages and better fringe benefits. It is time to end the tradeoff between higher wages and health insurance – passing my health care plan will allow workers to get both.

Howard Dean's plan gives individuals help to purchase their own insurance, although not enough to make it affordable. John Kerry's plan is centered on asking individuals to buy into the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP). Failing to support and expand the employer-based system will undermine that system and would erode our current system at the same time when it should be strengthened.

Under the Dean and Kerry plans, employers do not have to work to cover workers or radically cut the amount of the premium they pay. Their plans actually create excuses for employers to drop coverage and will only cover a fraction of the 41 million uninsured through employers, even though nearly nine out of 10 uninsured Americans are in working households. (According to Emory University Prof. Kenneth Thorpe, who analyzed all the plans, the Kerry plan will cover 5 million more Americans through their employers while the Dean plan will cover fewer than 1 million more. Under my plan, 27.5 million more Americans will get healthcare through their employers.) My plan covers everyone at work, at large companies or small business, full-time, part-time and self-employed.

The Dean and Kerry plans both reward companies that currently do not provide health insurance, increasing their competitive advantage over companies that have consistently provided affordable health insurance. My plan is a fair plan that does not steer help simply to the worst corporate citizens.

Unlike my plan, the Dean and Kerry plans fail to address workers' fears that they could lose their health care at any time. Under my plan, no employer could ever drop coverage, or increase the percentage of the premium they ask employees to pay. Under their plans, increasing premiums will still drive employers to stop coverage, pass costs on to workers, or withhold wage increases.

Under my plan, if a qualified worker loses their job, they can get insurance through a 65 per-

cent tax credit to help them afford COBRA coverage for 18 months. If you are between 55 and 65 years of age, you can buy Medicare. And for children and parents who might potentially fall through the cracks I provide an expanded Medicaid and SCHIP program that will act as a safety net.

A plan cannot offer universal health care unless it offers affordable health care. Yet under both the Dean and Kerry plans, too many families would have to pay a significant portion of their income to buy health insurance. Instead of a guarantee for every worker, their plans ask the uninsured to find health care on their own, and open up the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Plan to these people. Two million individuals under Kerry's plan, and four million under Dean's, are asked to buy health care on their own.

There are two problems with this approach. The first problem is the cost: the Dean plan asks an average family of four earning \$63,200 to pay \$395 a month before they can receive any help with health care premiums. Kerry's plan asks a family to spend \$632. This is simply unaffordable. The second problem is that sending the uninsured into the FEHBP will drive up the costs for workers who have health care through that program already.

For state and local workers, my plan is the only plan that dramatically strengthens the present system. In the first three years alone, my plan will provide \$172 billion in funds to states and localities – equivalent to 60 percent of their health care expenditures for state and local employees. That is money that can then be used to expand wages and benefits for state and local employees who have been squeezed by the fiscal crisis facing many states.

In contrast, Dean's plan exacerbates the current fiscal crisis facing state and local governments. Dean's plan relies on a large expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), a program that requires states to contribute between 17 percent and 35 percent of costs. Dean has no plan to reimburse states for these expenses.

My plan is the only plan that will assist unions in addressing the rising health care costs you face in your staff plans. The value of the 60 percent tax credit provided under my plan will also be available to unions (through an equivalent transfer payment) to help underwrite the cost of providing health insurance to your staff. We cannot ignore the impact that this has had on family income and morale as most unions have faced similar economic pressures to those facing private sector companies because of the Bush economic downturn. Everyone is facing the health care crisis and everyone deserves help. Quite frankly, neither Dean nor Kerry plans do anything to address the health care costs your union faces.

In the coming weeks, I will continue to speak out on my health care plan as well as offer a clear vision on what I would do as President. I do not intend to pull any punches: the American worker has taken it on the chin for far too long and deserves, and demands, change. I intend to fight for that change, and I want your support.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Richard A. Gephardt

Dear Mr. Goodwin:

On behalf of the membership of OPEIU Local 19 I wish to thank you, Kevin Kistler and the International for sponsoring the steward training session we had the pleasure to attend

here in Toledo, Ohio on Saturday, June 14. Mike Leroy presented the seminar and all that attended unanimously agree he was fantastic. We learned so much in such a short period of time. This was the first formal steward-training program held locally ever in the 12 years that I've been a member of OPEIU. I can't express my gratitude enough for helping us achieve this goal. As newly elected president of Local 19, my priority is to get our membership educated; something I feel has been lacking for some time. Educated members are active members and we're in desperate need of that.

Carolyn Stafford and I attended the Education Conference in Chicago last September and had the pleasure of meeting you and Kevin Kistler on Friday evening. Our discussion gave me hope for our Local. And then I met Wayne Pankratz. I sat in awe at that conference listening to Wayne describe the transformation Local 95 underwent over the last 4-5 years. The union he was describing might as well have been ours. It was then and there that I decided that I wanted to be at that podium in 4-5 years giving the same kind of report. With the International's help and support I feel I can accomplish this goal.

Once again, OPEIU Local 19 thanks you profusely for your financial, educational and moral support. It is appreciated more than words can describe.

In Solidarity,

Jane Ridenour, President
OPEIU Local 19

The Truth About The OPEIU

Well, it has been almost two years (October 30) since I was terminated for my union organizing efforts. From the onset of this action I have never been a member of the OPEIU. Now, with this in mind, listen closely! They (the Union) from the day I was terminated, paid me a weekly check from a Strike and Benefit Fund. This lasted two and one half months, till I took my present position. Trust me, with four daughters, a wife that is a homemaker, and living paycheck to paycheck, they (the OPEIU) kept me afloat. Then they (the OPEIU attorneys) simultaneously filed a federal lawsuit on my behalf. Since then, I have attended several sets of depositions spread about our great country. A stack of legal papers 16 inches high has been generated from my case. A settlement has been reached, in which my ex-employer has admitted his unlawful conduct, and of course, I will be receiving some monies for the heartache he put my family through. Now I hope you have not forgotten that I never was an actual OPEIU member. This is the reality of what the OPEIU can do for all of us. We can have a collective voice and level the playing field between employee and employer. A fair deal for both parties. There are no mobs, no paycheck-draining dues, or people trying to tell the owners how to run their companies. The Union can only be as strong as its members. Don't speak of the Union from a standpoint of ignorance – do some research, ask questions, and it will be very clear that it is what is best for you, your family and your company. They (the OPEIU) stood behind me and supported me in my time of need. Imagine the benefits of actually being a member. To all you pilots with upcoming votes, “Vote Yes,” and you will never stand alone!!! Fly safe and support the OPEIU.

T. Scott Rehm

Local 378 in tough negotiations with ICBC

Local 378 is in the midst of difficult contract negotiations to protect approximately 4,600 OPEIU members against substantial concessions demanded by ICBC, the public auto insurance company for British Columbians.

Local 378 has represented workers at ICBC since 1974, and during that time has had only two disputes resulting in strikes, the last of which was in 1981. The union has always been able to negotiate with the company, but is now facing demands for some of the worst concessions seen in Local 378's history. The ICBC is not fully controlling

the agenda, however, as a public service employer is under the auspices of the new anti-union Liberal government.

Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, insurance rates in Canada have been escalating. Because ICBC handles only auto insurance, it has been able to successfully maintain low rates and has been cited as a "success model," of a company that is delivering a good public service.

"Here we have a government company attempting to destroy the benefits of public auto insurance," said Jerri New, Local 378 President and OPEIU Vice President for

Region VIII. "The employer is asking for very substantial concessions, and is being very aggressive about those concessions, in terms of employee scheduling of work, leave entitlement, sick day provisions and seniority.

"ICBC is making massive profits, so there is no reason for the concession demands they are making," New continued.

The current contract expired on June 30, 2003, and a continuation clause is in effect until a new contract is negotiated. The Local unsuccessfully attempted to mediate with ICBC through the Labor Relations Board, and has since filed bargaining in bad faith and unfair

labor practice charges against the company.

"We're waiting for hearing dates," New said. "No talks are scheduled at the moment, so we've set a strike deadline of October 27 to pressure the employer to get back to the bargaining table.

"The issue goes beyond our members," New noted. "It's a public issue as well, as we're trying to preserve public auto insurance at the same time. So we're also working to gain public support for this issue."

New, as well as Local 378 Vice President Karen Rockwell and the ICBC Executive Board members are conducting the negotiations.

OPEIU June Executive Board meeting

Members of the OPEIU Executive Board met June 26-30, 2003 in Québec City, PQ, to swear in new officers, review international union business and hear from guest speaker Arturo Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers of America.

Elizabeth Fong sworn in as International Vice President



OPEIU President Michael Goodwin swears in Elizabeth Fong to the office of Region X Vice President at the Executive Board meeting. Delegates from Ontario to the Ninth Triennial Canadian Convention in April elected Fong as their Regional Vice President in a contested election. Fong replaces Ruth Workewich, who decided not to run for re-election. Also pictured is Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth.

Henderson B. Douglas Award to Conley



John Conley, President of ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873, receives the 2002 Henderson B. Douglas Award for excellence in organizing. Presenting the award are Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth and President Michael Goodwin.

OPEIU contributes to UFW



OPEIU President Goodwin and Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan present Arturo Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), with a contribution to the UFW.



Rodriguez is a special guest speaker at the meeting, also attended by his son, Arthur (left).



Rodriguez presents President Goodwin with a special photo.



The OPEIU Executive Board. Also pictured is ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 President John Conley, and UFW President Arturo Rodriguez with his son, Arthur.



Kevin Kistler, OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services, addresses the Board meeting.



The OPEIU Executive Board in session.

Democratic presidential candidates speak to working families

The Democratic presidential candidates came knocking on Labor's door on August 5, when the AFL-CIO hosted the 90-minute AFL-CIO Working Families Presidential Forum during the AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

All nine candidates for the Democratic nomination came to the forum to bid for labor's support, including former ambassador Carol Mosely Braun, former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, Senator John Edwards (D-NC), Representative Richard Gephardt (D-MO), Senator Bob Graham (D-FL), Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), and civil rights activist Al Sharpton. Glaringly absent was President George W. Bush, who neither attended the forum he was invited to, nor returned the questionnaire on his policies toward working people.

"President Bush has once again shown his scorn for the working people of the United States," OPEIU President Michael Goodwin said. "At the AFL-CIO forum, Bush had the opportunity to defend the damaging policies toward working families that his administration has pushed, and he ducked that opportunity. This underscores the importance of labor uniting behind a candidate who is dedicated to helping the working families of this country."

Nationally televised on C-Span, the Navy Pier Auditorium was packed with 2,500 union members who came to hear the candidates' positions. The candidates fielded questions directly from workers about the issues that really matter to them, as well as from the moderator, National Public Radio's Bob Edwards.

As union members know all too well, the

present administration has not been kind to union organizing. The Democratic candidates each spoke of their commitment to unions, and the rights of workers to organize. While the candidates differed on many issues in the forum, they were all united in their support for unions.

"Recognition of the importance of a worker's right to bargain collectively, freely associate and strike, underlies the entire economy," Representative Gephardt said. "Retaining and strengthening our nation's basic labor laws is the foundation for a strong and growing economy... Labor rights and a rising standard of living go hand-in-hand." All of the candidates support the workers' right to organize.

With 42 million Americans struggling without healthcare coverage, the healthcare crisis is a key concern of working families.

The healthcare plans that the candidates offered varied widely but all substantially address the issue.

With 83,000 jobs being lost per month under the current administration, the Democratic candidates eagerly offered ways to jumpstart the economy, and spoke in particular on trade issues.

While the candidates disagreed on many issues, they all definitely agreed it is time to get Bush out of the office he was selected into. The candidates all differed, however, on what approach would be best to take back the White House.

To find out more about how the Democratic presidential candidates will govern on working family issues, visit http://www.aflcio.org/issuespolitics/politics/candidates_2004.cfm for a look at their answers to the AFL-CIO questionnaire.

OPEIU celebrates Labor Day



Seniors Charlie Ponti Sr., the 90-year-old President of Local 153's retiree association, and 93-year-old Local 153 member Alice Jarvis join President Michael Goodwin and Region II International Vice President Richard Lanigan at the New York Labor Day parade.



Representative Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) addresses the New Jersey Labor Day parade.



OPEIU Local 153 and Local 32 members march in the New Jersey Labor Day parade. Local 32 Business Manager Steve Tully and Region II Vice President/Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan flank President Goodwin. Local 153 Business Representative Peter Krippa is pictured on the right and Local 153 Organizer Greg Vergara is pictured on the left.

OPEIU endorses Gephardt 2004

At its meeting June 26-30, 2003, the OPEIU Executive Board officially endorsed Representative Richard Gephardt (D-MO) in his 2004 presidential bid.

OPEIU is not alone!

Here's a list* of international unions that have officially endorsed Representative Richard Gephardt (D-MO) in his presidential bid. More are expected in the coming months.

- American Maritime Officers
- Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees
- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
- International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers
- International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
- Office and Professional Employees International Union
- Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association of the United States and Canada
- PACE International Union
- Seafarer's International Union of North America
- United Steelworkers of America

* Partial List

Save the Date

OPEIU's 23rd Triennial Convention will be held June 21-24, 2004 at the Diplomat Hotel, Hollywood, Florida. Please plan to elect delegates and alternates early. Information about the process and further details will be sent to local unions later.

City of South Miami clerical workers vote "yes"

When the city of South Miami went through a budget shortfall this year, the unorganized clerical workers were left behind. While the other city employees who were represented by unions were able to protect their benefits, the clerical workers had their insurance benefit payments increased by 50 percent, and had to take seven unpaid leave days. It was at this moment that OPEIU stepped in to reverse this downward course.

International Union Organizers Vince Menditto and Ed Darcy Jr. began discussions with the clerical group when they learned of their dire situation. Eager to get protection against the budget cuts, workers signed authorization for representation cards. The organizers spoke with Mayor Horace G. Feliu, as well as the city commissioners, and received their word that they would not interfere with an election if the employees wanted to be represented.

On July 8, OPEIU held an election for the group of 41 employees. All of the mailed in ballots voted yes for OPEIU. The Union has begun meeting with employees and is preparing to start contract negotiations shortly.

"This is truly a victory for workers," Darcy said. "Since the employees voted to be represented, the city hasn't rescinded their benefits. We will begin contract negotiations without those negatives in place. We expect

successful negotiations," he said.

The clerical workers will be the fourth municipality in south Florida organized by the International Union and represented by Local 100 in Miami.

Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler said, "We will continue to organize and grow the strength of public employees in Florida. It's important to increase membership to improve effectiveness."

OPEIU supports 100th anniversary of Mother Jones' March of the Mill Children



Children participate in the reenactment at the Botto House.



(Left to right) Ann Decker, Anne Goodwin, actress Betsy Means portraying labor activist Mother Jones, and Olivia Garcia reenact "Mother Jones' March of the Mill Children."

When the American Labor Museum/Botto House commemorated the 100th Anniversary of Mother Jones' March of the Mill Children on July 15, OPEIU members came to show their respect for the labor activist who spent

her life organizing downtrodden workers. Mary Harris, better known as Mother Jones, spent more than 50 years meeting with workers and helping them to overcome terrible working conditions, starting in the 1870s. She visited coalmines, train yards, factories,

and logging camps, all places that many women of her time feared to tread. With her, she carried only her belief that working Americans must work together to free themselves from poverty and powerlessness.

In 1903, Mother Jones traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to work with 100,000 textile workers that were striking to cut their hours from 65 to 55 hours per week. When she arrived, she noted the large number of children workers—one sixth of the striking contingency—and came up with an ingenious plan of action. Every day, Mother Jones would march the mill children from Kensington, Pennsylvania to the Oyster Bay, Long Island home of President Theodore Roosevelt, calling for child labor laws. While her goal of getting the government to pass a law taking children out of mills, mines and factories and putting them into schools would not be realized for several decades after the march, Mother Jones got people paying attention to the issue of child labor for the first time. They could not ignore the front-page news that she generated with her plan, the March of the Mill Children.

"Mother Jones believed that justice for working people depended on strong families, and that strong families required decent working conditions," OPEIU President Michael Goodwin said in remarks to the guests at the event. "We are here to honor her today because the same principles that

she fought for, we continue to fight for. We try to honor her every day, by fighting for the rights of working people."

The commemorative event was held at The American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark, and was co-sponsored by the New Jersey State AFL-CIO. Actress Betsy Means portrayed Mother Jones in a recreation of the March of the Mill Children. Speakers at the event included Goodwin, a member of the museum's Board of Trustees; Charles Wowkanech, President of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO and a museum trustee; and Ken Pengitore, Mayor of the Borough of Haledon. Many OPEIU members attended the commemoration and the performance to pay tribute to Mother Jones.

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Lobbyist Corner

Get involved to defeat dangerous legislation

Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis

If you hear President Bush talk about reforming a social program or a worker protections law, pay close attention to the meaning behind his carefully plotted words. In "Bushspeak," reform is code for slicing benefits while increasing costs, and denying eligibility standards for existing programs. In other words, when Bush says reform, the news isn't going to be good for working families. There are several such bills before Congress right now that will have a profound impact on you and your family. We must do everything we can to defeat these dangerous pieces of legislation.

Medicare Prescription Drugs

President Bush has proposed that Medicare cover certain costs for prescription drugs. Sounds like exactly what seniors and aging boomers want, doesn't it? The truth, however, lies in the details of the proposal. The bills passed by the House and Senate provide for large additional out of pocket costs on the part of the participant. By a vote of 216-215, the House passed a bill that would cover only one-fifth of drug costs for seniors and people with disabilities. It also calls for "means-testing"—linking benefits to income, which would undermine the historically universal nature of Medicare benefits. The House measure even forbids Medicare from negotiating prices with drug companies.

The House drug benefits provide no coverage for annual out-of-pocket costs between \$2,000 and \$5,100. Under the Senate plan, which passed 76-21, seniors would pay the full price of drug costs as well as Medicare fees after reaching \$4,500 in drug costs and before they hit \$5,800 each year.

Both bills move toward the privatization of the entire Medicare program, analysts say, beginning with the creation of drugs-only policies and drug benefits provided by managed care plans. Under the House plan, all of Medicare would compete with private insurers on a cost-only basis starting in 2010. Under the Senate measure, a pilot program along these lines would begin in 2006. Both bills leave seniors and people with disabilities vulnerable to the actions of for-profit organizations that would have the power to determine consumers' premiums and cost sharing.

The prescription drug bills in conference are absolutely the wrong choice for working families. They leave seniors high and dry after the next presidential election. This legislation will not become law until 2004, adding importance to who will be in the White House at that time.

Overtime Pay

In a major victory for working people, the Senate narrowly blocked the Bush Administration from issuing new changes to the U.S. Department of Labor's Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that could have affected 8 million American workers' rights to overtime pay. Under the Bush proposal, workers, including police officers, store supervisors and many other workers, would face unpredictable work schedules and reduced pay because of an increased demand for extra hours for which employers would not have to compensate workers, according to an Economic Policy Institute report released June 26. The administration has indicated it wants to issue final regulations before the end of the year.

When the House of Representatives failed to adopt an amendment authored by Congressman David Obey and Congressman George Miller that would have prevented the U.S. Labor Department from making the President Bush-proposed change to the FLSA,

the fate of overtime rested in the Senate's hands. In a 54-45 vote, six Republicans joined all but one Democrat to support the amendment by Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) that prevents Bush's proposal from being enacted. This amendment was attached to the fiscal year 2004 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill (H.R. 2660). The Republican Senators who voted for the amendment are Senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Ted Stevens (R-AK), Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Arlen Specter (R-PA). The lone Democratic dissenter was Senator Zell Miller (D-GA).

Despite this victory, workers cannot rest easy. A House version of the measure is now in conference, containing many negative provisions that threatens the future of the Senate bill. President Bush has also vowed to veto the Senate appropriations bill if the protections for workers were included, and Congress will need a two-thirds vote of both houses to overcome that veto.

Take Action

Many people ask—what difference can I make? Can one voice alone make the president stop his assault on working families, or make Congress protect our rights? It's true that one voice alone is easy to dismiss. But the sound of our voices strongly united cannot be silenced. We must take action together to defeat these measures. Here's how you can take action today!

Send e-mail to President Bush at president@whitehouse.gov, and tell him to stop attacking overtime pay. Tell him that a veto on the appropriations bill is a veto against working people.

Contact your senators and representatives, and demand that they do their part to help working families by protecting your right to overtime pay.

Urge your representatives and senators to vote NO on the final conference agreement for Medicare Prescription Drugs, and to pursue a real prescription drug bill.

Congress has returned from summer recess. Let's make sure their mailboxes and voice-mails are full of letters and messages from working families! Every letter counts. Every phone call can make a difference. If you prefer to make written contact, OPEIU advises you to either mail or e-mail all correspondences. With your support, we can press for immediate action on these measures.

If you don't know who your House representative is, the Clerk of the House maintains addresses and phone numbers of all Members and Committees: Clerk of the House, US Capitol, Room H154, Washington, DC 20515; phone (202) 225-7000; hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please direct your questions about communication with your Senators to the specific office(s) in question using the following format: Office of Senator (Name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

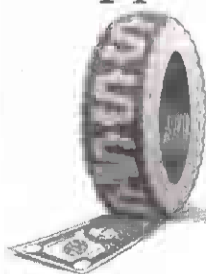
You may also phone the U.S. Capitol's switchboard at (202) 224-3121. An operator will connect you directly with the House or Senate office you request.

If you are not sure who your representative is, the following websites contain links to congressional directories: <http://www.house.gov/writerep> and http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn_faqs.html. You can also access this information at your local library, or call the International Union at 212-675-3210 for a booklet listing of congressional representatives.

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Local 2 picnic celebrates 25 years of representation at Kaiser-Permanente

To celebrate 25 years of Local 2 representation at Kaiser-Permanente in the Mid-Atlantic region, Local 2 members and their families enjoyed a day-long picnic at the picturesque Prince George's Stadium, home of the Bowie Baysox, the Double A affiliate baseball team for the Baltimore Orioles. The July 12 festivities, put together with the assistance of Local 2 shop stewards at Kaiser-Permanente, were a rousing success.

"The picnic was held to celebrate our continuing relationship with Kaiser, and to build union capacity under the Labor Management

Partnership, but it has an additional marketing benefit," Dan Dyer, Local 2 President and OPEIU Region II Vice President said. "With a turnout of more than 600 members, the picnic shows other companies in the Washington, D.C. area that have a collective bargaining agreement with Local 2 just how beneficial a relationship with us can be."

In addition to an all-you-can eat, "All American" buffet, the picnic included a fantasy fun park for the kids, including a merry-go-round, a moon bounce, speed pitching machines, swings and slides, and many games for the adults too, including foosball, ping

pong, volley ball, dunk tank and double shot basketball. Members were even able to play baseball on the field that the Baysox play on.

"It was great to have Marilyn Kawamura, President of Kaiser-Permanente of Mid-Atlantic and many other Kaiser management representatives including members of the Mid-Atlantic Labor Management Council, attending this special occasion," Dyer said. "This just shows how beneficial this relationship is to both employees and management."

All Local 2 members attending the picnic were given free tickets to the baseball game that evening where the Baysox played

the Trenton Thunder. Dyer threw out the first pitch and Secretary-Treasurer Mike Cowan threw out the second pitch, causing even more enthusiasm among the many Local 2 members in the stands. "Many members were impressed that he still had a great arm," Dyer said. After a heavy rain in the seventh inning the game was called, but everyone was able to observe the impressive fireworks display given by the stadium.

Funds for this event came out of Local 2/Kaiser employees escrow account and monies contributed from Kaiser Mid-Atlantic Marketing Department.

OPEIU members graduate George Meany Center

On Saturday, June 28, John J. Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO and Chair of the George Meany Center for Labor Studies-The National Labor College's board of trustees, and Dr. Susan J. Schurman, President of the college, presented degrees to the 155 undergraduate and 14 graduate students of the 2003 graduating class of the GMC-NLC, the largest in the college's history.

The Class of 2003 represented 38 national and international unions and organizations, including the Office and Professional Employees International Union. Graduating from OPEIU were the late Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis (1960-2002) with a Master of Public Administration and Kandy Denise Morton with a Bachelor of Arts, Labor Studies.

Sweeney, Schurman and the National Labor College faculty were joined by a number of officials and dignitaries, including OPEIU Local 2 Business Representative Carolyn Lewis.

Commencement was preceded on Friday by a senior project symposium, at which students discussed their senior research papers, and an awards ceremony.

Internationally known as one of the leading labor education institutions in the world, the George Meany Center-National Labor College has provided its highly acclaimed education and training programs to nearly 200,000 trade union leaders from the United States and around the world.

The National Labor College has now graduated five classes of nearly 800 students from its Bachelor of Arts in Labor Studies program. In addition, the University of Baltimore offers a Master of Public Administration degree and a Master of Arts degree in Legal and Ethical Studies at The National Labor College's campus.

Currently, the George Meany Center-National Labor College hosts more than 70 intensive, weeklong labor studies programs and conferences in organizing, union building and leadership development.

It is embarking on an ambitious campaign to update its campus facilities both to accommodate the growing demand for its degree programs and to provide an even broader array of services to the many national, regional and local union bodies that participate in its classes.



(Left to right) OPEIU Local 2 Business Representative Carolyn Lewis and OPEIU member Kandy Denise Morton.

OPEIU member receives Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship

Dessadra Lomax, a member of OPEIU Local 2, was one of eleven union members to recently receive an award from the Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship program. The program is provided through the Union Plus Education Foundation, and administered by the George Meany Center for Labor Studies-The National Labor College.

The scholarship winners, who represent a wide range of union affiliations, goals and accomplishments, attend the George Meany Center-National Labor College (GMC-NLC) in Silver Spring, Maryland. The GMC-NLC, one of the world's pre-

mier labor education institutions, has graduated nearly 800 students from its Bachelor of Arts in Labor Studies program, since becoming a college in 1997.

Lomax, who is a national organizer for the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), said she is looking forward to earning a Bachelor's Degree from the National Labor College, and that the scholarship will help her achieve her educational goal. "When I found out that I received that scholarship, it really made my day. I'm grateful to receive financial help, and I'm thankful to attend The National Labor College."

Lomax added that her experience at the GMC-NLC has been "nothing but positive," noting that the faculty and staff are always willing to help and offer guidance. "It's just an incredibly supportive environment."

"Higher education has become increasingly more difficult for working families to afford," Leslie Tolf, President of Union Privilege, says. "That is why we are proud to sponsor the Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship program and help men and women in the labor movement achieve their dreams for higher education."

"The National Labor College offers a unique program that is tailor-made for work-

ing men and women," Tolf adds. "The program allows students to attend classes at their own pace; the curriculum complements the work and union experiences of students; and it provides a learning assessment program that enables many students to obtain college credit for their relevant life and work experience."

For more information about the 2003 Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship program, visit www.union-plus.org/scholarships.

For details about the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, visit www.george-meany.org.

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

Work and Health

Repetitive Stress Injuries

A Common Problem, Perhaps with a Common Solution

Submitted by Jeffrey S. Freed

Medical Director, OPEIU Local 153 Health Fund

Repetitive stress injuries (RSIs) are most commonly thought to be equivalent to carpal tunnel syndrome, but are actually a group of workplace related musculoskeletal problems caused by repeated activities resulting in injury to the hand, arm, elbow, shoulder or neck. There are a large number of studies specifically related to carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition that is thought to be caused by continuous trauma to the median nerve that rests below a thick layer of tissue on the inside of the wrist. There has been much controversy over the actual cause of this condition, as well as other RSIs, and the appropriate therapy of each.

Specific interest in RSIs has recently increased because of the frequency of use of the computer among many working populations, and its possible adverse effects. Many studies have been performed to identify the possible causes of these potential problems, but as yet there is no consensus regarding cause and treatment.

Pain is the most common feature involved in any of the conditions included in RSIs. However, other symptoms can include a feeling of tingling, muscle weakness, and decreased mobility, among others. As far as carpal tunnel syndrome is concerned, pain, weakness, tingling and numbness in the affected hand are the most common symptoms. Women are more likely to develop this condition than men. Pain that occurs in the wrist, elbow, shoulder and neck can be a chronic, subacute or acute resulting in a nagging, but not necessarily disabling condition, or an immediate problem that results in an immediate inability to work.

There are two major issues as a direct result of RSIs. First, there is the worker's disability caused by the symptoms. Second is the loss of efficiency and work time caused by the inability to perform work because of the pain and other symptoms. These problems affect both labor and management and result in loss of productivity, increased insurance costs, and escalated cost of products and services. These issues affect all of us negatively, whether we have RSIs or not.

As far as the use of computers is con-

cerned, recent studies have specifically blamed the use of the mouse rather than the keyboard for the carpal tunnel syndrome. This is difficult to definitively evaluate because the condition also exists in people who don't do work that is thought to cause RSIs.

No matter what the specific cause, RSIs are a major burden to workers and their employers. Unfortunately, there are no routine preventive measure or measures that have been accepted by all experts in the field of disability prevention, including orthopedists, physical medicine specialists, or chiropractors. But certain precautions can be taken to try to decrease the likelihood of RSIs.

These include using a comfortable chair with a straight back that encourages good posture; having your computer or other device that you are using at a level that allows for relaxation of your shoulder and neck muscles; the mouse you use should be comfortable in your hand and preferably not require punching the device with the same finger over-and-over again. These are a few maneuvers that can help prevent an injury. However, one technique that is not employed routinely but is thought by many experts to be crucial in preventing RSIs is intermittent, short rest breaks. Pushing away from the device you are using, standing, stretching the back, neck, arm and wrist muscles for one or two minutes an hour is thought not only to decrease the incidence of RSIs, but has actually been shown in studies to increase productivity.

If you develop pain, numbness, tingling or weakness in your wrist, arm, elbow, shoulder or neck in spite of the above measures, medical advice should be sought very soon after the symptoms begin, to prevent major injury that might result in long term disability and the need for surgery to correct. An ounce of prevention is the best way to try to avoid RSIs; however, if this fails and symptoms do occur, early medical intervention is the fastest route to recovery.

Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D., P.C. specializes in general surgery/proctology. He can be reached at (212) 396-0050.

Canadian News

Gilles Beauregard recognized by Ontario Federation of Labour

Each year, the Ontario Federation of Labour (CLC) recognizes the contribution of five retired or deceased trade unionists through the awarding, in their names, of two scholarships. This year's awardees include former OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard, who died in January 2002.

Other awardees are Robert Belleville, SMWIA; Sam Connor, IAMAW; Olive Dennis, SEIU; and John McNeil, OSSTF. Beauregard and the others' names will be added to the Labour Honour Roll Scholarship plaque in the OFL's office.



Washington Window

Time to Tell the Truth

The headline on the front page of *USA Today* caught our eye and got us thinking: "Army foresees doubling of tours."

The story went on to say that due to the need for troops to police Iraq, Army members there, including reservists, would spend double the time away from home that their tours call for.

That got us thinking the Bush regime should tell the truth about its plans for Iraq, and elsewhere, and their costs. Those plans affect you and me. Here's what we're talking about:

- **Armed forces members' tours double.** If you're a member of the active services overseas, that means your dependents — and most have dependents now — won't see you for a much longer time.

Even with subsidized housing and other services, those dependents have little income. They must start planning on taking second jobs, in a market with 6 percent unemployment. Bush's rah-rah speeches at bases don't say that.

- **Reservists' tours double.** Same problem, only worse. Those reservists were yanked away from civilian jobs, many of them as firefighters, police and EMTs — not to mention union electricians and other trades.

Their families were left high and dry, without decent paychecks. What do they do? Default on mortgages? Have their cars repossessed? Don't take their kids to the doctor?

And what do their employers do? Federal law says that when the reservists return, they're to get their old jobs back. *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* learned that when a public uproar earlier this year forced it to obey the law in one case publicized by The Newspaper Guild and the *St. Louis Labor Tribune*.

But while waiting for service members to return, what do employers do? Fill the jobs? And with whom? Temps? Workers who know they'll be let go when the reservists return? And what does that do to worker morale, or efficiency?

- **The budget deficit skyrockets — and stays high.** Federal red ink is \$455 billion this year, a record, and will rise to at least \$480 billion next year. Depending on commitments in Iraq and elsewhere, it could stay that high for a decade or more.

That high deficit affects everyone: If the government has to borrow billions — trillions once you add it up over a period

of years — it has two main sources. One is to rob the Social Security trust fund. The other is private markets.

If Bush robs the trust fund, then Social Security would face a deep financial crisis just when the Baby Boomers start to retire. If the government goes back into the markets, it competes with you and me — and interest rates for home loans, car loans and consumer loans go up.

- **Bush plans other commitments.** Listen to Bush's rhetoric. He means what he says. He says the war on terrorism will never end. His regime published a U.S. strategy document last September saying we can preemptively use troops (and even, if necessary, nukes) against any threat, anywhere, any time.

That leads to a worldwide, extremely expensive commitment to first strikes against al-Qaeda, other terrorist groups, and governments that support them. Think Iraq, at what U.S. administrator Paul Bremer says is \$4 billion per month for the armed forces alone, and then multiply that again and again.

Start with Iran ... then North Korea ... then other "failed states." Add al-Qaeda, Hamas, Philippine terrorists, Colombian drug cartels and others. Bush could claim all are "threats."

Bush hasn't discussed the costs of fighting them or rebuilding nations. The Congressional Budget Office has: \$818 billion over 10 years just to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan.

- **Paying for this "war."** Not only has the Bush regime not discussed the costs of its "war on terror," it hasn't said how it would pay. Robbing Social Security? Not a word. Selling trillions of Treasury bonds, driving interest rates up? Silence.

Bush has one way, but that won't provide enough money: Cutting — or cutting out — domestic programs. There's a fourth way: Repeal his \$3 trillion in tax cuts for the rich. Forget it.

Who benefits from this red ink? A clue: Halliburton, Dick Cheney's old firm, received contracts worth \$1.7 billion for support and supplies for the military in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Corporate execs — Cheney included — got the tax cuts. They buy the T-bonds and get the interest proceeds, which we pay.

Put this all together and that's why it's time to tell the truth. If Bush won't, and he won't, we should.

Canadian News

Young Canadians learn to organize at summer camp

For the children of working families, union membership has been a part of their lives since they were born. They know the value of union membership, and how it provides their mothers or fathers with good pay, benefits, and an extended family that can be counted on. But while they experience the better lifestyle that comes with being a member, they can't truly know what it is like to be in a union until they enter the working world. However, thanks to an innovative camp started in 1994 by the late Romeo Corbeil, Secretary-Treasurer of OPEIU, the children of labor families get to experience first-hand what it is actually like to be in a union.

Since 1994, children of labor families ages 13 through 16 have learned how a union really works through the Romeo Corbeil Summer Camp, located at Lake Wappapello, Missouri. Canada consistently has a high rate of participation at the camp, and this year is no exception. Nine campers from British Columbia and Québec attended the camp, including Adrienne Boileau and Karl Dagenais from Montreal; Carl Brutlotte from Québec City; Chynna Howard from Kelowna; Samantha Lopez from Coquitlam; Jesse Corwan from Burnaby; Mary Diamond

from Surrey; Jessica Reilly from Chilliwack; and Janine Knights from Qualicum Beach.

"If our Union is to guarantee its future, we must look to the young people in our families, and encourage them to embrace the union lifestyle," OPEIU Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse said. "The Romeo Corbeil Summer Camp activates the ties of solidarity that are crucial to the labor movement. We are extremely pleased with the interest and participation of Canadian youth in this program."

OPEIU, the Missouri AFL-CIO and the Labor Education Program of the University of Missouri-Columbia, sponsor the Romeo Corbeil Summer Camp. Volunteer activists from Missouri labor organizations, as well as faculty and staff of the Labor Education Program, provide leadership for the camp experience. The principles of democratic participation are cultivated by assuring that campers are actively involved in all aspects of camp administration. Organized into local unions, campers select representatives to serve on bargaining, education and recreation committees.

"I truly enjoyed my experience at the Romeo Corbeil Summer Camp!" said camper Carl Brutlotte, from Québec City. "The food was great and the activities were a lot of fun."

Local 574 organizes young workers in a difficult sector

For all too many young Canadians, a first-rate education no longer guarantees a good-paying job. Rather, with the current high unemployment in Canada, graduates are often forced to accept employment with low wages, lousy working conditions, and abusive employers—all sectors without the protection of unions. OPEIU Local 574 has taken on the challenge to unionize these difficult sectors.

Local 574 (formerly part of Local 57, which was reorganized by industry) has a campaign underway to unionize employees at Renaud-Bray. Renaud Bray, the largest chain of French bookstores in the province of Québec, has never been unionized, and the organizers face a series of challenges. As the majority of Renaud-Bray employees are students and graduates, they are much more aware of the benefits of joining a union, and therefore have been instrumental in organizing. Working with management, however, has not been as easy.

With twenty branches of Renaud-Bray, the volume of employees in and of itself presented a challenge to the organizers. In addition to this challenge, the organizers had to

organize each outlet separately. With a total of twelve branches and 300 employees now represented by Local 574, Renaud-Bray has agreed to negotiate for all branches at one table. In an additional hitch, however, they refuse to do the negotiating as one collective agreement, and are requesting twelve separate agreements.

"The Renaud-Bray management has no experience with labor relations, and the negotiations have been difficult," Loic Breton, Local 574 interim President said. "The employer representative has no interest in dealing with unions."

Although currently in mediation, the membership has given the mandate to strike if they cannot reach a settlement. Local 574 is hopeful the pressure they are putting on management during the busy back-to-school season will have an effect on their willingness to negotiate.

"Local 574 has done an outstanding job in organizing such a complex situation," OPEIU President Michael Goodwin said. "Getting young people into unions is key to continuing to build and grow the labor movement, and this campaign is a strong step forward."

Office and Professional Employees International Union Romeo Corbeil Memorial Scholarship Fund "Summer Camp"

Six (6) scholarships will be awarded on the basis of at least one (1) per region and not to exceed one (1) per family for a lifetime. Applications are open to children (between ages 13 and 16 **ONLY**) of OPEIU members in good standing or associate members, all of whom must meet the eligibility requirements and comply with the Rules and Regulations as established by the OPEIU Executive Board. Each scholarship has a total maximum value of \$2,000.00.

ELIGIBILITY:

An applicant must be the son, daughter, stepchild or legally adopted child (between ages 13 and 16 **ONLY**) of an OPEIU member in good standing or an associate member.

PROCEDURES:

Each applicant must file an official OPEIU scholarship fund application. Application forms must be endorsed by the Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer attesting that a parent of an applicant is a member or an associate member in good standing on the date of award. Such endorsement must be obtained before the application is submitted.

FORMS:

Application forms may be obtained at your Local Union office or at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union.

APPLICATIONS:

All applications must be received at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union, 1660 L Street, N. W., Suite 801, Washington, D. C. 20036, no later than **March 31st** of each year.

TIME AND PLACE:

The **Summer Camp** will be held in August of each year at University Forest, 153 University Forest Drive, Wappapello, MO 63966, (573) 222-8373, fax (573) 222-8829.

SELECTION OF SCHOLARSHIPS:

Announcement of the winners will be made during the month of **June** of each year.

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION ROMEO CORBEIL MEMORIAL FUND "SUMMER CAMP" APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 31, 2004

Name of Applicant _____
Last First M.I.

Home Address _____
Street

City State Zip Code Telephone

Date of Birth _____ Sex M ___ F ___ Soc. Sec. # _____
(MUST BE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 16 ONLY)

Member/Associate Member Name _____
Last First M.I.

Home Address _____
Street City State Zip Code

Member/Associate Member Employed By _____ OPEIU Local Union _____

Relationship to Member/Associate Member: Son _____ Daughter _____ Other _____

If my child is selected for this scholarship, I fully agree to adhere to the rules that have been established by the Scholarship Committee.

Signature of Parent of Applicant _____ Date _____

Signature of Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer: _____
Date _____ Local Union Number _____

(Print name of signing officer)

The **Summer Camp** is in **August** of each year, at University Forest, 153 University Forest Drive, Wappapello, MO 63967, (573) 222-8373, fax (573) 222-8829.

Send applications and inquiries to: Office and Professional Employees International Union
Romeo Corbeil Memorial Scholarship Fund "Summer Camp"
1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 393-4464 Fax: (202) 347-0649