



# WHITE COLLAR

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

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## OPEIU mourns loss of Carol Dupuis

Family, friends and union sisters and brothers are mourning the tragic loss of OPEIU International Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis, who died December 31, 2002 as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident on December 25. She was 42.

In her tenure as Secretary-Treasurer, and



Carol Dupuis

her many years of dedicated service to OPEIU in other capacities, Dupuis dedicated herself to bettering the lives of working people throughout Canada and the United States.

"It's impossible to express the grief that I feel over this tragedy," International President Michael Goodwin said. "Carol's contribution to this union was significant, and her loss will be felt for many years. She touched so many in her life, and made such a difference in the lives of so many working women and men. Carol was not only a dedicated union leader, but a wonderful and caring friend, wife and mother. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family during this extremely difficult time," Goodwin said.

Dupuis was unanimously elected to serve as International Secretary-Treasurer by the OPEIU Executive Board in January 2002. The election was held following the death of Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard on January 3.

"Carol was a long-time member of OPEIU, and a labor activist who worked tirelessly for our members in Canada and the United States. We were so fortunate to have someone with the intelligence and compas-

sion that Carol brought to her position as Secretary-Treasurer," Goodwin continued.

Before her election as Secretary-Treasurer, Dupuis was a full-time Staff Representative with the OPEIU Central Ontario Council (COC) and in March 2000 was named International Vice President for Region X.

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

In 1992, Dupuis left U.N.D.E. to become a Staff Representative for the COC, where she served a variety of local unions in central and northern Ontario. She was fluently bilingual and represented members in both official languages at the bargaining table, labor board and other key areas. In November 1999, Dupuis was elected Vice President for Small Affiliates at the Ontario Federation of Labour where she represented the interests of some 50,000 members from 35 unions. In 2000, she was invited by the Governor General of Canada to participate in a study tour throughout various communities in Canada.

Education was an important part of Carol's life. She received a bachelor's degree in labor studies and was pursuing a master's in Public Administration at the University of Baltimore.



Carol Dupuis graduates from the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in 1999.

## Nancy Wohlforth elected Secretary-Treasurer

At its meeting held January 27-30, 2003, the OPEIU Executive Board elected Region V Vice President Nancy Wohlforth to serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the International Union. She will serve the balance of the unexpired term of Carol Dupuis, which extends to June 2004.

"We're very pleased that Nancy has accepted this position," International President Michael Goodwin said. "As a long-time member of OPEIU, and a labor activist who has worked tirelessly for OPEIU members, Nancy brings her unique experiences and perspective to the office of Secretary-Treasurer," Goodwin continued. "Our union has been hit hard by the tragic loss of Carol Dupuis, and Gilles Beauregard and we're very fortunate to have someone as qualified and dedicated to

OPEIU and the ideals of the labor movement as Nancy to continue Carol's work in the Secretary-Treasurer's office. I have every confidence that Nancy will fully represent the interests of our members in the United States and Canada," Goodwin concluded.

Wohlforth is an Executive Board member of the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO and Vice President of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. Prior to election as Secretary-Treasurer, Wohlforth served as Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer of OPEIU, Local 3 in San Francisco, California. She has been a lifetime activist in the labor movement holding various positions throughout her career, and is a graduate of Columbia University with a master's degree in American History.



President Goodwin swears in Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth on January 27.

# ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

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## Celebrating a life of service

At the funeral Mass on January 6, President Goodwin delivered the eulogy for Carol Dupuis. He also brought condolences of AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

*Below is President Goodwin's eulogy:*

On behalf of the 140,000 members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse and the OPEIU Executive Board, I want to express our sincere sympathy to her husband Michel, son Alexander, Carol's parents Ann and Lawrence, her sisters and to all of her family.

I also have been asked by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney to extend his condolences on behalf of the labor movement in the United States. Carol was a remarkable person who was loved and respected by everyone who knew her and will be dearly missed by all.

The labor movement represents 15 million employees on the North American continent, and very few women serve as principal officers of International Unions. Carol was the first woman in the history of OPEIU to serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the International Union. She opened the door for many women to follow into leadership positions.

Carol started her career as a member of Local 225 in Ottawa, and from the first day she was eager to help employees improve wages and working conditions on the job. She made sure that she learned all she could about workplace issues and attended the National Labor College in Maryland, achieving an undergraduate degree in Labor Relations. She was also pursuing a master's degree in Public Administration. She held many positions in the union during her 23-year career and she performed every one of

them well. She loved her job and could not wait to go to work everyday.

Serving as Secretary-Treasurer meant that the family had to relocate to the Washington, D.C. area with Michel leaving his job in Canada and having to find another job in the United States. These sacrifices were made because Carol loved her work and serving the membership, and was willing to answer the call wherever that call might take her.

Her tenure as Secretary-Treasurer was the highlight of her life's work. She was happy and made other people happy to know her. Her personality was outgoing and cheerful. She was a star in everything she did and everywhere she went. She was electrifying to meet and there was an excitement about her that you could see and feel whenever she was present.

We had a wonderful year together working as a team. The last time I saw Carol was at the office holiday party in Washington, D.C. We had a great time talking and singing holiday songs. This is how we will always remember her — as a team player who was always enjoyable to be with and a person who cared about others.

Carol's picture will remain on the wall of our International Union forever so that the contributions she made will never be forgotten. The OPEIU is thankful to her for her service to the union, its members and the labor movement. We will remain eternally grateful to her. God bless her in her heavenly home and we hope that someday we will be able to be with her again.

May God give the family the strength to deal with this tragic loss and may His love bring them comfort and peace.

Michael Goodwin, President  
January 6, 2003

Also, a memorial Mass to celebrate Carol's life was held on January 28, 2003 in Palm Springs, Calif. during the Executive Board meeting and attended by her husband, Michel Dupuis.

Many other tributes were sent to the International Union including the three printed below:

### **An air of dignity to all she did**

Carol Dupuis was a dedicated trade unionist. Throughout her career she represented the members of OPEIU with boundless energy, tremendous ability, courage and compassion. She lent an air of dignity to all that she did. Her contacts and influence in the trade union movement were far reaching and she earned the respect of all with whom she came in contact. We will reflect on her potential and on our loss for some time to come.

Carol set high standards and goals and achieved them with purpose and zeal. She was a role model, mentor and patient tutor encouraging others and instilling self-confidence. She could always find the humor in situations and was not afraid to laugh at herself.

Her ability to care seemed limitless. My fondest memories of her will be her great delight in sharing anecdotes about her family that she loved without bounds.

It was wonderful to fall within the circle of her light for even such a short period. She was my friend and I loved her.

Ruth Workewich, President  
Central Ontario Council

### **Rare ability to bring people together**

So many Local 343 members knew and loved Carol. The units that Carol serviced enjoyed her flare for dealing with management, as well as the friendship she extended to all bargaining unit members. Carol possessed that rare ability to bring people together, and she will be sorely missed within OPEIU and in the labor community at large.

Carol Baker, Vice President  
OPEIU, Local 343

### **A remarkable woman**

Carol Dupuis was a remarkable woman. Carol was a mentor to me and to our Local 347 in Sarnia, Ontario. Carol was actively involved with our Local and was determined to see us win a representation vote when we were challenged by SEIU. With Carol's help, along with others, we were successful. Carol devoted her heart and soul to OPEIU. Carol made the effort to get to know as many members as she could. Carol took the time to meet and socialize with our families. Carol, at what marked the highlight of her career, was so happy in her move to Washington, D.C. to accept the position of Secretary-Treasurer. We are so saddened by the loss of Carol Dupuis. She has touched us in her special way. Carol will remain in our hearts and with OPEIU forever. Our deepest sympathy and prayers go out to Carol's family.

Dianna Fulton, President  
OPEIU, Local 347

## Scholarship established for Alexander Dupuis

The OPEIU Executive Board has established a \$15,000 scholarship fund for Carol Dupuis' two-year-old son, Alexander, to be used for higher education tuition and books.

There have also been many inquiries at the International Union office asking if the Dupuis family has a preference for receiving contributions in Carol's memory. The family recommends that such contributions be made to the International Union for deposit in the Alexander Dupuis Scholarship Fund.

Contributions can be sent to:  
Alexander Dupuis Scholarship Fund  
c/o Nancy Wohlforth  
Secretary-Treasurer  
OPEIU, AFL-CIO  
1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801  
Washington, D.C. 20036



Alexander Dupuis

## Kathleen Kinnick named temporary Secretary-Treasurer



President Goodwin administers the Oath of Office to Vice President Kathleen Kinnick. Kinnick served as Secretary-Treasurer following the death of Carol Dupuis on December 31, 2002, until the OPEIU Executive Board chose Nancy Wohlforth as the new Secretary-Treasurer on January 27, 2003. Unfortunately, this was the second time in a year that Kinnick was called upon to perform this function. OPEIU is extremely grateful to Kathleen for the great job she did.

# Local 102 negotiates historic contract with Lear Siegler

## At Fort Rucker, Ala. training facility, "best contract in the history of the industry"

OPEIU, Local 102 has negotiated an historic contract with Lear Siegler Services, Inc. that will mean significant wage increases for the 330 professionals in the bargaining unit. OPEIU believes that the wage increases are the highest negotiated in any labor contract in the country that expired during 2002.

"This is probably the best contract in this industry's history," said Melvin Schwarzwald, OPEIU General Counsel, who was asked by President Goodwin to join the negotiations. "Salary was the key issue for us, as the company was paying the pilots much less than U.S. Department of the Army civilian employees that perform similar work. This turned out to be a tough negotiation because the company didn't want to match the salaries of other

pilots in the industry. But with perseverance, we secured a contract that not only matches but surpasses what these other employees are earning," Schwarzwald said. Another key provision in the contract is that Lear Siegler is now an agency shop, said Schwarzwald, which means that employees must either join the union or pay a fee equal to the dues.

Negotiations with the company began in April 2002, shortly after the bargaining unit affiliated with OPEIU. "It was a new day for the company, because this was the first time they had to negotiate with an international union," International Representative Paul Bohelski said. "Due to the membership's overwhelming support, because they were so vocal and really demonstrated their solidarity, they won the day," Bohelski said.

Local 102 President Steven Rush stated that "Mel Schwarzwald did a terrific job presenting the case and the company had a hard time not seeing the light of day on this one."

The contract, which is effective January 1, 2003 and expires September 30, 2005, covers instructor pilots, academics who conduct classroom training, clerical workers and dispatchers. It provides for a salary increase for flight instructors that will range from 26.85 percent to 46.16 percent. All other employees covered under the contract will receive 16 percent increases.

Lear Siegler is a contractor for the U.S. Department of the Army that conducts basic training for all U.S. helicopter pilots, and those of many NATO nations, at Fort Rucker in Daleville, Alabama.



Melvin Schwarzwald  
General Counsel

# Washington home care workers win election with Local 8

On February 10, 2003, home care workers at Lower Columbia Community Action Council in Longview, Washington voted 29 to 11 to join Local 8. These home care workers earn only \$7.35 to \$7.65 per hour, have no paid holidays and receive only a small amount of paid time off, yet they care for the community's most vulnerable elderly and disabled citizens.

Although the agency receives the same state funding as unionized employers, the compensation is far below union standards. The employer, however, managed to find enough money to hire an expensive attorney to aggressively fight employees' efforts to organize, reports Local 8. The scare tactics didn't fool these workers, most of whom have been with the agency for more than

ten years.

The next step for the caregivers at Lower Columbia is to negotiate a fair contract. "We look forward to sitting down with our employer to work together for a contract that meets all concerns, and we will do this now with one voice. We'll be looking to our community to support us in this process," said caregiver Brenda Kodama. Local 8 has already set the stage for a long community based campaign to win a first contract. Church leaders, union members and other community activists will be called upon to convince this agency to uphold union standards.

Local 8 represents home care workers at

five other non-profit agencies in Washington state and seeks to protect and improve industry standards by organizing workers at those agencies that fail to provide adequate standards.

"I'm hoping a union will help us to improve our situation," said Ruth Admire, an 18-year employee. "We're united now and we'll be headed to our capitol to get support for better funding." Local 8 members are meeting with state legislators every week to get the message across that home care workers can't be left behind in the state budget. Last year, Washington's Governor Locke supported a measly 25-cent raise.



Happy home health care workers at Lower Columbia.



Home health care workers celebrate the victory at Lower Columbia Community Action Council.

# Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride planned throughout U.S.

The event's theme was, "On the Road to Citizenship," and the Immigrant Workers Rights reception featured guests including David Glasser, National Director of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, Arturo S. Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers (UFW), Milton Rosado, President of the National Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), John Wilhelm, General President of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE), and Maria Elena Durazo, General Vice President of HERE. Immigrant Workers Freedom Rides are planned to originate in cities throughout the country - including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, Houston, Miami, Chicago and Boston - continue to Washington, D.C. where participants will lobby on behalf of immigrants' rights, and then culminate in New York on October 4, 2003.



OPEIU Local 29 member Diana Contreras (Oakland, Calif.) and President Michael Goodwin at the Immigrant Workers Rights reception at the Diplomat Westin Hotel in Hollywood, Florida on February 27, 2003. Contreras is employed at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in San Francisco.

## Local 509 endures extended strike

### **Dynamic Metal Forming Company fails to bargain in good faith; demands increases in medical insurance, prescription drugs**

The 31 members of Local 509 in Elkhart, Indiana that are employed at Dynamic Metal Forming Company have taken to the picket lines, enduring a strike that began November 5, 2002 and won't end until the company reverses its course and begins to bargain in good faith with the union.

"The demands made by Dynamic are outrageous," said Kevin Kistler, OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services. "The company is asking these highly skilled workers to accept hefty increases in medical insurance and prescription drug payments, as well as reductions in dental benefits, productivi-

ty bonuses and vacation time, while making absolutely no effort to compromise or consider the needs of their employees.

"They've made no attempt to bargain in good faith," Kistler continued. "The list of anti-union activities is long, including failure to respond to a proposal created by a mediator in an effort to reach a settlement, and encouraging replacement workers to act in an aggressive and dangerous manner toward the striking members. The company has refused to negotiate and continually states that it will not compromise on any issue, so it's now facing unfair labor practice charges," Kistler said.

In addition, Dynamic has demanded a

broad new management rights clause giving them the unilateral right to modify work hours, change the duties of employees, transfer employees between jobs, shifts and departments, and introduce, modify or discontinue any policies, practices or procedures at will. Dynamic also demands a "zipper clause" that eliminates all past practices and benefits not specifically contained in the agreement, and demands that it no longer be required to discuss new plant rules with the union and that new rules will not be subject to the grievance procedure. The company demanded the unilateral right to subcontract any and all work without bargaining the

effects, mandatory overtime, a drug/alcohol testing policy where the employer unilaterally establishes the criteria, and a new absentee/tardiness policy that better facilitates employee terminations.

The company is also demanding, among many other things, that the contract continue to deny employees any right to arbitration over any matters except suspension or discharge, and that union members be denied their only other method of handling grievances — their First Amendment right to handbill or conduct an informational picketline.

Negotiations continue and an update will be published in the next issue of *White Collar*.



Striking members of Local 509 walk the picket line.

## Hotel discounts offered through Union Privilege/Hotel Employees Union

OPEIU members are eligible for discounted rates at union hotels in popular vacation destinations throughout the United States through the Union Plus Union Hotel discount program. The program was developed by Union Privilege and the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE) to give union members another reason to stay union when they travel by providing discounts when they stay at a hotel where HERE and other union members are employed. When OPEIU members patronize these establishments, they are supporting working families and receive rates that beat or meet those offered by AARP with savings of 10 percent to 78 percent off rack rates.

### **How the program works**

Participating hotels offer a special discounted rate to union members and their families. Union members simply have to mention the "Union Hotel Discount Rate Code" when they call the hotel for a reservation or input the "Union Hotel Discount Rate Code" when they make a reservation online through the hotel's website.

Participating hotels include the Sheraton Universal in Universal City, California, the Hilton Washington in Washington, D.C., the Wyndham Palace Resort in Orlando, Florida, Sheraton Atlantic City Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J., Bally's Las Vegas, Nevada and the Paris Las Vegas.

The Union Hotel Discount Code can be found on the Union Plus website at [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org).

## Walter Allen elected Region V Vice President



President Goodwin swears in Vice President Walter Allen Jr.

The OPEIU Executive Board elected Walter Allen Jr., Executive Director/CFO of OPEIU, Local 30 in Los Angeles, Calif., to fill the vacancy of Region V Vice President created by the election of Nancy Wohlforth as Secretary-Treasurer. Allen will serve the unexpired term of Wohlforth until June 2004.

## OPEIU continues to grow

The OPEIU continues to organize and grow, despite the tough economic climate and declining overall union membership in North America.

OPEIU membership grew by 1,760 in 2002, to a total of 109,584 members in the U.S. The OPEIU ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> among 65 national unions in 2002 affiliate membership.

The average membership of the unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO in 2002 totaled 13,181,283. Although some unions continued to grow — including OPEIU — the severe economic downturn took a heavy toll, especially on unions in the retail and manufacturing sectors. The average 2002 membership represents a net decrease of 72,788 members compared with 2001.

Despite this, OPEIU's organizing efforts and substantial growth have resulted in a higher level of respect in the community and stronger contracts for OPEIU members.

## OPEIU Executive Board



The OPEIU Executive Board at its meeting in Palm Springs, California, January 27-30, 2003. Pictured from left to right are: (back row) International Vice Presidents Millie Hall, Sheila Morrison, Julie Weir, Dr. John Mattiacci, Dan Dyer, Mary Mahoney, Walter Allen Jr., Richard Lanigan, Phillip Pope, (middle row) Judy Solkovits, Colleen Malley, Maureen Bo, Theresa Horner, Becky Turner, Maurice Laplante, Ruth Workewich, Anita Roy, (front row) Patricia Priloh, Jerri New, Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse, International President Michael Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth, Kathleen Kinnick and Gary Kirkland.

## Affordable home mortgages for union members

Members of OPEIU across the country can now take advantage of the HIT HOME mortgage initiative that has been available to members in 20 pilot cities. HIT HOME is a partnership between the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust in cooperation with Countrywide Home Loans and Fannie Mae.

Since the program was launched in November 2000, Countrywide Home Loans has originated more than 2,000 mortgages for a total volume of almost \$250 million in financing for working families. Over the next three years, HIT HOME is expected to generate approximately 10,000 loans with a total volume of \$1.2 billion nationwide.

Benefits of the program include one of the widest selections of competitively priced home loans in the industry, including zero-down payment programs, homebuyer education, and hundreds of dollars in cost savings at closing. Countrywide also offers free set up and maintenance of the Working Family Mortgage, which can shorten the length of a borrower's loan and save thousands of dollars in interest.

Members of OPEIU can find more information by visiting the HIT HOME website at [www.hithome.org](http://www.hithome.org), or by calling Countrywide Home Loans at 1-866-HIT-HOME to speak with a Countrywide HIT HOME representative.

## Lobbyist Corner

### Slow start for 108th Congress

Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis

The 108th Congress has gotten off to a very slow start, as the political agenda continues to be dominated by threats of terrorism and the war with Iraq. The U.S. House and Senate have just completed work on Fiscal-Year 2003 appropriations bills, with cuts in all domestic programs. OPEIU continues to push both the Republican and Democratic Leadership to pass the following important legislation for working families:

Patients' Bill of Rights  
Prescription Drug Benefits  
Minimum Wage Increase  
Pension Reform  
Unemployment Compensation

Health Care for the Uninsured  
Bankruptcy Reform  
Trade Issues  
Mental Health Parity  
Medical Malpractice Insurance

### Getting involved

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

If you 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, U.S. Capitol, Room H154, Washington, DC 20515; phone (202) 225-7000; hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please direct your communication to 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 United States 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 web sites contain links to congressional directories: <http://www.house.gov/writerep> and [http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn\\_faq.html](http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn_faq.html). You can also access this information at your local library.

## Maritime Trades Department meets



Attendees at the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) Executive Board meeting, with MTD President Mike Sacco (center) and OPEIU President Michael Goodwin. Also pictured are Kevin Kistler, Director of Organization and Field Services; Richard Lanigan, Vice President; John Brenton III, ITPE (OPEIU, Local 4873) Secretary-Treasurer; John Conley, ITPE President and Michel Lajeunesse, Canadian Director.

## Work and Health

# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Submitted by Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D.

OPEIU, Local 153, Health Fund Medical Director

**C**hronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a devastating lung illness occurring frequently throughout the world. Although a significant percentage of those digging at the World Trade Center have developed symptoms of COPD, which include productive cough, shortness of breath and decreased exercise tolerance, the primary cause of COPD remains not this type of environmental exposure, but rather tobacco-induced lung damage. Despite the facts that COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in our country, killing more than 119,000 Americans in 2000, it remains under-diagnosed and under-treated. It is estimated to affect between 11 percent and 12 percent of the U.S. population.

The diagnosis is often not made or it is made late in the course of the disease, long after severe lung damage has occurred. This is because people often dismiss their early morning cough and mild sputum production as being a natural and expected result of smoking or exposure to something in their workplace. Occasionally, people do not go to their physicians until they are actually short of breath doing routine activities. Eventually, if the disease progresses unchecked, the lungs will eventually fail and the person will literally choke to death because of a lack of oxygen.

Lungs have a tremendous reserve and a significant portion must be damaged before a person recognizes that their breathing is impaired. Most people do not tell their physicians that they are having breathing problems until at least half their lung function is gone. It is of the utmost importance to recognize (and have your physician diagnose) COPD early, document its existence (by lung function tests), and intervene (smoking ces-

sation and symptomatic treatment) early in the course of the disease.

COPD is an inflammation of the lung, which is usually the result of chemical insult by irritants like cigarette smoke (85 percent of cases), occupational chemicals and environmental dust like that at the World Trade Center site. Prevention is the best way to deal with COPD because once damage has occurred it is possible to reverse only a small proportion of the functional loss.

The most important thing to remember is that the more cigarettes smoked, the faster the decline in lung function. Those who stop smoking at any age do not regain those parts of the lung already damaged; however, compared to those who continue to smoke, they have more stable pulmonary function, slower rates of decline in their breathing, and an increased survival compared to those who continue to smoke. That is, they live longer!

The questions you must ask yourself when wondering whether you might have COPD, a condition that will significantly shorten your life if undiagnosed and untreated, include:

Do you smoke?

Do you cough up mucus?

Do you cough or clear your throat very often?

Do you wheeze?

Are you short of breath with minimal activity?

Have you avoided activities that you used to enjoy because they make you short of breath or because you cannot keep up with your friends during these activities?

Do you become short of breath dressing or towel-drying after a shower or bath?

Have you missed work or planned activities because of a breathing problem?

Have you gone to a doctor or an emergency room because of a breathing problem?

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, you should urgently seek medical care. It is very possible that you may have COPD, even if you did not work in a dangerous environment like the World Trade Center site. Exposure to environmental irritants, or more likely if you are or have ever been a smoker, put you at risk. Prevention of further lung damage may very well be the only way to save your life.

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



## Washington Window Tax Breaks Vs. School Books

**E**nron. Tyco. Qwest. Global Crossing. All big business. All symbols of corporate greed. And all hurt working families.

But they're all huge and it takes organizations, like the federal government and the AFL-CIO, to confront them.

But there's another type of corporate greed occurring right in your own backyard. It occurs locally. It hurts your kids. And you can battle it locally.

It's called corporate tax breaks for economic development.

Local governments distribute tax breaks to companies as mammoth as Wal-Mart and stores as small as a local Dairy Queen. But as a series of reports by Good Jobs First — a worker-oriented think tank — makes clear, the decisions don't do much more than put your tax dollars in their corporate pockets.

Worse, those lost millions of dollars are usually property tax dollars, and property tax dollars are the ones that pay for your local schools. That means a dollar given to Wal-Mart, Tyco, Dairy Queen or whoever is probably a dollar taken away from your child's classroom. It's tax breaks vs. school books.

The property tax breaks are usually distributed in secret, says Greg LeRoy, director of Good Jobs First and author of the latest report showing how much money schools lose from the Giveaways. *Protecting Public Education From Tax Giveaways to Corporations* is available from LeRoy's group and the National Education Association, the top teachers' union.

NEA plans to lead a campaign to open the tax breaks to public scrutiny. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is joining in. After all, they're getting short-changed, too.

"We weren't looking at school board powers to set revenue rates, but we were looking at tax losses," LeRoy said, conceding that some school boards can set tax rates.

"It's local government bodies that negotiate these tax breaks — and we're affected," adds NSBA's Dan Fuller.

Even local school boards that can levy taxes have limits. That came through clearly in one Illinois school district.

There, a combination of a state tax rate cap on school boards and corporate breaks that removed property from the rolls

forced the Crete-Monee district to lease the new roof for its high school. It lacked the money to buy it.

These corporate tax breaks are a potential source of money for the nation's public schools. And those tax breaks go to rich corporations, from local governments, and they're enormous.

They're also uneconomic: One Dairy Queen in rural Minnesota got a 5-year \$275,000 tax break to buy new machines — and create two jobs. One paid \$5.15 an hour, and the other paid \$5.85.

How are kids hurt? Use Cleveland as an example. Its school district was flat broke in the mid-1990s, so much so that the mostly white GOP-run state legislature and GOP governor used that as an excuse to divert millions of taxpayer dollars from the majority-minority school district in a Democratic city to parents of private school students, via taxpayer-paid tuition vouchers.

What did this have to do with tax breaks to corporations? Only that in the same era, they were a favorite "economic development" device of former Cleveland Mayor Mike White (D), says Ohio Education Association research director Fritz Fekete. Cleveland's public school kids lost both ways.

And that story is repeated nationwide. Forty-two states and Washington, D.C., give corporations waivers from property taxes if they promise to bring in new jobs. Forty-one, and D.C., use "tax improvement financing" to entice corporations. That limits property taxes — which pay for schools, remember — to the original value of the site, not new factories or improvements.

Such deals are almost always done behind closed doors between local governments and the companies. They use the excuse of "confidential financial information."

But local voters can fight back against these giveaways, by demanding openness, accountability, on-the-record votes, an end to corporate tax breaks, and ironclad promises of many new jobs — not two low-wage jobs in a local Dairy Queen.

That's one way to battle corporate greed, and it's right in your own backyard. It will help your kids. And success means business will have to pay its fair share for local schools, which its workers' kids — but not its execs' kids — attend, too.

### WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of  
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INTERNATIONAL UNION  
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC  
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# Canadian News

## Canadian Director appointed to OQM

The Québec State Minister of International Relations, Louise Beaudion, has appointed OPEIU Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse to the Observatoire québécois sur la mondialisation (OQM).

The mission of the Observatoire québécois sur la mondialisation is to further the understanding of all aspects of the globalization phenomenon and provide dependable information, enabling the people of Québec to fully appreciate the issues at stake for the

community and measure the consequences of globalization so that it may act in an informed manner with a view to promoting a controlled and balanced globalization process that is respectful of human rights.

Currently, Michel Lajeunesse serves as Secretary General of SEPBB 57 in Montréal. He also represents the OPEIU on the Executive Board of the Québec Federation of Labour and sits as a Vice President at large on the Executive Council of the Canadian Labour Congress.

## Local 527, Hamilton, Ontario

### Local 527 ends strike with new contract

The members of Local 527, Hamilton, Ontario successfully concluded a 10-day strike against the Hamilton Wentworth School District Board in October 2002, resulting in a two-year agreement that included salary increases for the 430 members of the bargaining unit.

The members hadn't had a salary increase in 10 years, and had been working for 14 months without a collective bargaining agreement. The employer wasn't demonstrating a willingness to address salary concerns, offering workers a three-year agreement with no salary increase the first year, a 1 percent increase in the second year, and nothing in the third year. The school board's offer also made no provision for a retroac-

tive increase for the 14 months the workers were without a contract.

So the workers went on strike and ended up settling with a two-year agreement that provides a 1 percent retroactive salary increase, and 2 percent in the second year of the agreement. The contract expires August 31, 2003. Local 527 is preparing to reenter negotiations, which are expected to be dominated by the negotiation of job classifications and hours.

John Morris, Local 527's President said Linda Cook, Staff Representative from the Central Ontario Council did a terrific job leading the negotiations. Also instrumental was Eileen Griffith, Local 527 President at the time of the negotiations.

## Agreement in principle reached for BellActiMedia

Members of SEPBB 57 at BellActiMedia (Sales) in Montreal have reached an agreement in principle with the company, which runs from January 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005.

The unionized members of the sales group at BellActiMedia, numbering more than 200, ratified the proposed settlement on January 18, 2003, giving their bargaining committee a strong mandate not to sign should the employer attempt to change the language.

"Our new employer has trouble sticking to its word," Unit President Loïc Breton reports.

"Since we reached an agreement on December 23, 2002, the company — who has recently purchased the Yellow Pages from Bell — has been trying to re-write the contract behind our backs," Breton continued.

The company, whose head office is located in New York City, is an American investment firm with a very bad reputation with unions in the United States.

"We faced the arrogance of a company who tried to bully us into accepting anything," Breton said.

"But the support of our members and a strong strike vote gave us clout at the bargaining table. A fair agreement was reached through the help of a mediator," Breton said.

The 30-month settlement includes base salary increases of 9 percent for the duration of the agreement and salary protection in case of company reorganization of the sales department. Another highlight of the contract is improved union leave provisions for union stewards and bargaining committee members.

## SEPBB welcomes new members

SEPBB 57 has filed for certification to represent approximately 70 engineers, lawyers and office workers employed by the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec.

"I am pleased to welcome our soon to

be new members," SEPBB 57 President Maurice Laplante said.

"Our union represents more than 500 members in professional jurisdictions," he continued.

## Two other caisse populaire Desjardins join SEPBB 57

Another round of caisses populaires restructuring has given the 20 employees at caisse populaire Desjardins St-Donat de Montréal the opportunity to transfer from one FTQ affiliate to SEPBB 57. Employees at caisse pop-

ulaire Beaujeu in Lacolle have also transferred their union certification to the SEPBB. These are true examples of union solidarity, FTQ style. SEPBB 57 represents a majority of the members in the Mouvement Desjardins in Québec.

## New Region IX Vice President



Colleen Malley, Region IX Vice President and President of Local 397 in Regina, Saskatchewan following her election.

## ATTENTION LOCAL UNIONS!

AFL-CIO CIVIL, HUMAN & WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONFERENCE

June 26-28, 2003

Chicago, Illinois  
Fairmont Hotel

Work and Family Seminar on Bargaining and Policy  
June 26, 2003

Organizing for Economic Justice, Voting Rights, A Voice@Work,  
Immigrant Workers' Rights and Civil and Women's Rights  
June 27-28, 2003

For more information, Local Unions wishing to send delegates  
should contact Rachna Choudhry,  
Civil, Human & Women's Rights Department, at (202) 508-6904

## Editorial



### How the Secretary-Treasurer was chosen

By Michael Goodwin, International President

Due to the untimely death of Carol Dupuis, the Executive Board was once again given the responsibility of choosing a successor, the same duty that befell them last year when Gilles Beauregard passed away. When such surprising events happen, the Executive Board must look to the Constitution for guidance. Article XIII, Duties of Executive Board of the International Union, Section 12 states, in part, "Whenever the office of the Secretary-Treasurer becomes vacant due to resignation, suspension, expulsion, death or incapacity, the President shall have the authority to appoint a Temporary Secretary-Treasurer to serve ... until the Executive Board chooses a successor, but in no event, not later than ninety (90) days from the date of the first appointment by the President." Since Kathleen Kinnick was

Board chose Region V Vice President and Local 3 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth to fill the unexpired term of Gilles Beauregard and Carol Dupuis, which runs to June 2004. Nancy is a lifetime union activist and has earned a master's degree in American History from Columbia University. I look forward to working closely with Nancy and I know she will do a great job for the members of OPEIU. I hope to see her serve for many years as Secretary-Treasurer.

I have been asked — Why wasn't a Canadian chosen as Secretary-Treasurer? The answer to this question is easily explained. A Canadian was asked to be a candidate for the office of Secretary-Treasurer, but declined. In looking for another Canadian candidate, it was conceded that there was no one that the Canadian Vice Presidents could support who was ready or willing to serve within the time limits prescribed in the Constitution. Remember, the entire process had to be completed by April 5, 2003 and the Executive Board had to find the best-qualified candidate by that time. If the best-qualified candidate at the time happened to be a Canadian, all the better. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Once it became clear that the choice had to be made now and there was no one in Canada who was ready or willing to serve that was supported by the Canadian Vice Presidents, it became obvious that the circumstances dictated the choice. It should be remembered, however, that the Executive Board chose Region X Vice President Carol Dupuis from Ontario to be Secretary-

Director, including the responsibility for the coordination of organizing, education and servicing activities, editor of the official Canadian publication and authorizing strikes. The autonomy also provides for a separate Canadian Convention.

Policy decisions are discussed by the three top officers — the President, Secretary-Treasurer and Canadian Director. The views of Canadian members are included and represented by the Canadian Director and by the OPEIU Executive Board, which includes six Canadian officers — four regional Vice

Presidents, a Vice President in the seat reserved for women, and the Canadian Director. To my knowledge, no other union on the North American continent has the autonomy enjoyed by the Canadian membership.

I look forward to joining our Canadian sisters and brothers at their Triennial Canadian Convention in April 2003 to celebrate their achievements.

Once again, congratulations to Nancy Wohlforth for being chosen as Secretary-Treasurer and we wish her the best in her new position!

#### Why wasn't a Canadian chosen as Secretary-Treasurer?

appointed as Temporary Secretary-Treasurer on January 6, 2003, the Executive Board was under an obligation to choose a successor within ninety (90) days or not later than April 5, 2003. There is no provision in the Constitution for an extension of time for the Executive Board to choose a successor and no provision for the President to extend the Temporary appointment. The Constitution is clear. The Executive Board had to act prior to April 5, 2003. In carrying out their responsibilities under the Constitution, the Executive

#### A Canadian was asked to be a candidate for the office of Secretary-Treasurer, but declined.

Treasurer just twelve months earlier. Carol was 41 years old and was expected to serve for many years. So you see, the choice should not be seen by anyone as a slight to Canadian members. On the contrary, the appointment of Carol Dupuis sent a clear message that the Executive Board hoped that the Secretary-Treasurer's position would be filled by a Canadian for a long time to come. Once again, time and circumstances did not allow for this to happen.

It should be noted that the Constitution in Article XIV, Canada, provides a great deal of autonomy for the Canadian membership. It grants broad powers to the Canadian

### Rep. Gephardt announces presidential bid



Representative Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) and OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin at a reception sponsored by organized labor to recognize the congressman for his many years of service on behalf of working people. The 26-year veteran of Congress has announced his presidential candidacy, promising to repeal Bush's tax cuts and use the savings to ensure health insurance to everyone who works in America. "America has the most technologically advanced health care system in the world," Gephardt said, "but we have fallen behind the rest of the industrial world when it comes to providing access to quality health care for all our citizens."

Gephardt was elected to be the House Democratic Leader in 1989, and during his tenure used his leadership role to raise the minimum wage, defeat efforts to roll back affirmative action, pass campaign finance reform legislation, and include labor and environmental standards in U.S. trade agreements.



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