

WHITE COLLAR

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

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Michael Goodwin re-elected International President Nancy Wohlforth also elected Secretary-Treasurer



President Michael Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth and the U.S. Regional Vice Presidents elected at the convention are sworn into office on Friday, June 25 by Vice President Emerita Carolyn Combs. (Right photo) The newly elected officers celebrate to the applause of the delegates.

Delegates to the 23rd Triennial Convention, June 21-24, 2004 unanimously re-elected Michael Goodwin to his fourth full term as International President of the Office and Professional Employees International Union. Nancy Wohlforth was also elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer, a position she has had since January 2003. The convention hall erupted in cheers and applause after the delegation voted in favor of the nominations of both President Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Wohlforth.

"I pledge to you that I will continue to work my heart out on your behalf, to continue making this union the great union that it is," Goodwin said. He thanked his nominators Richard Lanigan, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 153, and Becky Turner, President of Local 277. "I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart," Wohlforth said. "I love you all!"

Convention coverage on page 9

Local 40 settles three-year contract

Major victory includes staff increases at Mt. Clemens

On September 13, 2004, nurses at Mt. Clemens General Hospital in Michigan voted 316-21 to approve a

groundbreaking three-year contract that provides for increased staffing—ending a strike (Continued on page 4)



Local 40 nurses at Mt. Clemens General Hospital walk the picket line.

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

2	Local 494 ratifies agreement	5	Local 2 is 100!	9	Convention coverage	15	Lobbyist Corner
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Lloyd Smith praises APMA/OPEIU relationship



Dr. Lloyd Smith

Lloyd S. Smith, DPM, the president of the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) told OPEIU delegates about their continuing relationship between the APMA and OPEIU and pledged to make every member of APMA a member

of the Guild. The APMA was established in 1912 and is the premiere professional organization representing the nation's Doctors of Podiatric Medicine, representing more than 79 percent of the podiatrists around the country. Each year, the APMA undertakes five major initiatives to educate the public on proper foot and ankle care.

"We have a strong voice on Capitol Hill," Dr. Smith said. "We are working to provide equal pay for equal work; it's one of our major goals," Dr. Smith said. We need your help on that." He discussed the opportunities that arise while working with organized labor. Not only are they able to educate their union sisters and brothers, but these medical practitioners have a stronger legislative advocacy and are able to fight against insurance company discrimination on issues such as patient choice, access, full coverage and equal pay for equal work — something that cannot always be done without the help of organized labor.

We can take back the agenda, says Maude Barlow

Maude Barlow, chairperson of the Council of Canadians, brought greetings from Canada and spoke of the critical political situation in North America. "This is a precious moment in our history because their model is failing — the gap between the rich and poor is failing — we have a third world here in the first world because of the policies these people have brought in.

"This system is failing environmentally and economically," Barlow continued. She indicted the Bush administration for its goal of global privatization. "This model is not working," Barlow said. "Economic globalization is on its knees — there is a vacuum, and we need to step in with alternatives that stresses that working people everywhere have fundamental rights. If we do, maybe this is the moment we can take back the agenda. We must be there



Maude Barlow

with our passion and our conviction," Barlow said. "and we must not become discouraged. Remember, sometimes when you feel you're losing, you're just about to win."

Now is the time, McGlotten urges



Robert McGlotten

Robert McGlotten, OPEIU lobbyist with McGlotten & Jarvis, painted a sobering picture of the legislative

outlook in Washington. "Unfortunately, the legislative report I'm bringing you is not a very good one," McGlotten said. "We've had an increase in minimum wage, we do not have a patients bill of rights, we're still fighting the battle for overtime pay, unemployment compensation, pension reform, diabetes prevention, mental health parity, and the important piece of legislation in recent years, the Employee Free Choice Act. The legislative record is a very, very dismal one for us.

"I've been around for 40 years, I've never seen it this bad for American workers," McGlotten noted. "The only right we have that will strengthen us, and that many have died for, is the right to vote." Now is the time to do something about your politics, McGlotten stressed. "We have to make a change. We have to vote, our families have to vote. Now is the time for us to stand up, move ahead and do the job that's necessary."

Judge Mathis promises, we're coming back to take over the White House

Judge Greg Mathis, host of the television show, "Judge Mathis," gave an impassioned speech that thanked the labor movement for its support over the years, and said, "I thank God for all of you, the union members of America." He also spoke of the new position he'll be assuming in January 2005 as national president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. It's an organization founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as an avenue to achieve equal justice and equal rights.

"Now more than ever before this country needs the labor movement to rescue from the grips of corporate corruption that threatens this country," Mathis said. "We have a federal government that stole an election, ripped off our Treasury to give back tax dollars to its wealthy supporters. I say that this country's focus is really upside down.

"We thank God for the unions, because it was the labor movement of those years that fought back and helped to elect a new pres-



Judge Greg Mathis

ident, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and together FDR and the unions worked together to turn this country around." Mathis said. "We know how to fight back, and we can fight back."

We must step to the forefront, CLUW President Johnson says

Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), thanked OPEIU for its great support of the CLUW. She also recognized the work of Kathleen Kinnick, a vice president representing OPEIU on the CLUW Executive Board, as well as Theresa Kandt and Millie Hall for their dedication to the organization.

As CLUW celebrates its 30th anniversary, Johnson said, "great progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go. "This is a very important year for all of us because it's an election year, and the primary goal is to change the occupancy of the White House.

"Our challenge is to accept the fact that we are regressing in many areas; accept that fact that we are the organization, labor, that must step to the forefront and turn things around like our brothers and sisters did before



Gloria Johnson

us," Johnson said. Women still face many challenging issues, such as equal pay, discrimination and inadequate childcare. The majority of women workers are still not unionized. "We must continue our fight... we must continue to organize."

We accomplished much by working together, says Rodriguez

Arturo Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers of America, spoke passionately about the many organizing battles his union has undertaken, and thanked OPEIU for its continued support.

After telling delegates about a number of intense organizing battles for California farm workers, Rodriguez told delegates that these were good examples of "what we can accomplish when we work together and are willing to give all we have against employers who refuse to recognize the rights that workers have in this country."

Rodriguez relayed the struggle of mushroom pickers who have been fighting for a contract for 17 years. Through UFW efforts, including vigils at the State Senate and a 165-mile march that took 10 days, these workers now have a contract that includes wage increases and health insurance for their fam-



Arturo Rodriguez

ilies. "We ask you sisters and brothers to continue to work with us. We'll keep you updated about our legislative fights and what's happening on these campaigns."

Following his speech, President Goodwin presented Rodriguez with a \$25,000 contribution from OPEIU to support UFW's efforts.

It's crunch time, says Dr. Martin



Dr. Annie B. Martin

gates to give extra attention to the convention theme, "Organize and We All Win," and to recognize the importance of this year's presidential election.

Dr. Martin, president of the New York Chapter of the NAACP, spoke of organized labor's efforts to combat the Bush administration's assault on workers' rights and encouraged all to work to elect a new president in November.

"Now until November is crunch time," Dr. Martin said. "We know that unified efforts can make a difference. We must form coalitions with groups that can help defeat President Bush." Dr. Martin encouraged all delegates to "keep the faith as you continue to work for just causes," and quoted the poet Langston Hughes, saying "keep your hand on the plow; hold on, freedom will come."

A person President Goodwin calls the "matriarch of the labor movement," Dr. Annie B. Martin warned dele-

Members honored for outstanding service

At the convention, OPEIU honored a number of members for outstanding service. International Representative Jeff Rusich was awarded the Henderson B. Douglas Memorial Award 2003 for his work organizing helicopter pilots. Rusich was recently part of the effort to organize 540 helicopter pilots.

Myra Hepburn won the regional Organizing Cooperative (ROC) Award. Richard Ellis, Local 100, received a Special Recognition Award for preventing privatization; while Prudential Agents who assisted in the organizing campaign also received the Special Recognition Award. Voluntary Organizing Committee (VOC) Award winners Capt. Stephen Ragin and Capt. Michael Dorsett of Local 108, were awarded for their assistance on the Air Methods



Myra Hepburn

Corp. organizing campaign. Voice of the Electorate Award winners were: Gold winner Tracy Komer and Local 494 (accepted by Local 494 Vice President Tia Darden); Silver winner Sherry Patton, Local 129; and Bronze winners Gregory Blackman, Local 100 and Richard Ellis, Local 100.

Winners of the OPEIU Organizing Achievement Awards were: Gold winner John Conley, president of ITPE Local 4873; Silver winner Iram Ramirez, International Representative; and Bronze winner Dan Dyer, President of Local 2.

See next page for more honorees

Members with 40 or more years of membership recognized at convention

Members with more than forty years of service were recognized by the convention and thanked for their dedication to the labor movement. Honored were: Charles Ponti, Local 153, 67 years; Evelyn Brooks, Local 42, 56 years; Anne Stokes, Local 42, 54 years; Vivian Grubbs, Local 1794, 50 years; Sedora Villa, Local 153, 42 years; and Arlon Wells, Local 179, 40 years.



Charles Ponti



Vivian Grubbs



Arlon Wells



Evelyn Brooks, Anne Stokes and Sedora Villa.

Convention Scenes



Pam George, Local 306, the Chair of the Officers' Reports Committee. Patricia Bautista, Local 537, served as Co-chair.



Patricia Robertson, Local 42 with Vice President Walter Allen and Theresa Kandt.



Canadian Director Emeritus Michel Lajeunesse and his wife, Suzanne.



Local 32 delegate Mary Short.

Remembering those lost



A special memorial tribute was held at the convention to remember those sisters and brothers who passed away since our last convention. (Top left photo) An emotional Melissa Beauregard, wife of the late Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard, (bottom left) Martha Moss, wife of the late International Vice President J.B. Moss, and (bottom right) Michel Dupuis, husband of the late Secretary-Treasurer Carol Dupuis address the convention. Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth (top right) led the tribute.

Convention Scenes



Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan nominates Michael Goodwin for International President. Lanigan also served as Co-chair of the Constitution & Laws Committee.



Region IV Vice President Becky Turner, Chair of the Constitution & Laws Committee.



ITPE members, pictured with ITPE President John Conley (front row, fourth from left) and International President Michael Goodwin.



Region III Vice President John Conley, President of ITPE.



OPEIU General Counsel Melvin Schwarzwald works with Executive Board on response to Canadian notice of autonomy received June 20, 2004.



Convention delegates receive ballots for vice president elections.



Local 277 delegates Ramona Alexander and Margo Peel.

Outstanding service honorees



International Representative Jeff Rusich is awarded the Henderson B. Douglas Memorial Award for 2003.



A Special Recognition Award is given to those who assisted in the campaign to organize over 800 Prudential Agents. Pictured left to right are (back row) International Representatives John Lynch and John Edmonds, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler, International President Michael Goodwin, International Vice President Richard Lanigan, (front row) Prudential Agents Frank Miller and Ab Widlow, Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth and Prudential Agent Jay Newman.

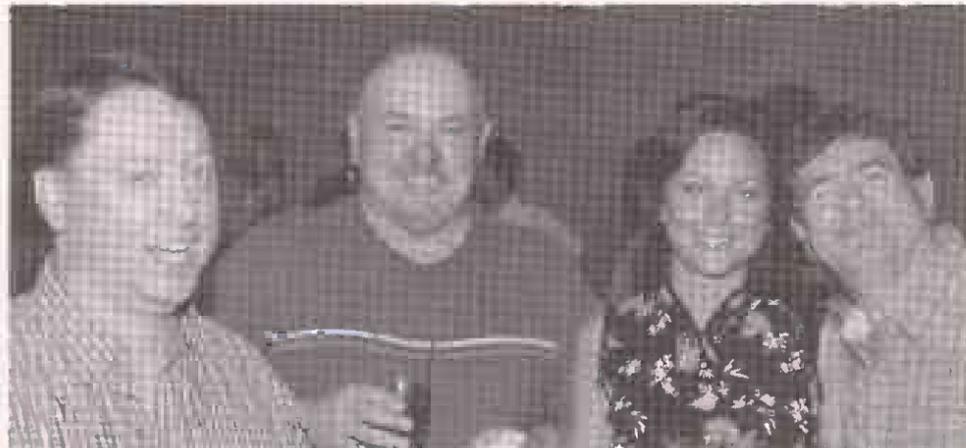
Convention Scenes



Director of Organization & Field Services Kevin Kistler opens the convention.



Administrative Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer Juliet Casey and Florida Regional Director Ed Darcy Sr.



Some of the Canadian delegates who attended the convention.



Legislation Committee Chair Anita Roy, Local 12, and Co-chair Dan Dyer, Local 2.



President of the South Florida Central Labor Council Fred Frost and President of the Florida State Federation of Labor Cindy Hall welcome delegates to their state.



Senior Vice President Kathleen Kinnick, who served as Rules Committee Chair. Walter Allen, Local 30, served as Co-chair.



Election Committee Chair Lynn White, Local 471, and Co-chair Capt. Stephen Ragin, Local 108, deliver their report.



Publicity Committee Chair Julie Weir, Local 502, and Co-chair Phillip Pope, Local 2002, report to the convention.



Official Publications Committee Chair Judy Solkovits and Program Committee Chair Mary Mahoney, Local 6.



Official Publications Committee Co-chair Maureen Bo.



Program Committee Co-chair Millie Hall, Local 494, and CLUW President Gloria Johnson.



Senior Vice President Gary Kirkland and Vice President Theresa Kandt deliver the report of the Resolutions Committee.



MAGE Local 2002 and Local 512 members, pictured with International President Michael Goodwin.



Organizing Committee Chair Patricia Priloh, Local 457, reports to the convention. Cindy Schu, Local 9, served as Co-chair.

Committees not pictured are:

- Sergeant-at-Arms Committee
Chair: Greg Blackman, Local 100
Co-chair: Margo Peel, Local 277
- Tellers Committee
Chair: Steven Tully, Local 32
Co-chair: Judith White, Local 471

Work and Health

Stem Cell Research: An Ethical Problem, a Personal Decision

Submitted by Jeffrey S. Freed
OPEIU, Local 153, Health Fund Medical Director

The controversy over stem cell research is something we hear or see almost daily in the newspaper or on television. In spite of this, little is revealed about the nature of this research, the opinions on both sides of the controversy, and the implications to us, the public. This article will attempt to bring some light to the topic so you can make your own decision and have your voice heard.

Stem cells are those very immature cells that exist in developing embryos and fetuses as they grow in a woman during pregnancy. They have the ability to change into cells that will become specialized organs like the heart, the blood cells and the lungs, for example. Presently, stem research has the goal of removing these cells from an embryo, which is a fertilized egg that has divided into a ball of cells, 2, 4, 8, 16, etc., before organs or features of a baby have begun to develop. A scientist would then stimulate the stem cells to be capable of activities like producing insulin for treatment of people with diabetes, or becoming nerve cells that could be used to treat people with paralysis caused by injury to their spinal cord. These are only two possibilities in a field that has the potential for the cure of diseases as varied as Alzheimer's disease in the elderly or cystic fibrosis in the young.

There is a price to pay for these possibilities, however. Going forward with this research that might develop treatments for these medical problems has also generated

ethical issues. The major one we face is whether we are killing human life when we take stem cells from embryos that are destroyed in the process. This is the issue that plagues us and has slowed scientists' ability to do this research.

The argument is clear. If these embryos represent human life, taking the stem cells would be killing that life when retrieving the cells. If they are not "alive," however, we are doing a service to humanity by seeking cures for diseases that devastate people of all ages. The advocates on both sides of the issue are passionate about their stand. There is no clear answer to the problem. Both sides make very logical arguments that I will not detail here.

It is important that you do understand, however, that there is an argument for both sides — a human, moral argument for harvesting stem cells and doing the potentially life-saving research, and an argument for not destroying what could be considered "life."

It is extremely important that you all join the discussion and learn as much about the topic as you can. Future decisions regarding where the field of stem cell research will go will depend on who your elected representatives are. Be certain that the candidates you vote for are informed about stem cell research and have views that match your own. The responsibility is in your hands.

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



Washington Window The State of Working America, 2004

The state of working America in late 2004 is not good — and the country is at a crossroads where the election this fall could determine whether it gets better or worse.

That's the conclusion we draw after reading the report of the same name, published by the Economic Policy Institute.

The 420-page study, published every other year, paints a bleak picture of what happened to working families since the end of the boom at the end of 2000, and the subsequent recession and official "recovery."

It includes unemployment up from a low of 4 percent — once thought unattainable — to 5.4 percent in August, real incomes declining by \$1,500 per family since 2000, no new job creation until last fall, and huge increases in worker productivity, with 85 percent of the benefits of those gains going into corporate executives' compensation, not workers' paychecks.

Meanwhile, according to other reports, published the previous week, the number of poor jumped by 1 million the past year, the number of uninsured increased by more than that, the number of children in poverty is close to 1 in 5 and real income was stagnant in three-fourths of the country. In the remaining quarter, the South, it declined.

That is the economy the GOP regime has presided over for the last three months. And, says EPI President Larry Mishel, a top economist, the GOP's tax cuts for the rich have had something to do with the dismal record.

Mishel and his colleagues declined to quantify how much the tax cuts for the rich, and other Bush policies, led to or worsened the slump. But he did make an interesting point.

"They started talking about the recession even before the inauguration" in January 2001, he said of the ruling Republicans, though the slump didn't start until their watch, in March 2001.

"And their policies have been remarkably ineffective in dealing with the persistent labor slack" that has driven unemployment up, kept it up and driven compensation — for all but the richest — down," he added.

"They started talking about tax cuts for the wealthy to create jobs and growth. But they [the tax cuts] have not been successful."

To be precise, he cited another study that reports that growth since November 2001 — the official "end" of the recession, though not the end of the jobless slump — is due primarily to low interest rates from the Federal Reserve Board and increased defense spending, including spending to fight the war on terror.

The tax cuts? "They raised gross domestic product by 0.1 percent," Mishel says.

But here's the real rub. As the economy hemorrhaged jobs and incomes stagnated or fell, another type of tax cut could have helped a lot more.

Mishel, quoting another study, at the website economy.com, reports that tax cuts targeted to low- and moderate-income people "could have created two million jobs at half the cost" of the Bush cuts.

Two million jobs happens to be just about the number of people — 2.066 million — who joined the jobless rolls since former Texas GOP Governor George W. Bush was seated in the Oval Office.

And Bush tax cuts helped push revenues down sharply in three years: Individual income tax receipts were \$794 billion in 2003, \$210 billion lower than in 2000. Corporate tax receipts dropped from \$207 billion in 2000 to \$132 billion last year, or one-third, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

CBO refused to say how much of the loss was due to the Bush recession and how much to the Bush tax cuts.

But that's not the point: Here's another analysis, not CBO's and EPI's. It's ours: For half the cost of the Bush cuts, and if they're targeted to workers, not the rich, we lose few jobs, not 2 million.

Mishel and his colleagues won't say it, but we will: The Bush tax cuts not only were skewed to the rich, but they made a bad situation — the recession that started on his watch and that, as far as workers are concerned, is still going — worse.

For such an economic record, the Bush regime deserves the blame for the present sad state of working America.

For more information

about the OPEIU,

visit our website at

www.opeiu.org

Lobbyist Corner

November 2, 2004: Reclaim America!

Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of
McGlotten & Jarvis

This November 2 will be your opportunity to vote for a president that will have a vision of good jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits, as well as the respect for the basic rights of workers that are the true test of economic security for our nation and its citizens. Government can and must play a positive role in the lives of its natural resources: "People."

President Bush and the Republican leadership in the U.S. Congress have chosen to move in another direction. The deterioration in this nation's economic structure is affecting the working middle class. The Bush economy is marked by fewer jobs, unemployment for longer periods, stagnant wages, falling income and declining health coverage. Let's review the Bush record for the last 42 months. The Bush administration:

- Does not support the Employee Free Choice Act that would allow workers to join a union, free from employer intimidation, harassment and threats. During his presidency, Bush has taken away the collective bargaining rights of 170,000 workers in the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security.
- Supports a privatization plan to hand over Social Security funds to Wall Street investment firms. Bush also supports making tax cuts for the wealthy permanent, which Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan said may require cuts in Social Security benefits.
- Wants to privatize 850,000 federal jobs. The Bush plan would compromise the advantages over federal workers in a public-private competition for jobs from the nation's air traffic control systems and the U.S. Postal Service.
- Ended overtime pay protections for many workers.
- Refused to extend unemployment insurance for jobless workers.
- Negotiated trade deals with weaker worker protections.
- Denied airport screeners freedom to choose a union.
- Proposed quitting Defense Department workers' civil service protections.
- Signed a Medicare prescription drug bill that created a huge gap in coverage that could cost seniors thousands of dollars a year.
- Opposed increasing the minimum wage and has supported allowing states to opt out of the federal minimum wage law and backed creation of a sub-minimum wage for some workers.

Had enough? We need a new leadership in the White House and U.S. Congress — a leadership that will fight for working families and all Americans. It's up to you: Vote Kerry/Edwards!

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!

Contact your local representatives. 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.

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 5 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/writerrep> 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.

Your action is needed. Do your part to help your union and your family.

Bush administration is trying to take away overtime pay!

Each year our country celebrates Labor Day as a way of recognizing the accomplishments of organized labor. Among those accomplishments are the eight-hour work day, paid vacations, pensions, health insurance, OSHA regulations, Social Security and Medicare — all items that were won for American workers through campaigns orchestrated by organized labor.

Another accomplishment won for all U.S. workers by labor unions is the 40-hour work week. But it is an accomplishment that the Bush administration is trying to take away with the sweep of a pen.

Since 1938 overtime pay for work in excess of 40 hours a week has been a standard of the U.S. workplace. Not anymore. As you no doubt have seen or heard through news reports, the Bush administration's new overtime rules went into effect in August. This means that millions of U.S. workers will no longer have the protection of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the right to be paid time-and-a-half for work above 40 hours in a week. Not only is this misguided plan an insult to America's workforce, it also spells trouble for the nation's unemployed.

The new rules will not affect union members, whose rights to overtime pay are spelled out in a contract. Nevertheless, the new rules will have an impact on the U.S. workplace as a whole. They will surely encourage some employers of union members to seek changes in overtime pay in future contract negotiations. They will also lead to other schemes such as "flex-time" or "comp-time" that will also make employees work harder for less money. The new overtime rules mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor are a terrible precedent to establish. Equally troublesome is the fact that they were put into effect not through legislation but through an Executive Order.

The Bush administration says it ordered the new regulations to simplify matters. That explanation almost seems comical when one realizes that the new rules are spelled out in a guideline book that is as thick as a standard dictionary. The lengthy and complicated guidelines also make it difficult to say just how many workers are affected by the new rules. But the Economic Policy Institute has issued a report that says that millions of workers will be adversely affected by the new regulations. Other sources, including the AFL-CIO, estimate that as many as six million workers will lose their right to overtime pay under the new rules. Naturally, the Bush administration disputes these numbers and even says that the new rules will bring overtime pay to many workers for the first time.

Among the workers that can lose overtime pay as a result of the new rules are kitchen workers, nurses, administrative staff employees, low-level salaried supervisors, which is a broad category that can cover many people, as well as additional workers who, under the new rules, could now be considered "professional employees" even if

their pay is relatively low.

There are many other occupations that will be affected by the new rules. As an example, almost anyone earning more than \$100,000 a year will no longer be protected by overtime laws, unless, of course, they are protected by a union contract. While the vast majority of working Americans earn less than \$100,000 a year they still have to be cautious that the \$100,000 salary figure isn't used as a starting point for further changes that may cover additional jobs with lower wages.

As mentioned, the rules were put into effect the last week in August. But the House of Representatives and the Senate have passed separate bills that overturn the new rules. If the two Houses of Congress combine the separate bills in conference, the resulting measure still faces a veto by President Bush.

All Democrats in both Houses of Congress voted to overturn the rules. But in a clear case that shows that political activism pays off, unions convinced some Republicans to break ranks and vote with the Democrats on this issue. Twenty-two Republican House members and five Republican Senators voted to overturn the rules. And one of the most outspoken opponents of the new overtime rules is Arlen Specter, the Republican Senator from Pennsylvania.

In spite of the bipartisan effort to overturn the new rules, it is still an uphill battle because of President Bush's determination to please corporate supporters. Even if Congress defeats the President on this matter, he is almost certain to revive it if he is re-elected.

In reviewing the impact of the new overtime rules, we think it is important to explain that they will even have an adverse impact on U.S. workers who are currently unemployed. That's because the new rules will stifle job creation.

We all should remember that one of the major purposes of the FLSA was to help create jobs. The law was passed during the great depression, when unemployment rates were as high as 30 percent and the intent of the law's overtime pay requirement was to open up jobs to the unemployed. The reasoning was simple. Given a choice between paying workers time-and-a-half for work in excess of 40 hours a week or hiring additional employees at straight time, lawmakers believed that most employers would choose to hire new workers to save money. In other words, the true incentive of overtime pay was to create more jobs. That incentive has now been removed for many employers by the new overtime rules imposed by the Bush administration. In an economy that has been bleeding jobs, this does not seem to be the wisest action. The Bush administration is the first one since Herbert Hoover's to suffer an aggregate loss of U.S. jobs during a four-year term in office. And now, with the new overtime rules imposed by the Bush administration, it seems the president's solution to his dismal record on job creation is the equivalent of trying to put out a fire with gasoline!

Editorial



Vote or Die!

By Michael Goodwin, International President

You may have seen T-shirts around the country with the words "Vote or Die" displayed. I first saw the shirts at the Democratic National Convention held in Boston in July. At first, I thought it looked rather drastic to display such strong words, but after giving it some thought I realized that many citizens probably take these words literally. You see, this election is probably the most important election in a lifetime. I know that this claim has been made before but this time I think there is more than a ring of truth to it. There is so much at stake for working families. The very existence of the labor movement is threatened. In this edition of *White Collar* you will see a report on the Bush Administration's attempt to deny overtime to over six million workers. We also know that the administration is reviewing the legality of voluntary recognition and cardcheck procedures. There is no question that the philosophy of the administration is that the country would be better off without unions.

I don't agree with that nor do the majority of Americans. In fact, in every poll taken on this subject, the majority of Americans have said that they would join a union if they had the opportunity.

In this column I thought it was important for you to know where Senator John Kerry and President Bush stand on healthcare, prescription drugs, job creation, union member rights and immigration reform. No one wants to be told how to vote and neither me nor this International Union would ever attempt to do so. Our sole purpose here is to educate members on issues so that they can make an informed decision.

Unfortunately, in past elections nearly half of the eligible voters did not vote, thereby leaving the decision to others. We suggest

that every eligible voter should exercise his or her right to vote on Election Day. That's why we urge you to vote on November 2 to

make sure that your voice is heard and your vote is counted. Please go to the polls and VOTE! and make sure that every eligible

voter in your household does the same. It's only with your participation that the true voice of the American public will be heard.

WHO WILL STAND UP FOR GOOD JOBS AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE?



SENATOR JOHN KERRY



PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

Kerry has a common-sense plan that will reduce health care expenses for the average family by \$1,000 per year, making it easier for us to negotiate for quality benefits and pay improvements. *(Boston Globe, 5/11/04)*

More Affordable Health Care

In almost four years in office, Bush has done nothing to make health care more affordable for working families. Out-of-pocket expenses have risen an average of 50 percent, and now 44 million Americans have no health coverage. *(Kaiser Family Foundation)*

Kerry supported a law to make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors under Medicare by keeping down drug costs while capping out-of-pocket expenses. *(S. 812, 7/23/02)*

Less Expensive Prescriptions

Bush signed a Medicare prescription drug law that provides coverage for seniors beginning in 2006 and drug discount cards this year. The plan does nothing to rein in drug prices and forbids Medicare from negotiating lower prices for seniors. *(Consumers Union, 6/27/03; Report by Health Reform Program at Boston University's School of Public Health)*

Kerry plans to create 10 million jobs by giving tax incentives to businesses that add good American jobs. *(CBO vs. 3/20/04)*

Creating Good Jobs

President Bush is the first president in more than 50 years whose economic policies have cost America jobs - 1.3 million jobs lost since 2001 instead of adding jobs. *(UPI, 6/10/04)*

Kerry opposed President Bush's attempt to take away employees freedom to form a union in the Department of Homeland Security. Kerry has also fought for the right of municipal and public safety officers to form a union. *(H.R. 5005; RC: 226, 9/26/02; response to AFL-CIO questionnaire)*

Union Members' Rights

Bush has asked Congress to eliminate union contracts at the Department of Defense. This would take away for 700,000 civilian employees annual pay raises, step increases, appeal rights, and bargaining rights. *(The Washington Post, 6/7/03)*

Kerry supports giving taxpaying immigrant workers the opportunity to earn legal status if they've been in the United States for at least five years, have been working, and can pass a background check. *(Associated Press policy Q&A, "Immigration" Jan. 25, 2004; Democratic Primary Debate, 9/4/03)*

Immigration Reform

Bush supported a "temporary immigrants" plan granting temporary visas to immigrants already working and paying taxes in the United States. Once the visa expires, immigrant workers would have to go back to their original country; they would not be able to become citizens and would not get green cards. *(SEIU analysis)*



Printed in USA

Letters to the Editor

Dear International President Goodwin:
Why Jobs Matter

With a job, no matter how menial, comes self-respect. With a job, one can hold one's head high, and look everyone straight in the eye. With a job, no matter how taxing, comes a paycheck, no matter how small. With a job, one can go to work and feel useful until quitting time. With a job, days off and holidays are sweeter than wine. With a decent paying job, one can pay bills and keep creditors away from the door. With a job, one can hopefully be better off than before. With a job, sick days enable one to take time off to see a doctor without loss of pay. With the loss of a job, one can lose one's safety net, and may then fall free to the bottom of an ever-growing mountain of debt.

I prefer having a job any day, to never knowing the satisfaction and joy that comes with earning and deserving a full day's pay. Finally, and most importantly, when jobs and unions go hand-in-hand, it makes it harder for self-serving bosses to get the upper hand!

John Clifton Davis
Montclair, NJ

Dear International President Goodwin:
Re: White Collar, #486, Spring 2004

Why don't you tell the truth? It was the higher taxes put in by the Democrats that drove the businesses out of the U.S.A. Then the AFL-CIO and CLC wanting power, not what the workers wanted BUT POWER, that



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>

wages in the United States of America drove prices up. The worker in the U.S.A. wants to buy things cheaper—so goods and items produced can be sold in our country cheaper

than they can be produced here.

Face up to the truth! I was a union member but I'll never be one again even if I have to go on welfare to live.

Of course you give the Democrats money so that they'll push through your bills to gain power! Cut your salary down to that of your little fellows—then maybe I'll listen to you.

P.S. Many of us are discontented with you.

Sincerely,

Royal R. Meservy
Local Union 472

Dear President Goodwin:

Thank you very much for awarding me the \$5,000 scholarship. I was very surprised and excited when I found out I had received it. I believe it is a great honor to be given this money for college.

I will be attending Middle Tennessee State University. I intend to major in biology and animal science. After I complete undergraduate school, I hope to attend a school of veterinary medicine.

Thanks again for helping me to achieve my goals.

Sincerely,

Christina Crawford

Dear Editor:

I want to express my appreciation to the staff of General Vision Services for the prompt and efficient services provided to me on Monday, September 13, 2004.

I faced the unfortunate situation of a crack in both of my contact lenses at the same time. I called Ellen at GVS, and she referred me to

Dr. Kunins at the company's facility on 14th Street. He set me up with temps and within 48 hours I had two new pairs of contact lenses and my 20/20 eyesight was restored!

Thank you to the staff of GVS!

Michael Goodwin
OPEIU President

Dear President Goodwin:

I just wanted to take a moment of your time to express my deep gratitude for the wonderful opportunity you so generously provided to me by inviting me to the 23rd Triennial Convention. My attendance there was a privilege and an honor, to say the least.

Also, I wanted to say thank you on behalf of all the pilots in Local 109 for your belief in the need to organize professional helicopter pilots. While it is often mentioned that it is the support that counts, it is too often overlooked that it is really the heartfelt belief in something that comes first. While the so-called support is no doubt the mechanism to success, it is in fact your wisdom, vision and decision — your belief — that has made our organization possible.

I attempted to say this during my brief acceptance speech, but I'm afraid it might have been lost in all of my nervousness.

The convention was an astounding success in my opinion; thank you so much for the experience.

Sincerely,

Troy V. Montanez
Negotiating Committee Member —
Local 109
Lincoln, Nebraska

Local 494 ratifies agreement with UAW

By a count of 214 to 75 (74 percent), the membership of Local 494, Detroit, Michigan voted to ratify the tentative agreement with the UAW negotiated by, and with unanimous support of, the local's Collective Bargaining Committee and Executive Board. The contract is effective through February 1, 2009.

"We feel we have addressed the major

concerns of our active and retired members," Local 494 President Tracy Komer said. "Through economic improvements, benefit increases and language changes, this agreement reflects the improved relations between Local 494 and the UAW.

"We would like to thank our membership for their support through these negotiations," Komer continued. "We would also like to thank

President Ron Gettelfinger and Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Bunn and the UAW International Executive Board for their willingness to open negotiations early and their commitment to work diligently with Local 494 to provide a fair and equitable agreement."

The Collective Bargaining Committee members were Komer, Jerry Bommarito, Karen Dunning, Jan Lafata, Karen McCarthy,

Audrey McKenna-Decker and Sandy Naples.

Highlights of the contract include: a \$1,000 lump sum award in February 2005; \$1,500 in February 2006; a 2 percent gross wage increase in February 2007; and 3 percent in February 2008. In addition, an annual bonus will be awarded this year and next, the amount dependent upon a member's years of service. Because this contract modification was agreed to seven months prior to expiration of the current agreement, active employees will also receive a \$500 ratification bonus.

Other highlights include an increase in pension rates and tuition assistance, as well as adoption of a mass transit benefit program that provides up to \$100 per month, on a tax free basis, for employees using public transportation for commuting purposes and employees who pay for parking in connection with their commute.



FCT protest

Union officials join Catholic school teachers in front of Cardinal Egan's office at 1011 First Avenue in Manhattan to protest the employer's demand for increased health care premlums, which in effect means pay cuts. Left to right are International President Michael Goodwin, Local 153 Senior Business Representative Patricia Hoffman, FCT President Mary-Ann Perry and FCT Vice President Patricia Gabriel. Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan (not shown) also attended the "Insult and Injury" protest.

WHITE COLLAR

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

MICHAEL GOODWIN
President

NANCY WOHLFORTH
Secretary-Treasurer



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Wohlforth tells Stonewall Democrats to hold politicians accountable

OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth was the keynote speaker at the National Stonewall Democrats 2004 Convention's Labor Lunch, where she spoke passionately about the November presidential election and said it would decide "the course of history for millions of people around the world."

The Stonewall Democrats convention, held in Providence, Rhode Island in the days leading up to the Democratic National Convention in July, hosted some of the nation's most influential and high profile members of the Democratic party. Among the speakers were Representative Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) and Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe.

The convention is held biennially, and this year brought more than 300 participants to Providence for a host of workshops, training sessions and special events.

Wohlforth, the highest-ranking gay person in the labor movement, told delegates that the way to beat Mr. Bush is to focus on issues important to gays and lesbians, such as gay marriage, and use these issues to get out the vote in November.

"I want to elect the Johns and get rid of Bush more than anyone," Wohlforth said. "I say we cannot duck the issue... Do the right thing. Don't duck and run. Come out fighting fear and hatred. If we duck and run like we did on a lot of issues in 2000, a lot of our

people will stay home again."

She also stressed how many of the issues important to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community are also key civil rights issues important to the labor movement.

"Gay marriage has become a labor issue,

a civil rights issue," she said. "The only way we can protect our domestic-partner benefits is through a union.

"Above all, let us hold the politicians accountable. If we can't hold them accountable before the election, do you think we can after?" she asked.



Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth with Representative Patrick J. Kennedy (D-R.I.) and delegates to the National Stonewall Democrats 2004 Convention. Wohlforth told delegates to focus on issues important to gays and lesbians, and use those issues to get out the vote on November 2!

Local 393 scores again!

By Susan Carey, President, Local 393

One of our greatest rights as Americans is the right to assemble or organize and to collectively give our voice to our needs, our right to be acknowledged and rewarded equitably for our labors, as well as the right to live in dignity.

We, as unionists, know that the greatest advocate for the "average" citizens of America is the union. We also know that we continue to struggle to retain all we have achieved through collective bargaining while legislation on every level obliterates what we have gained. Union jobs have diminished through trade agreements with countries that now produce goods previously manufactured by Americans, yet we are expected to purchase those goods and keep our economy viable.

We in Michigan have seen the drastic drop in union membership and elimination of union workers in the industries indigenous to our state. With this comes the editorials that challenge the strength of unions and their influence in the job market and, of course, in city, state and national elections. Let us hope that

in the coming elections the strength of organized labor will refute their predictions.

This year, OPEIU Local 393 has had to negotiate the contracts of four credit unions and the UAW office staffers in the Multiple Employee Group known as MEG. While those talks are currently ongoing, OPEIU scored a major victory and all eyes were on us!

Wanigas Federal Credit Union in Saginaw, Michigan notified us that they rejected our proposal to extend the contract for a year, and offered three days of bargaining – the third day being the day the contract would expire. Simultaneously, they applied for federal mediation.

International Representative Faye Orr was assigned by President Michael Goodwin to lead our team in the negotiations. Jocelyn Phillips and Martha Clemens, the Local 393 stewards at Wanigas, were our delegates to the OPEIU Convention, and there they met Faye.

Both women were profoundly impressed by the immediacy with which OPEIU dealt with the Canadian boycott. They returned from the convention with a renewed strength of purpose and pride in their union, convey-

ing to their members the need to rely on, work for and support their union.

In the three days of bargaining, the consulting firm that represented Wanigas gradually but methodically proved their intention to decimate all benefits and reduce wages of the "overpaid employees."

Their pedantic concern for only hiring persons with college degrees was reflected in their stance to pay new hires a pittance above fast food wages and their unctuous references to the annual wage of our members were repeated throughout the process.

Meanwhile, our members wore their union buttons or buttons that read "This place works because I do;" this offended management and reference was made to it by their negotiator several times.

Despite approaching the deadline and having been given management's final offer, the union stood fast. Faye, in her inimitable southern ladylike way, told them firmly, "You insult us. If you think we will agree to this you are sorely mistaken, and we will never agree to a concessionary contract... we will just wait for the mediator."

Immediately thereafter, we sent the word out to the UAW locals, the labor council, the core union people in the Saginaw area and to the media. That night, the evening newscast said Wanigas employees were set to strike. The Saginaw News carried the story in the evening edition.

The next morning when Faye and I drove into their parking lot, there were no parking spaces and union people stood four abreast from the sidewalk to the teller windows – withdrawing their money. The telephones were ringing constantly with people demanding to speak with the CEO or the board members who were from the UAW local union next door. By the close of business that evening, the run on the bank drew nearly half a million



Wanigas Federal Credit Union Shop Steward Martha Clemens, International Representative Faye Orr, Chief Steward Jocelyn Phillips, and Local 393 President Susan Carey.

dollars and our members were ready to walk!

Management was stunned at the outpouring of union support and knowing a picket line would close the place down, they rethought their position. We settled the contract on our terms.

It was a thrilling sight to see our members march in the local union next door, singing "Solidarity Forever." They unanimously ratified the agreement, and then embraced one another and us, their bargaining team. OPEIU made an impact on the city of Saginaw!

To brother Michael Goodwin and the International staff, our thanks for your immediate response to our needs, for expediting strike approval and for your telephonic calls with your concerns. You have given the members of Local 393 impetus and resolve as we face employers with their lawyers and consultants across the bargaining tables.

We are confident that we will succeed in giving our members the understanding that despite these precarious times, union people will prevail and solidarity is alive and well!



Wanigas employees, members of Local 393, are happy with the contract.

Family Fun Day for Local 30

"It was a huge success," declared Events Committee Chairperson and Local 30 Vice President, Cathy Young. "I have heard only great things from our members about this event in the past, and with the way this year's picnic sold out all 800 tickets in advance, I am sure we should keep on doing it."

August 29 was the date. Crown Pointe was the place, and hundreds of Local 30 members and their families made it the biggest and best event ever. The Local 30 "Family Fun Day" serves up great weather for the beach, plenty of great food, prizes, activities, and just plain fun for everyone.

"We have said all along that one of the goals of the leadership of Local 30 would be to give members more value for their dues," Local 30 President Marianne Tegio said, "and if the tremendous response to this year's 'Family Fun Day' is any indication, I think we have done it."

"This is a really good time to bring out the whole family and spend it with co-workers and friends," Hector Peralta, EVS, said. "I wouldn't miss it!"

"It's wonderful to see so many people who work so hard get the chance to come together strictly for social purposes," Executive Director Walter Allen Jr. said.

"Everyone involved has done a great job, from our Events Committee for organizing it, Picnic People for the great food and activities, our members for all the donated prizes, and to our Executive Board for supporting the idea and making it possible," Allen continued.



Local 30 members and families have a great time at the Family Fun Day.



Region V Vice President and Local 30 Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer Walter Allen Jr. welcomes everyone to the picnic.



Local 30 members do the limbo!

Local 40 settles three-year contract

(Continued from page 1)

that began August 9 and cost the hospital close to \$3 million, reported Local 40 President Vickie Kasper. Local 40 rejected two proposed contracts during the five-week strike, and an agreement was finally reached after the hospital agreed to add the equivalent of 25 additional full-time nurses to the bargaining unit.

"The vote was all about patient care," said Merry Hamby, a nurse at the hospital for 13 years. "This is not about the money." The nurses took their professional responsibility seriously to advocate for their patients at the hospital, and were steadfast in their fight to protect their patients' right to safe, adequate, appropriately skilled and timely nursing care. Staffing levels were so inadequate as to be dangerous for patient safety and health, thus the nurses went out on strike. "Some of our nurses are taking care of eight to nine very ill patients," said Sandra Sullow, vice president of Local 40's Mt. Clemens General Hospital RN Unit. "The end result is that we have more patients, less nurses and less support staff, which lowers the quality of care."

The 540 nurses, members of OPEIU Local 40, walked off the job over staffing ratios, as well as paid time off and employee contributions for health care benefits. Workers were without a contract since February 2004.

"The vote showed that we successfully reached a mutual agreement that resonated with the membership," Sullow said. "We met mutually on a solution to patient care at Mt. Clemens by agreeing to a minimum guarantee of nursing staff levels in the hospital. So while we didn't get patient ratios, we did get more nurses, which is basically what we needed." While the

contract provides smaller raises, additional hires will bring staffing back to the pre-reduction levels of 2003.

Other contract improvements include no reduction in paid time off (PTO) for current employees; employees may "sell" up to 50 percent of their PTO balance each year; no mandatory cross-training for employees with five years or more of seniority; a \$2.50/hour premium for cross-trained nurses performing work outside of their "home unit;" and no more than 15 percent of the nursing positions shall require variable shifts.

Local 40 nurses remained strong during the strike, even as the hospital brought in newly hired permanent replacements. They walked the picket line with signs declaring, "Unsafe staffing puts patients at risk!" and "We walk the line so your life's not on it!" A large banner was always on hand that said, "Mt. Clemens General Hospital says, cut staffing, cut sick time and cut benefits. Nurses know better! Increased nurse to patient ratio saves lives!"

The nurses were greatly buoyed by support from fellow labor members in different unions. "We have been so supported by all the labor organizations around," Sullow said. "We feel that our issues, while very limited to our specific problems, also reflect the struggle of workers across the country as they try to get safe working conditions, decent wages and benefits. We have many more similarities than differences."

The nurses received the strong support from Michigan State AFL-CIO President Mark Gaffney, whose participation in the negotiations led to the settlement. Both Local 40 and the International Union are forever in his debt.



Nurses celebrate their contract victory!

Juliet Procopio weds



Juliet Procopio, assistant to Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth, was married on May 21, 2004 to Thomas Casey. Attending the wedding were (left to right) Region II Vice President Patricia Priloh, Wohlforth and International President Michael Goodwin. Mr. and Mrs. Casey now reside in Maryland with Juliet's 10-year-old son, Joseph.

Local 2 celebrates 100 years



(Left photo) Local 2 President Dan Dyer opens the program at the 100th anniversary celebration on October 2 and welcomes participants; (middle photo) Secretary-Treasurer Mike Cowan reports on evening events; (right photo) Dyer visits with International President Michael Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth. Goodwin and Wohlforth were guest speakers at the event, and brought well wishes from the International Executive Board and OPEIU members.

Local 2, serving Washington, D.C. and Maryland, celebrated their Centennial on October 2, 2004 with a dinner dance for members. International President Michael Goodwin and Joslyn Williams, president of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO were on hand and congratulated the Local on its 100 years of achievement on behalf of working men and women in the tri-state area.

"Local 2 is filled with hard-working officers and staff that work diligently to defend the rights of their members and to give voice to them on the worksite," President Goodwin said. "And those members are some of the

finest within the OPEIU. Congratulations to them on 100 years of union service—here's to another 100 years!"

The birth of Local 2

In 1904, a charter was issued to the Stenographers, Typewriters, Bookkeepers and Assistants Local 11773 (now OPEIU Local 2). It was the year Theodore Roosevelt became president, the ice cream cone was unveiled at the St. Louis World's Fair and when work began on the Panama Canal. The original fifteen members of Local 11773 were committed to organizing, protecting against

discrimination for union activity and fighting for fair pay — many of the things that Local 2 still works for today. In 1945, the AFL granted a charter to the Office Employees International Union (OEIU) and Local 11773 became OEIU Local 2 (OEIU later became OPEIU).

Local 2 has a very proud record of union activism on behalf of clerical and professional employees. In the last few years, the local has successfully negotiated innovative contract language at some shops including domestic partner health and pension benefits, expanded parental leave for sick parents

and spouses/partners, and workable telecommuting. Local 2 was in the forefront of the fight to compress the workweek to allow members time for their families, and has been actively fighting for retiree health care and the maintenance of existing health insurance benefits for its members.

With its past record of achievement, its past struggles and victories, willingness to break new ground and improve the lives for area clerical and professional workers, the members of Local 2 can look ahead to the next 100 years with great pride and enthusiasm.

For the full story, see next page

Washington D.C. local members join overtime protest



Members of Local 2, Washington, D.C. joined the August 23, 2004 protest of the Bush administration's changes to overtime regulations, which went into effect that day. AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney was among those who addressed the gathering in front of the Labor Department in support of retaining overtime eligibility for up to 6 million workers deprived of it by the Bush rules. Hundreds of workers attended the protest, as well as Senate Labor Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), and CWA President Morton Bahr. The fight over overtime pay resumed September 7 when the GOP-run Congress returned from recess. For more information about this issue, see story on page 15.

"This Place Works Because We Do!"

The History of OPEIU Local 2

By Kathleen McKirchy

21-Year-Member of OPEIU Local 2

The birth of the union now known as OPEIU Local 2 occurred during the same year that the ice cream cone was unveiled at the St. Louis World's Fair. It was the same year that Theodore Roosevelt became president, when work began on the Panama Canal and when Marlene Dietrich, Cary Grant, Ray Bolger and Ralph Bunche were born. It was also that year that Frederic Bartholdi, the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, died—one day after this new union came into existence. Perhaps this one day in common baptized the local with a new spirit of dignity and justice, sparking its zeal to organize and fight for the interests of clerical and professional workers for 100 years.

The fifteen members who were granted a charter by the American Federation of Labor on October 3, 1904 and who became Stenographers, Typewriters, Bookkeepers and Assistants Local No. 11773 would be gratified to know that this union now represents 6,000 members; that it organized shops furiously over the years; that it produced the first president of the international union; that it broke out of the mold of unionizing only staffs of other unions and organized thousands of workers in private industry; that one of its staff representatives would be the second union member to be appointed to the Pre-Home Rule DC City Council; and that it would pioneer innovative contract subjects and language. All of these OPEIU Local 2 has done.

Beginnings

Local 2 in Washington, DC was the second local of the Stenographers, Typewriters, Bookkeepers and Assistants Local Union to be granted a charter by the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the first being the local union in Indianapolis, Indiana. But its number was 11773 and it was a "federal local union," similar to locals directly affiliated with the AFL when no national union existed, and able to organize a variety of workers.

It is unclear which was its first organizing victory and contract, the AFL or the International Association of Machinists (IAM). Correspondence exists between AFL President Samuel Gompers and Secretary-Treasurer Frank Morrison with the first officers of Local 11773, John Sherrier, President and Frank Hartwell, Secretary, regarding negotiations, and reference is made to an IAM contract. But no document has been found identifying when the first IAM contract was signed.

By 1909, the IAM contract addressed minimum salaries—stenographers with three years or more experience earned \$15 per week, bookkeepers \$18 per week, typewriters \$12 and office clerks \$11. The workweek was 42 hours. Signing this contract for the union were M. E. Joynt, Arthur Hunt and J. G. Bridham.

By 1910, Local 11773 had two female officers—Mrs. Marion Webster, President, and Miss Dagmar Nielsen, Secretary. In re-negotiating the contract with the AFL, which appears to have occurred in large part via letter, President Samuel Gompers indicated his dismay with a union proposal that management must submit in writing the reasons why employees are discharged. In a letter to the union dated March 1, 1910, he asks "Is it possible that such a proposition was seriously made?... It would seem that competency and faithfulness of service should be determined by the employer... surely you would not seriously ask the AF of L to give in writing the information to the union as to the cause for which any employee may be discharged."

The union also wanted protections against discrimination for union activity, a proposal that management believed was unnecessary.

At this time the AFL was located in what is now the headquarters of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters at 901 Massachusetts Avenue NW. Local 11773 was then located at 4321 8th Street NW. Across the country, in addition to the Indianapolis and Washington local unions, 50 other charters had been granted for clerical worker unions by the AFL. But during the '20s and early '30s, most failed to survive. By 1932, fewer than two dozen existed. But Local 11773 persisted and grew.

The Drive for an International Union

The election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935 granting workers the right to organize, and the lingering effects of the Great Depression spurred massive organizing across all industry sectors. Clerical worker unions grew and began to see a need for a national coordinating body to share power, ideas and resources.

In 1936, a resolution was presented at the AFL Executive Council meeting by Molly Levitas, a Chicago activist, supporting granting a charter to a new national union of clerical workers. Although not passed at this time, the struggle for national recognition brought several Local 11773 leaders to the forefront in the fight for clerical worker rights.

Paul Hutchings became president of Local 11773 in 1938, running the local out of his apartment while he worked full-time at the IAM. The local at this time was already breaking new ground by organizing workers in private industry and the membership increased to 400 (dues were \$0.75 per month). By 1943, the membership had climbed to 800.

W. Robert Probey also became active at this time. A bookkeeper at the AFL, he was allowed to work part-time as a business agent for the local, which bolstered its ability to organize locally for new members and agitate nationally for a national clerical union.

At the 1941 AFL Convention, another attempt was made to pass the national clerical union resolution. A. Philip Randolph, the president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, gave Hutchings,

Probey and others encouragement in the fight, likening the struggles of African-American workers for recognition and inclusion with those of clerical workers. The resolution finally passed and the AFL set up the International Council of Office Employee Unions, a sort of "trial run" organization to see if the idea of a national union of clerical workers would work.

The existing local unions then met in Chicago, and Paul Hutchings, President of Local 11773 was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Although on their way, the AFL was still reluctant to admit them as a new international union due to many locals with few members and uncertainty about the new group's financial viability.

In 1943, the International Council opened its first office at 827 14th Street NW in Washington, DC. Hutchings took a leave of absence from his job at the IAM and became the full-time paid Secretary-Treasurer of the Council, allowing for more coordination, organizing, and political participation by its member locals.

Finally in 1945, the AFL agreed to grant a charter and the Office Employees International Union (OEIU) was born. The founding convention was held in Cincinnati with 90 delegates from 54 locals representing 22,000 members nationwide. Local 11773 became OEIU Local 2, and its president, Paul Hutchings, was elected the first president of the new international union. By 1946, 161 local OEIU unions had been chartered.

World War II and the Century's Second Half

In 1944, OEIU Local 2 organized one of its major shops, Washington Gas Light. At some point in the late 1940s, Robert Greenwood became Local 2 president and John Cahill, who later became president of the local, was serving as a business agent.

Heavy organizing brought major shops into the Local 2 fold throughout the late '40s and into the '50s and '60s including the Wonder Bakery, two funeral homes, several international unions, health and welfare funds and the CIO and AFL Federal Credit Unions. In 1960, the first Master Agreement was signed, setting basic wage rates, benefits and working conditions for all the shops at national and international unions that were signatories.

In 1953, members of the local attended the national union convention in Cleveland. The delegation, which included then-President Robert Greenwood, John Cahill, Herman Hazel, Esther Smith and Jean Zelig, mentioned in their report to the members that they had been addressed by Frances Perkins, the first female Secretary of Labor who was appointed by FDR. "Her talk was not only timely... but also proved to the delegation that women can play an important part in the development of our democratic way of life," they reported.

In 1965, OEIU changed its name to the Office and Professional Employees International Union, and thus Local 2 acquired the name it proudly wears today. Also during this year Local 301 in Baltimore was merged into Local 2, widening its geographic jurisdiction.

Organizing continued into the 1970s and 1980s, adding the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority, the Georgetown Dental Clinic, American District Telegraph Company of West Virginia (ADT), Group Health Association (now Kaiser Permanente) and the National Bank of Washington to its stable of unionized worksites. Organizing wins in the 21st century have included additional bargaining units at Kaiser Permanente, at ADT and at Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

On the Picket Line

While recognizing the sensitivities of conducting job actions against other unions who were Local 2 members' employers, the local never hesitated to take whatever steps were necessary to win justice for the workers. In 1963, Local 2 members struck the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers International Union (now the United Brotherhood of Carpenters), causing *The Washington Post* to headline "Unionists Picketed by Unionists" (3/8/63). The Asbestos Workers International Association was struck for a first contract in 1969.

Ten years later, members were on the picket line at the American Postal Workers Union Health Plan, as they fought for maintenance of their contract and an increase in the pension plan contributions. This particular battle caused *The Washington Post's* Mike Causey, in his Federal Diary of November 30, 1979 to write "Two of the Town's Biggest Unions Are Eyeball to Eyeball... other AFL-CIO unions in town are watching the fight with interest because union picket lines thrown up around union offices pose all sorts of philosophical questions."

Job actions weren't limited to strikes, however, as "work to the rule," lunchtime picketing, creative leafleting, innovative member buttons and clothing at work and other strategies were devised to win the day for the members of the local.

Local 2 in the Community

Organizing, bargaining and political action were not the local's only strong points. From the beginning, Local 2 had been active in the labor council's United Labor Agency, now the Community Services Agency, sponsoring Union Counselor Training, serving on their boards, and providing volunteers for community events, strike support of other locals and fundraising. In the 1960s the local spearheaded clothing drives for the United Farm Workers. In the '70s, Local 2 hired buses and went around to the shops rounding up members to support the rallies for the GE Strikers and the JP Stevens Boycott at Woodies and Hecht's. Local 2 has also been an active affiliate of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, joining with the 175 other local unions in the area to promote the interests of all workers.

People Stories

Local 2 has produced a few of the national and local labor movement's best activists. Phil Daugherty, who served as Business Agent from 1962-68 was appointed by the President of the United States to the Pre-Home Rule DC City Council. John Hazel was the local's first African-American business agent and was most likely its first black Secretary-Treasurer. Margareta Crampton, the local's first female First Vice-President, became the COPE/VIP Director for the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. Robert Harbrant became the first Executive Director of the AFL-CIO's Food and Allied Service Trades Department, and retired as the Assistant to the President of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers. He credits his advancement into these positions to his experiences as a steward for Local 2 at the AFL-CIO.

And of course, there was Paul Hutchings, who, as already mentioned, left his job as president of Local 2 to become the first President of the newly-chartered national union of clerical workers in 1945.

The Next 100 Years

OPEIU Local 2 has a very proud record of union activism on behalf of clerical and professional employees. In the last few years, the local has successfully negotiated innovative contract language at some shops including domestic partner health and pension benefits, expanded parental leave for sick parents and spouses/partners, and workable telecommuting. Local 2 was in the forefront of the fight to compress the work week to allow members time for their families and for leisure, and has been actively fighting for retiree health care and the maintenance of existing health insurance benefits for its members.

With its past record of achievement, with its past struggles and victories, with its willingness to break new ground and continue the march to better lives for area clerical and professional workers, the members of OPEIU Local 2 can look ahead to the next 100 years with hope, with pride and with great enthusiasm.

The Changing Names of Local 2

1904	Stenographers, Typewriters, Bookkeepers and Assistants Local No. 11773
1937	Office Employees Union Local No. 11773
1945	Office Employees International Union, Local 2
1965	Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 2
1983	Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 2

The Various Offices of Local 2

1904	4321 8th Street NW, Washington, DC
1945	1110 13th Street NW, Washington, DC
1945	1221 G Street NW, Washington, DC

1954	1507 M Street NW, Room 805, Washington, DC (Phone- Adams 4-1118!)
1968	1126 16th Street NW, Washington, DC
1983	555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC
1990	8455 Colesville Road, Suite 1250, Silver Spring, MD

Presidents of the Local

1904	Joseph W. Sherrier
1910	Marion Webster
1937	E. J. Tracy
1938-1941	Paul Hutchings
1941-1946	W. Robert Probey
1947	Robert Greenwood
1954-1977	John Cahill
1978-1987	E. J. Sheridan
1987-1990	Don Haines
1990-1993	E. J. Sheridan
1993-Today	Daniel Dyer

Sources—The historical files of OPEIU Local 2: "White Collar Union," by Joseph Finley, Octagon Books, 1975; AFL-CIO Listing of Mergers, New Affiliates, Title Changes Since December 1955; Letter from Robert Harbrant, July 30, 2004; Local 2 affiliate file of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO; "100 Years of Struggle and Success", America@Work, January 2000; Dan Dyer, Mike Cowan, Linda Bridges, Margareta Crampton.

From an April, 1929 Washington, DC Newspaper Article, "Stenographers' Entertainment, Card Party and Dance April 18th"

The Stenographers, Typewriters, Bookkeepers and Assistants' Association announces that its spring dance will be held in the ballroom, Carpenters' Hall, Tenth and K Streets NW, (now the site of HERE/UNITE Local 25) on April 18th.

In addition to a dance, it will consist of a card party for those not wishing to dance, a good entertainment with several specialty numbers and very good refreshments. The Entertainment Committee is making extensive preparations in its endeavor to give everyone an evening of pleasure. Prizes will be given for special dancing numbers.

This organization, which now has a membership of 280 is taking this means of welcoming some 35 new members. These members are employed in two offices which recently moved to this city from Chicago. Many prominent labor officials have been invited to attend this affair which is expected to surpass the one given last year."

Canadian delegates no show for convention

The International Union learned at the very last minute that Canadian delegates would not be attending the OPEIU Convention at the Westin Diplomat hotel in Hollywood, Florida held during the week of June 21, 2004. Instead, the Canadian delegates went to the nearby Sheraton Bal Harbor hotel to hold their own meeting and declare independence from the International Union. The Canadian National Committee (CNC) delivered notice to the OPEIU Executive Board on Sunday, June 20 of its independence.

The International Union has filed a lawsuit in Florida seeking a secret-ballot election among OPEIU's Canadian members to determine the legitimacy of the CNC action. In accordance with Article XIV of the International Union Constitution, Canadian members are entitled to express their desire for an autonomous Canadian union but such an expression must be by a secret ballot election conducted by an impartial third party.

In addition, the lawsuit asks the Florida court to award damages to OPEIU for economic losses to the International Union for transportation of Canadian delegates to the Convention, hotel rooms and Convention costs, among other issues. A court date has been set for November 2004.

Several Canadian Local Unions have filed a counter suit in British Columbia asking the B.C. court to award the new independent Canadian union approximately 25 percent of the International Union treasury. This claim is based on the reasoning that Canadian members constituted 25 percent of the overall OPEIU membership and, therefore, they should be entitled to 25 percent of our assets. The claim totally disregards the in excess of \$10 million in deficits that the Canadian sector has accumulated since an accounting was first required by the International Union constitution in 1977.

Despite the failure to provide notice to OPEIU in sufficient time to avoid penalties under the contract the union signed with the Westin Diplomat hotel in 1999 for the meeting, the withdrawal of the Canadian Labor Congress secretary-treasurer from the convention's speaker list without notice and the adverse effect of 100 empty seats provided for Canadian delegates, the US delegates were able to persevere and continue the convention.

Convention delegates saluted the delegates from Canadian Local Unions 327, 386 and 521, who demonstrated their integrity by resisting pressure to abandon the meeting.

Labor Day Anti-Bush Policies Rally 50k strong!



More than 50,000 workers crowded the streets of Manhattan for the Labor Day Anti-Bush Policies Rally on Wednesday, September 1, 2004. Pictured in front of the throng are New York Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, Council Secretary Ted Jacobsen, and New York State Federation President Denis Hughes. Members of OPEIU Local 153, New York, N.Y., also were out in full force at the rally.

OPEIU Local 2 Labor History Timeline

1881	American Federation of Labor Founded	1966	Organized the Building Services Workers Union (Now SEIU); Organized Merkle Press; Organized the Machinists Pension Fund
1896	DC Central Labor Union Chartered (Now The Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO)	1967	Organized the American Federation of Teachers; Lost an election at the Baltimore Biological Laboratory
October 3, 1904	Charter Issued for Stenographers', Typewriters, Bookkeepers and Assistants Local No. 11773 (Now OPEIU Local 2)	April 4, 1968	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Assassinated
1904	First Contract with the AFL	1968	Organized the American Ice Company; Organized the International Printing and Graphic Communications Union (Now GCIU); Organized the Remington Office Machines Division, Sperry Rand Corporation
1909	First Contract with the International Association of Machinists, AFL	1969	Organized the Asbestos Workers International Union; Organized Martinsburg Gas and Heating; Organized Center for Community Change
1920	Women win the Right To Vote	1970	Occupational Safety and Health Act Passed Organized Group Health Association
1929	Stock Market Crash Starts the Great Depression	1970	Organized Washington Print Press; organized the United Federation of Postal Clerks Hospital Plan (Now APWU Health Benefit Plan); Organized the DC Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association; Organized the Graphic Arts International Union (Now GCIU)
1935	Wagner Act becomes law giving workers the right to organize; Social Security Act Becomes Law	1971	Organized the National Bank of Washington; Organized SeaLand, Baltimore; Organized Washington Teachers Union Local 6; First separate contract signed with Road Sprinkler Fitters 669 Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee; Organized National Automatic Sprinklers; Organized the Transportation Institute
1937	Local 11773 changes names to Office Employees Union Local 11773	1972	Organized the Road Sprinkler Fitters Local 669; Organized the United Mine Workers of America
1938	Fair Labor Standards Act Becomes Law	1974	Organized SEIU Local 82 Labor Management Medical Trust Fund; Organized the Utility Workers Union of America
1941	America Enters World War II	1975	Organized the National Council of Senior Citizens (Now the Alliance for Retired Americans); Organized the Agricultural Federal Credit Union
1943	National Publishing Company Organized	1976	Organized American District Telegraph of West Virginia (ADT)
1944	Organized Washington Gas Light	1977	Organized the staff attorneys at the American Federation of Government Employees
1945	World War II Ends, President Franklin Roosevelt Dies Office Employees International Union Granted Charter by the AFL	1978	First Contract at the Greater Washington Central Labor Council and United Labor Agency (Now the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO and Community Services Agency); Organized Georgetown University Community Health Plan (Now Kaiser Permanente); Organized the Int'l Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades (Now IUPAT); First contract at ATU Local 689
1951	Organized International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, AFL (Now GCIU)	1979	Organized the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; First contract at Kelly Press; Organized the Pension Fund of the United Association of Plumbers
1952	CIO Employees Federal Credit Union Organized	1980	Negotiated a separate contract with the National Post Office, Mail Handlers, Messenger and Group Leaders Division of LIUNA; Organized the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department; Organized the National Football League Players Association
1953	AFL Employees Federal Credit Union Organized	1981	Solidarity Day—400,000 workers protest Reaganomics; Organized the National Electrical Benefits Fund
1954	Won Election at Continental Baking Company For Clerical Workers at the Wonder Bakery; Withdrew an election petition at Chestnut Farms Dairy	1982	Organized CWA Local 2300; Won election for the Georgetown Dental Clinic; Organized B & B Acquisition Corporation; Organized Bredhoff and Kaiser
1955	AFL and CIO Merge to form the AFL-CIO Organized Waiters Union Local 781 (Now HERE 25)	1983	Organized the National Federation of Federal Employees (Now IAM); Local 2 Becomes Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 2
1956	Merger of the AFL and CIO Federal Employees Credit Unions	1985	Organized Washington Metro Area Transit Authority
1958	Organized Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association; Organized the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Obtained First Contract at the American Newspaper Guild (Now The Newspaper Guild/CWA); Organized the American Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union (Now Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco and Grain Millers Union)	1986	Organized the Field Employees at AFSCME
1959	Organized the Communications Workers of America; Organized the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers International Union (Now United Brotherhood of Carpenters); Organized the United Association of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters; Organized the International Association of Fire Fighters; Organized the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electrical Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America (Now Amalgamated Transit Union); Organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Retail Clerks Local 400 (Now UFCW); Organized Cardlay Associates	1990	Organized the AFL-CIO Union Privilege Program; Organized SASMI, National Bank of Washington closes—loss of 450 members
1960	Organized the WW Chambers Funeral Home; Organized the Southern Bakeries Company; Targeted GEICO for organizing; Organized J. William Lee's Sons Company Funeral Home; Master Contract Signed with several Int'l unions; Int'l Union of Operating Engineers newly signed	1992	First Contract at IBEW 24; Organized the International Brotherhood of Teamsters
1961	Organized the United Federation of Post Office Clerks (Now the American Postal Workers Union); Organized Operating Engineers Local 77; First Contract at the Roofers	1993	Recognized at Service Employees Local 82
1962	Started an organizing drive at AAA Letter Services; First Contract at the United States Book Exchange, Inc; Organized the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers; Organized the Insurance Workers International Union (Now UFCW); organized the Flight Engineers International Association; Organized the Commercial Telegraphers Union (Now CWA)	1994	Organized the Coalition of Labor Union Women
1963	Ran an unsuccessful organizing drive at Morton's Department Stores and Virginia Metal Products Inc; Organized the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO	1997	Group Health Association, now Humana, sold to Kaiser Permanente
November 22, 1963	President Kennedy Assassinated	1998	Organized ATPA (Sheet Metal Workers Pension Fund)
1964	Organized the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (Now UNITE); Organized the American Institute for Free Labor Development (Now part of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center)	1999	Organized Baltimore IBEW Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee; SeaLand closes—loss of 25 members
1965	Organized the Int'l Association of Machinists Labor-Management Pension Fund; Organized the Department of Labor Credit Union; Baltimore Local 301 is merged into Local 2 OPEIU, Becomes Office and Professional Employees International Union,	2001	Organized the Maryland Federation of Teachers
		2002	Union Labor Life Insurance Company Employees Federal Credit Union Merges with the AFL-CIO Employees Federal Credit Union; Organized Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
		2004	Added new members at Kaiser Permanente; Organized two new facilities at ADT
		October 2, 2004	OPEIU Local 2 Celebrates its First 100 Years!

23rd Triennial Convention Coverage

Organize and We All Win

U.S. Regional Vice Presidents elected

Elections also were held to decide who would fill the 13 Regional Vice President positions (and 1 position created in Region III for 3 years only) on the OPEIU Executive Board. Delegates from respective regions around the United States voted to elect:

Region II
Richard Lanigan
Dr. John Mattiacci
Dan Dyer
Mary Mahoney
Patricia Priloh

Region III
Phillip Pope
John F. Conley

Region IV
Becky Turner

Region V
Walter Allen Jr.
Tamara Rubyn

Region VI
Judy Zenk

Region VII
Anita Roy
Julie Weir
Aaron Sanders

Diversity Vice Presidents elected

Theresa Kandt
Green P. Lewis
Judy Solkovits

These Vice Presidents were also elected by all US delegates to provide diversity on the Executive Board.

Convention speakers stress need for unity

Solidarity vital for organizing, political success

In addition to the business of the convention, the gathering was an excellent opportunity to hear from national and international leaders from both the political and labor arenas. Here are some highlights:

Senator Clinton says, let's work together

Despite a busy schedule, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) found time to address the convention via satellite from Washington, D.C. and warned that America faces a healthcare crisis, and spoke of her plan to help curtail healthcare cost increases and to tackle the fundamental flaws in our healthcare system.

She also spoke of the need to protect workers' rights to form a union, saying, "it's becoming tougher and tougher to start a union in the first place. That's why I'm proud to be a co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act that would require

employers to recognize card checks. The bill also allows employees to seek arbitration, and provide more options for workers."

Union members can also do much to affect change, she said. "The most important thing all of you can do is work to change the leadership in Washington, from the White House to the Congress. Never has there been more at stake than in an election. No one is in a better position than you to help make it happen."



Which side are you on, asks Rev. Jackson

The Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr., founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, passionately asked delegates to consider the question, "which side are you on?"

Jackson told delegates that Jesus warned to "beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing," reminding us that opposition to organized labor is often disguised and uses many methods to undermine our activities.

Jackson said the question is especially relevant now, as unity within the labor movement is so important to future growth. "I congratulate this union for growing - you're swimming upstream," he said. "The more you grow and expand the more power you have to protect your interests. Unions must unify and get strength, not divide and weaken. And members must vote their hopes and interests over their fears."

"We have the power to make a difference," Jackson said, encouraging everyone to get involved and make their voices heard in the



Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. meets with President Goodwin at the convention.

November elections. "It's time for a change in direction and leadership. I'm on a low-carb diet. That's C.A.R.B. — no Cheney, no Ashcroft, no Rumsfeld, no Bush!"

Chavez-Thompson says get out and vote

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson paid tribute to President Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Wohlforth. "These are two of the most dynamic, most effective union leaders in the country," Chavez-Thompson said. She then went on to extend her tribute by saying, "When you chose Nancy as your secretary-treasurer, you were the first union in history of our movement to choose an open lesbian as an executive officer. I know something about breaking glass ceilings, and I know that not only she made

history, but you made history."

Chavez-Thompson then reiterated the importance of the 2004 presidential election and a campaign to restore workers' freedom to join unions. She also stressed the importance of pressuring Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. There are 42 million workers in America who are not part of the union movement that would like to join but cannot, because when they try employers use intimidations, lies and firings to stop them and the law does little or nothing to protect them. Chavez-Thompson expressed the importance of not only passing the legislation, but to also elect a president who will sign it. She said all union members have to get involved in the political process, to "make it your own personal mission" to help elect the right person in November and "to tell the truth about George W. Bush" to fellow union members, friends and neighbors.

Make it your own personal mission ... to tell the truth about George W. Bush



AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson is pictured with convention escort committee.