

# The Rapaport Report

Volume 1, Number 5

December 2005

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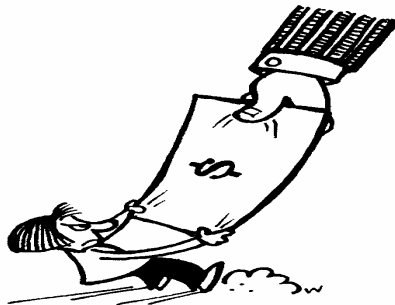
The entire crew at *The Rapaport Report* wishes each and every one of you a happy holiday and a happy new year. Have a great holiday. If in the past year you have handled a grievance, a health and safety matter or a human rights issue, stood on a picket line, attended an LEC, LERC or LMC meeting, supported a picket line, listened to a grieving member, sat on a bargaining team, mobilized for a strike vote, attended a demonstration or a union training session, came to Convention or to the Labour Day parade, spoke out or simply spread the union word then you deserve a great holiday. You have hitched your wagon to the forces that want a better world for working people.

The Executive Board met on Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Here is the December issue of *The Rapaport Report*.

The federal election is on. It is cold outside. The holiday season is upon us. Another year is gone. Another year is on the way. Where does the time go? 2006 used to seem so far away.

Much has changed in the world. Yet much remains the same. What remains is the sad truth that people who have more want still more. What also remains is the opposition. What is new are the details. It's about privatization, lower wage standards, P3's, cutbacks, restructuring, globalization, pensions, OPSEU, democratic and union rights. The word 'cutback' is meaningful. They want to cutback what we have already won, what is ours. They want to lower the size of what I call the 'making a living class'. Some folks are falling behind.

The 'falling behind' is uneven. I heard a very troubling message repeatedly at the convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour in late November. The equity groups; racial minorities, women, First Nations and the challenged are feeling more marginalized and more left behind. That message must be heeded. The pursuit of equity must stay on the table. The 'making a living class' must be open to everybody.



What I mean by the ‘making a living class’ is a reasonably comfortable life, with guaranteed health care, a good place to live, no fears about the necessities, available and accessible quality education, reasonable calm in the street, democratic rights, culture and recreation, clean water and air, etc., etc.

A major theme in this newsletter is a description of our efforts to get more folks into that ‘making a living class’. In OPSEU, one of our main struggles is for part-time and casual workers. In the union, UNITE-HERE, it is their campaign for hotel workers. For all of us, it is about the fight for public health care. The folks in the BPS Health Care Division are leading that charge in partnership with the Ontario Health Coalition.

Locals, bargaining teams and the ‘big OPSEU’ are fighting back and frequently winning. In spite of our internal differences, OPSEU plows on. OPSEU is a critical mass of 115,000 members, thousands of activists, a staff of 240, \$69.5 million (projected, 2005) and connections to a wider network. We can and we do make a difference.

The Executive Board is wrapping itself around how to best use our resources and activism; to make the biggest possible difference. There are differences of opinion, of course. But, we are learning ways to express those differences, to listen and to respect. We are a diverse union. Personally, I find it fascinating.

I recently read over my earlier newsletters. The overall tone seems contradictory. There is the bad news. The injuries against workers, their families and communities continue; privatized health care, degrading infrastructure, more divestments and privatization, more poverty, etc, etc. Yet, there is the good news; that we as a labour movement continue. We negotiate and police our collective agreements. We attend demonstrations. We organize the unorganized. We say ‘no’ to the forces that want to take away from us.

This issue of *The Rapaport Report* is the same. There is the good news and the bad news.

First I give you some bad news. There are still full-time working people who are having a hard time making ends meet. I read over that last sentence and my jaw drops. In itself, that is not really news. What is news is that some casual and part-time workers who are in unions are falling behind or not keeping up. They are a growing demographic – even inside OPSEU bargaining units and work places. **Moirá Cowan** was the Unclassified Representative on the 2004-5 OPS bargaining team. **Moirá** is an unclassified Correctional Officer from Local 108 in London. Her article (page 10) describes the plight of part-timers, casuals and unclassified. **Moirá** also gives us good news. We continue the fight and have won some victories.

Hotel workers in Toronto face a double jeopardy, poorly paid and poorly treated. **Andrea Calver** is an organizer with UNITE-HERE, the union representing hotel workers. In her article (page 8), **Andrea** describes the working conditions of hotel workers. She also has good news. The hotel workers, through their union,

UNITE-HERE, are embarking on a campaign to improve matters in Toronto and across North America.

**Gary Lawrence** of Local 504 writes (page 9) about the bad news at the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. They are planning to privatize the Trillium Drug Program. He also writes about the local's fight back, the good news. I have been spending a lot of time with Local 504 lately. I went to a meeting/rally of Trillium workers over lunch time on the first day of the Board meeting. I joined them for a meeting with NDP Health critic, **Shelley Martel** earlier in the week.

Many of us are turning our thoughts to political parties and electoral politics with the federal election. OPSEU is considering a direct affiliation with the New Democratic Party. *The Rapaport Report* has produced a special article (page 11) on that issue. 'To Affiliate or Not to Affiliate' traces the history of acquiring political rights for OPSEU members and activists. The article also identifies opinions on the affiliation question.

**A Reminder** – The Health Care Division is promoting a health and safety campaign. Please sign their petition at <http://new.PetitionOnline.com/safety11/petition.html>

### **As Expected**

As expected, **Terry Downey** won the position of Executive Vice President of the Ontario Federation of Labour. She starts in early January. **Terry**, we all wish you the very best of luck and success at the O.F.L. We congratulate **Sister Terry**. It is difficult to say that we will miss **Terry** because I'm certain that we shall be seeing her regularly.

As expected, the leadership in Region 5 gets a shuffle and a new person. **Nancy Pridham** becomes Region 5 Vice President. **Peggy Maybury** returns to the Executive Board. I look forward to working with **Nancy** and **Peggy**.



## Executive Board Meeting – December 14 and 15

### The Budget Debate

Usually the budget debate is held at the December Executive Board meeting. However, due to the heavy agenda, that debate was postponed until the January meeting.

### The Toronto Hotel Campaign

UNITE-HERE, the hotel representing hotel workers is asking other unions to support their collective bargaining campaign. We will make our opinions known to the management at the downtown Sheraton Hotel where we hold our annual convention.

### Investing the Strike Fund

At the October Executive Board meeting we debated whether the strike fund can be used to purchase 31 Wellesley Street. At this board meeting, we were informed that the strike fund currently holds two properties; head office and the Fonthill Regional Office. We passed a resolution that maintains that practice, permitting the executive board to purchase properties from the strike fund and owned by the strike fund. There is more on the purchase of 31 Wellesley East on page 7.

### Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED)–Report from the Transition Committee

**Nancy Pridham** represents the Executive Board on the Transition Committee. Under the OLBEU

structure, their structure contained 30 zones reflecting the thirty LCBO districts. After extensive discussion and research, the Transition Committee developed an OPSEU local structure for the 5,400 members in the LBED, based on geography, concentration, OPSEU's 100 member local rule and regional guidelines. The Executive Board charters locals. We chartered 27 LBED locals on Wednesday afternoon. We attached some smaller stores to composite locals in Region 6 and Region 7. We now have the responsibility to see that the local leadership is elected and trained



That will be the focus of the LBED Local Assembly scheduled for January 23 and 24.

Like most unions, the OLBEU had a Grievance Committee that determined if grievances go to arbitration. Some EBMs saw that has a violation of Article 25.2 of our constitution, referred to as carriage rights. **President Casselman** ruled that there was no violation. Debate

ensued. **John Coones** of the LBED leadership was happy with Leah's interpretation. He reminded us that the OLBEU Grievance Committee was part of the merger agreement. The Executive Board upheld **Leah's** interpretation.

### **Providence Continuing Care Centre (PCCC)**

The local leadership from Local 431 made a verbal presentation to the Executive Board. Their institution was the Kingston Psychiatric Hospital before divestment from the OPS. They are upset about the difficulties that they face trying to remain as members of the OPSEU Pension Trust. I plan to visit their local on Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> as an Executive Board Member and as an OPT Trustee.

### **Environmental Policy**

Convention, 2005 passed a resolution to put OPSEU into the green camp. The Executive Board accepted that resolution as a mandate to create an OPSEU Environmental policy. A Board committee was assigned to come up with a plan. That plan was presented to the Executive Board on Wednesday.



We will work with two environmental groups; the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and Public Interest. Both groups have long histories working with municipalities, unions and community groups. There is quite a lot that OPSEU members can do in our jobs, in our communities and in our union. We voted the project \$53,000 to develop a Green Plan to bring to Convention in April.

### **OPS Bargaining Follow-up**

**Terry Baxter** was the chief negotiator in the 2004-5 OPS bargaining. He explained to the Executive Board the mandate that developed from bargaining; to develop a gender neutral job evaluation system, to assign OPS members to their proper category, to discover and act on pay equity discrepancies. The wage grid will be negotiated in the next round of bargaining.

### **Anti-Harassment Training**

On Thursday morning, we received anti-harassment training from **Suresh Paul**. We discussed our responsibilities as union activists and executive board members and as an employer in dealing with harassment. We discussed the OPSEU anti-harassment policy, which is available at

[www.opseu.org/committees/policy.htm](http://www.opseu.org/committees/policy.htm)

### **Purchasing 31 Wellesley Street East**

The Board voted to purchase 31 Wellesley Street East from the strike fund. I supported the purchase of the building. I opposed the use of the strike fund for the purchase. According to the

Treasurer's report, over 20% of the \$39 million in the strike fund is invested in real estate. Is this prudent investment? I'm not convinced. Or, is this a way of taking pressure off the general fund? That was never the purpose or the intention of the strike fund.

### **Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs)**

A major challenge in our health care sector is the LHIN plan. LHINs are a major restructuring from the Ministry of Health. Under the guise of transferring power and decision making to communities, the LHINs initiative is more about job loss, competitive bidding, managed competition and loss of union certification. These local networks are not care providers, they are management structures that will reward service contracts to the lowest bidder – driving down wages and threatening unions. In an unprecedented move, the four major health care unions in Ontario; OPSEU, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) are joining forces to oppose LHINs. This alliance should prevent unions from competing in organizing. The Board voted \$67,000 for this campaign. Stay tuned. You should hear much about the campaign in January and February.

### **Statement of Respect**

The Board revised the Statement of Respect read at every OPSEU event. It now includes actual contact information for the two qualified advisors to contact in the event of harassment. The change added transsexual people.

### **Dues Increase**

There was a proposal to raise dues by 0.1% for the expressed purpose of building a war chest to fight restructuring, divestment, privatization, etc. We postponed until the January meeting when we debate the budget.

### **BPS Arbitration Data Base**

There was a proposal to design, develop and implement an arbitration data base for the BPS. We all agreed that this is a necessary tool for BPS stewards. The Board referred the matter to the President's office and asked for an update at the January meeting.



### **Pension 'Grandparenting' Campaign**

There has been and continues to be divestment from the OPS. We experience and expect divestment at mental health facilities, tax auditors at the Ministry of Finance and the Trillium Drug Program. It is disheartening to lose job security and a collective agreement. It makes matters worse to be cut off from the OPSEU Pension Trust.

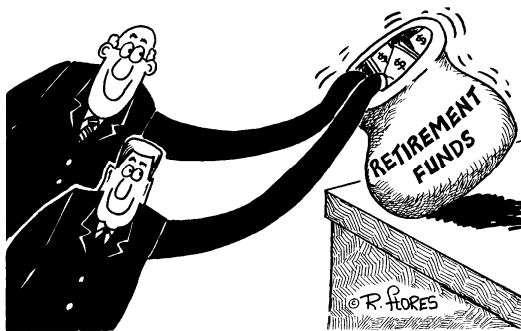
In pensions, 'grandparenting' permits employees at divestment to remain with the pension plan until retirement – not new hires. OPSEU and the OPT see grandparenting as positive for the plan as well as for the employees. The OPT

plan text must be amended to extend grandparenting, which require agreement from both sponsors. The responsible Minister, **Gerry Phillips**, will not sign.

We have a new campaign 'We Put Our Trust in OPTrust'. The Executive Board allotted the campaign \$18,500 to change the Minister's mind.

### Pension Liaison Committee

**Marcia Gillespie** from OPSEU staff was re-appointed as a trustee at the Hospitals Of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP). OPSEU, CUPE, SEIU and ONA, the four major health care unions in Ontario, each appoints two trustees. The other OPSEU trustee is **James Sanders**, Local 142.



OPSEU appoints all five union trustees at the OPSEU Pension Trust. We just appointed **Ruth Galinis** from local 601 in Sault Ste. Marie to a three year term. **Ruth** retired from the OPS earlier this year. **Ruth** is a long-time OPSEU activist and is the first OPSEU retiree appointed as an OPSEU trustee. **Tony Carneiro** and the Region 5 Retirees have mentioned this concern to me. OPT has over 21,000 pensioners.

**Ruth** replaces me. My term as OPT Trustees ends on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Thus

ends a five year journey. I will miss it. But I did make a decision to run for and serve on the Executive Board. I am happy with that decision.

**Heather Gavin**, OPSEU pension guru, has been appointed Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the OPT. I have served with **Heather** as a union trustee for over four years. **Heather** was instrumental in the creation of the OPT in 1994. This is a step forward for OPSEU and the labour movement. The future of pensions is on the agenda. **Heather's** voice will be heard.

### Political Action Plan

The Political Action Committee of the Board presented its plan for the federal election. It is proposing that OPSEU supports all the NDP incumbents in Ontario. It also proposes supporting eight other target ridings as well as six OPSEU members. The plan was accepted and supported with \$55,425.

### New Membership Centre in Timmins

The Board voted to lease a membership centre in Timmins for \$1540 a month.

### Fighting Closure of Regional Centres

The government plans to close 3 centres with residents with developmental disabilities. Families of residents and workers at the facilities say that these residents cannot be properly cared for in community settings. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, a court continued a stay that prevents moving residents out of the facilities without the families' permission. The board voted \$10,000 for the campaign.

## Toronto Hotel Workers Unite To Raise Standards in the Hotel Industry

By Andrea Calver

The collective agreements of 4,000 hotel workers in 23 major Toronto hotels expire on January 31, 2006.

Hotel workers are overwhelmingly immigrants to Canada, with a high number of women. HERE-UNITE members come from over 80 countries and speak dozens of languages. Despite their hard work, hotel workers remain undervalued. They are among the more than one million full-time workers in Toronto who earn less than \$29,000 per year.

Workload is a major problem in Toronto's hotels, especially in housekeeping, where there are bigger beds, heavier duvets and more hotel amenities in rooms.

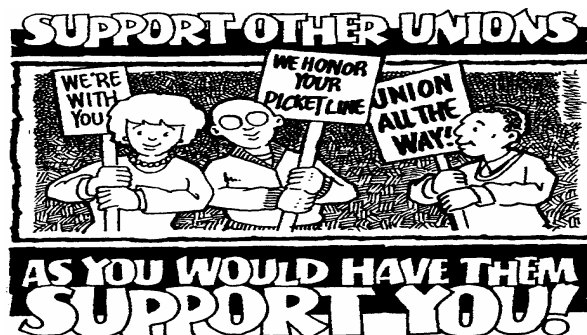
Room attendants at Toronto hotels experience higher injury rates as workload increases, with the added pressure to work faster.

Hotel workers are the backbone of tourism and hospitality. "We Make It Work!"

Hotel workers came to the Labour Council meeting in October. They sought support and solidarity for the campaign to improve working conditions in all Toronto hotels. Labour Council delegates, representing every major union, passed the following resolution:

“Across North America an epic struggle is unfolding. UNITE HERE is undertaking a tremendous continent-wide campaign to raise the standards of hotel workers. In 2006, they have lined up bargaining for the major cities in North America, starting with Toronto. The union is preparing for an all-out confrontation with the multi-national hotel chains to raise wages throughout the entire industry; ease the workload that is causing severe health problems, especially for room attendants; and win employer neutrality during organizing drives in non-union hotels...Local 75 in Toronto is in the forefront, as their 23 contracts covering over 4000 workers all expire on January 31, 2006.”

Visit [www.hotelworkersunited.org/toronto](http://www.hotelworkersunited.org/toronto) or email [acalver@unitehere.ca](mailto:acalver@unitehere.ca).



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## Fighting Privatization at the Trillium Drug Program

By Gary Lawrence

The Ontario Ministry of Health is divesting like crazy. Land ambulances have been downloaded. The provincial psychiatric hospitals have been or are being divested. Air Ambulance is concluding divestment in January in a self serving display of senior management conflict of interest. Retired bureaucrats colluded with the Ministry to hive off this section of Emergency Health Services to a company called Ontario Air Ambulance. About 60 OPSEU members, mostly dispatchers and paramedics from the Medical Air Transport Centre in Local 545 and admin staff in Local 504, are negotiating a new Collective Agreement in the Broader Public Sector (BPS).

On December 8<sup>th</sup> the Ministry issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. 71 OPSEU members working for **Trillium Drug Program** (TDP) in Local 504 are targeted for layoff. They provide needed subsidies for high priced drugs for over 80,000 Ontario households. The tender also includes the already privatized Seniors Co-Payment Program (SCP), which pays the drugs (for a co-payment of up to \$2) for seniors and people on social assistance. SCP is currently run by Resolve Corporation.

What makes this privatization particularly galling is our history in protecting the Trillium workers jobs. In February, 2002 OPSEU won a landmark policy grievance. Referred to as the "Trillium Award", it states that OPSEU bargaining unit jobs are to be filled by union members. Across the Ontario government, unfortunately, many OPSEU jobs have been filled outside the bargaining unit by temporary agency staff (temps), fee-for-service consultants and transfer payment workers.

At the time most of the Trillium workers were temps. As a result of the award management was forced to place them in the bargaining unit and make the regular workers classified ('permanent') and the seasonal and on-call workers unclassified (no job security or benefits). Effectively we forced the employer to stop contracting-in. Now they want to contract-out our jobs!

We are responding to this attack on public services and our jobs by fighting back. Internal workplace and external campaigns have been launched. Our first action was the wearing union buttons everyday on the floor. When private sector respondents to the RFP came to our worksite to plot with management we protested and wore black attire. We are developing links with opposition legislators and public stakeholders. Key to the successful implementation of our strategy is a large core group of workers who meet regularly, come up with good ideas and divide up the tasks.

We are getting great help from our union central and other union activists. Solidarity is critical. We are also getting valuable lessons from *A Troublemaker's Handbook 2* ([www.troublemakershandbook.org](http://www.troublemakershandbook.org)). We have a long way to go, and too little time, to force the employer to kill the tender.

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**Exploitation of casuals, part-time workers, unclassified.....****By Moira Cowan**

**T**here are way too many part-time, casual, contract, unclassified, temporary and non-permanent employees. OPSEU's approach and resolve to fix up this problem is evident. Let's take a look at all three sectors.

***The Ontario Public Service***

Through the last few rounds of bargaining, the efforts of the various Ministry Employee Relations Committees (MERCs) and the Grievance Department, many unclassified workers have achieved full-time status. However, as of January, 2005, there were still 11, 473 unclassified employees, over 21 per cent of the OPS membership.

There is good news. In the last round of bargaining, we achieved 'Appendix 25'. This provides the framework for many unclassified court employees to be rolled into a newly created status, Flexible Part-Time. This status brings benefits, vacation entitlements, and schedules; but most importantly, a life. This is a positive beginning for many.

There is more good news at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The MERC team has managed to eliminate a highly subjective competition process and to replace it with a rollover conversion practice. This recognizes an employee's seniority in her/his job and provides compensation for years of the unfair treatment by converting employees to a full time position in a fair and equitable manner.

And there is yet more good news in the OPS. A 'Letter of Understanding' in the new collective agreement addresses the government's responsibility to significantly reduce the number of unclassified employees through conversion to full-time status. This is not a process where layoffs and lack of contract renewals is acceptable. The onus is on the government to continue this through 2008.

***Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology***

College part-time employees are legally denied the right to organize as part of a union. Ontario is the only province to deny these rights.

Part-time employees, academic and support staff, outnumber full-time employees in Ontario colleges. **President Casselman** put it this way, "Colleges are given special legal rights by the province to exploit these workers."

A campaign is underway to correct this 'wrong'. Part-time employees doing the same work as full-time employees receive less pay and receive no vacation or benefits. Our message is being spread through the labour movement, to politicians and to the public. A formal complaint is being made to the International Labour Organization. Sign the petition at - <http://www.petitiononline.com/r4ptcwo/petition.html>

***The Broader Public Service***

The broader public service has thousands of members who work in part-time and casual positions. Employers in developmental services, youth corrections and childcare centres are notorious for retaining large part-time pools of casual and call-in workers who often have no benefits or pensions, and work irregular and unpredictable hours. Some members try to cobble together a fulltime income by working two or more part-time jobs, especially in the healthcare sectors. One of the causes of the spread of SARS in Toronto was significant number of hospital staff commuting between part-time jobs at different hospitals.

Some BPS employers recognize that converting part-time positions to regular fulltime positions would help recruit and retain experienced staff, and contribute to better service, but part-time workers cost less. As long as the Provincial Government refuses to properly fund BPS agencies, BPS employers will continue to try and exploit part-time workers.

Many BPS units have successfully bargained seniority rights, benefits, pensions and wage parity for part-time workers. Once the fiscal advantage of hiring part-time staff is removed, employers create more fulltime positions.

The Liquor Control Board Employees Division has about 5,800 members. The casual component numbers over 3,300 members, about 57 per cent.

**Janet Mantlker**, an organizational psychology expert at Carlton University, argues that job security is vital for the health and well-being of workers, their families, and employers. Is it too much to ask to have a decent wage and job stability?

The government maintains and encourages practices that increase the number of part-time and casual employees at an unacceptable level in every sector. Our voices must be heard. Our goal is the conversion of part-timers to the ranks of full-time employment.

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**To affiliate or not to affiliate, that is the question****A Special Feature of *The Rapaport Report***

**I**n the September issue of *The Rapaport Report* we wrote that the Political Action Committee of the Executive Board is conducting discussions on a significant political question. Should OPSEU directly affiliate with the New Democratic Party?

That discussion focuses directly on OPSEU's place in the world of party politics. This is a big issue for us. Affiliating with the NDP would tie us very closely to them.

The plan is to hold discussions with the membership/activists. The issue is then to be brought to Convention in April, 2006 for resolution.

OPSEU's place in the political world has a long and complex history. In many ways, it developed from our collective bargaining and the type of work that we do. It also developed as OPSEU evolved as a union, seeing as its primary task the defense and advancement of the lives of working people.

About three decades ago, we came to the realization that the defense of workers requires more than collective bargaining. It requires our participation in the wider political arena, as a union and as individuals. Today, we take many of our political rights for granted.

It was not long ago that most members of OPSEU could not run for political office without permission from the employer. If elected, even to a municipal council, they had to give up their jobs. They could not speak publicly on any political issue. Even raising money for a candidate or party was of questionable legality.

Through the 1970s and 1980s OPSEU developed policies and political action on a broad range of social justice and international issues – opposing Apartheid in South Africa, supporting women's rights, opposing racism, sexism and homophobia, advocating for fair taxation, whistle blower protection and for the social safety net. We went into coalition with like-minded groups to achieve these goals.

In the 1980's the right of OPSEU, as a union, to participate and contribute to political causes was most legally challenged by Merv Lavigne. Merv wanted to scab during the 1984 CAAT-Academic strike even though the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act had (and still has) anti-scab provisions. With the backing of the National Citizens Coalition, Stephen Harper's former employer, Merv sued OPSEU for using some of his union dues for political causes that he personally opposed. He argued that a union's sole function was to enhance the economic position of its members through collective bargaining and that the union had no right to spend any of his dues on causes that were not directly related to collective bargaining. In 1989 OPSEU won that dispute. The Supreme Court ruled that we had the legal right to develop, fund and advance political positions.

The political action door was opening. It was now legitimate for unions, like OPSEU, to develop, advocate and advance political views that are adopted through conventions. But we were still largely barred from electoral political activity. Over three quarters of the union membership, in the OPS and in CAAT, were barred from fully participating in electoral politics because we were public servants. It was viewed as a conflict of interest. More conservative voices asked why OPSEU members should have the right to elect their boss. We couldn't work in an election campaign for fear of being fired.

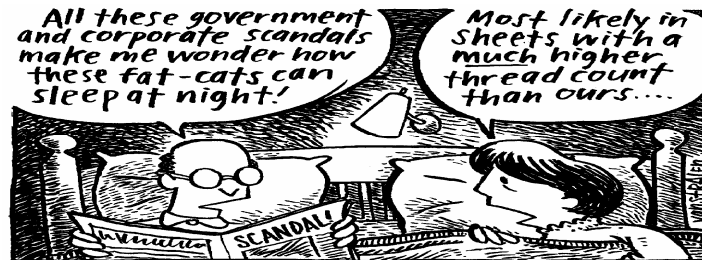
The big reforms came in 1993-94. The changes to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act (CECBA) gave OPSEU the right to operate fully in the electoral arena. The changes to the Public Service Act gave all OPSEU members the right to full participation in the electoral process. It was recognized that public servants are also citizens. The political door was now wide open.

Today, our union is quite the political animal. We take positions on many political and economic issues. We publicize our positions as well as devote time and resources to those positions. We enter into coalitions with other unions and community groups. At every municipal, provincial and federal election we see many familiar OPSEU faces running for office, openly working for candidates and taking public positions. We have sophisticated databases that pinpoint the municipal ward and the provincial/federal riding of members. We ask our members to vote for candidates who best represent our point of view. We book off members to work on campaigns. We donate money, office space and resources to political campaigns. We threw our heart and soul into David Miller's campaign in 2003. We threw every resource that we had to un-elect the Mike Harris Tories in 1999 and 2003. We even asked members to vote strategically.

In other words, we have grown up politically. After three decades of struggle, we have achieved mastery over our own political agenda and program. We know who we are and we know how to defend our interests politically and electorally.

Now, we are being asked to consider this next move. Do we wish to affiliate to the provincial New Democratic Party? That is both a principled and strategic question. There is no doubt that the NDP's policies are most like OPSEU's. But does affiliation move our union forward?

What do you think?



### Political Opinions Among OPSEU members and activists

I have often heard that if you put two union activists in a room you end up with at least four opinions. There are many contradictory and complex opinions out there. I detect the following twelve. I am sure that there are more. Here goes my short list.

**Opinion 1** - The New Democratic Party is most like OPSEU. They believe in a strong public sector, regulating the excesses of wealth and industry, redistribution of wealth and income, a strong social-safety net, equity, collective bargaining, environmental protection, and on and on. We should support them and affiliate with them because that strengthens the NDP, which is the natural ally of labour and the public sector.

**Opinion 2** - But the Bob Rae government let us down. They became too conservative by focusing too much on fiscal restraint. They backed off on public auto insurance. They

had a program of privatization (Highway 407). Their big transgression was the so called Social Contract. Ouch, that did hurt.

**Opinion 3** – Yes, the Rae government let us down in many ways, but in other ways we made tremendous gains; anti-scab legislation, political rights for civil servants, the right to strike for the OPS and the establishment of joint trusteeship in our two large pension plans; the OPSEU Pension Trust and the CAAT Pension Plan.

**Opinion 4** – Get Real! Power corrupts. This opinion has two branches.

**Opinion 4A** - It does not matter whom you support. All parties, including the NDP, break their promises and do what they want anyway.

**Opinion 4B** - Get over it. Live in the real world. Yeah, he let us down, but next to Mike, Ernie and Dalton; Bob looks like an angel.

**Opinion 5** - Unions cannot deliver the vote of their membership. It does not matter whom we support or affiliate with. Members vote how they want to vote. So, why bother?

**Opinion 6** – There is no difference between the Tories and the Liberals. This viewpoint is most prevalent in NDP circles. While the Liberals might be less confrontational they are still following the same privatization and downsizing path of the Tories. The style might be different but the substance remains the same.

**Opinion 7** – There is no difference between the Tories, the Liberals and the NDP. See Opinion 4.

**Opinion 8** – All politicians are liars, scoundrels and crooks and we do not want to be identified with any of them. This view was given a big boost with the Sponsorship scandal in Quebec and the MFP scandal in Toronto.

**Opinion 9** – Politicians work long hours for the public good out of a sense of civic pride. They should be applauded and respected.

**Opinion 10** – How much is this going to cost us?

**Opinion 11** – Unions, like OPSEU, should spend their time and resources negotiating and defending collective agreements. That's why members pay dues

**Opinion 12** - Does alignment with one party narrow our options when another party is in power? If the governing party knows our intentions and loyalties, does that limit our maneuverability during and between elections?

## Other News

**President Casselman** has appointed **Marilou Martin-Benoit** as an Executive Assistant. **Marilou** hails from local 557, CAAT-Support bargaining, the PWC, Region 5 EBM, intermittent MDT Region 5 staff rep. I have known **Marilou** since 1992. She has always been a great asset to OPSEU.

### Challenge from Local 5102

Local President **John Keating** challenges all locals. At their Christmas Party they charged guests \$20 and each brought a new toy. They made donations to the Emily Stowe Shelter for Women and Juliette's Place.

### Injured Workers Demo

The Injured Workers Network held their annual Christmas demo at the Ministry of Labour on December 9<sup>th</sup>. The OPSEU flag was there. Queens Park is dragging its heels in restoring benefits and rights to injured workers.

### Region 5 Women's Caucus

The Region 5 Women's Caucus held their annual December 6<sup>th</sup> event in

memory of the 14 women engineering students murdered in Montreal in 1989. The Women's Caucus holds its next regular meeting on Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. Contact **Yvonne Bobb** or **Gloria David** for details.

### Region 5 Human Rights Committee

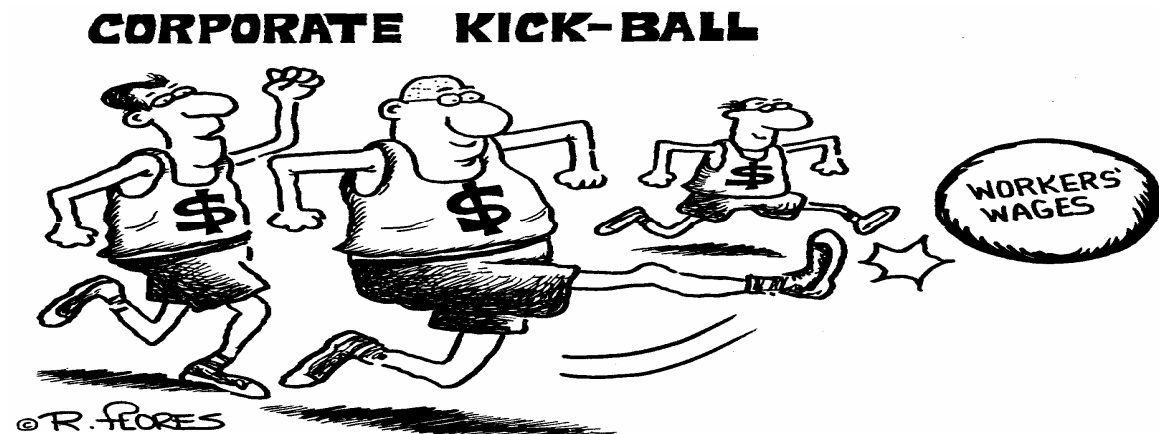
The Human Rights Committee is holding a meeting on Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Contact **Cecil Beckford** for details.

### Labour Council Forum

The Labour Council is holding a forum 'Women in Politics: Getting Involved'. It is on Saturday, February 18 at 8:30 am at Metro Hall, 55 John Street. Contact Labour Council at 416-443-3663. It is designed to encourage and increase the participation of women within their unions, their communities and in the political arena. Region 5 picks up the \$25 fee.

### Region 5 Retirees Group

**Tony Carneiro** reports that attendance at the November 29<sup>th</sup> meeting topped 60 retirees. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM

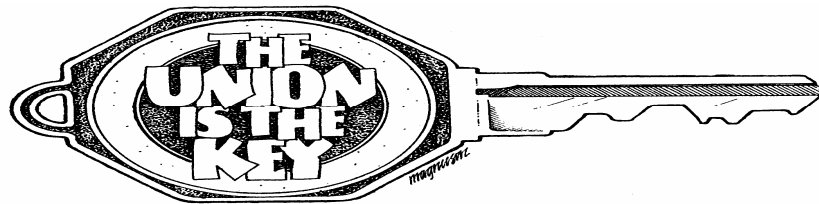


**Notices and Events** (Unless otherwise noted, events are at 31 Wellesley Street East)

Labour Council Membership Meeting – Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM, OFL Building  
 Region 5 Woman's Caucus – Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, after work  
 Region 5 Human Rights Committee – Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, after work  
 Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC) Meeting – Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, after work  
 Region 5 March 4/5 Weekend Union School deadline for applications – January 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED) Local Assembly – January 23-24  
 Executive Board Meeting - January 25-26  
 Labour Council Political Forum – Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM, Metro Hall  
 Region 5 Weekend Union School – March 4-5  
 Region 5 Retirees Group – Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 AM  
 Deadline for Convention resolutions and constitutional amendments – March 6<sup>th</sup>  
 OPSEU Convention – April 20-22  
 Region 5 Weekend Union School – June 3-4

**Region 5/OPSEU Contact Information**

**Terry Downey**, RVP, Soon to be OFL Vice President - [terry.downey@sympatico.ca](mailto:terry.downey@sympatico.ca)  
**Nancy Pridham**, EBM, Soon to be Regional Vice President - [nancypridham@look.ca](mailto:nancypridham@look.ca)  
**David Rapaport**, Executive Board Member (Remains the same) – [drapaport@opseu.org](mailto:drapaport@opseu.org)  
**Peggy Maybury**, Soon to be Executive Board Member - [pegmaybury@hotmail.com](mailto:pegmaybury@hotmail.com)  
**Yvonne Bobb**, Region 5 Member, Provincial Woman's Committee - [ybobbl@sympatico.ca](mailto:ybobbl@sympatico.ca)  
**Cecil Beckford**, Region 5 Member, Provincial Human Rights Committee  
 OPSEU representative on Labour Council Executive - [ceceilb@rom.on.ca](mailto:ceceilb@rom.on.ca)  
**Carl Mohan**, Region 5 Member, Provincial Youth Committee -  
[cmohan@opseu541.org](mailto:cmohan@opseu541.org)  
**Bob Taylor**, President, Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC) - 416-482-6680  
**Gloria David**, Contact, Region 5 Women's Caucus - 416-314-6484.  
**Tony Carneiro**, Chair, Region 5 Retirees Group - 416-787-7033  
**Toronto and York Region Labour Council** – 416-441-3663  
**OPSEU Direct** – 416-443-8888  
**OPSEU web site** – [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)



*The Rapaport Report* is the newsletter of David Rapaport, Region 5 Executive Board Member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, OPSEU. I am responsible for the contents of the newsletter. If you have complaints, comments, praise or criticism, please get in touch with me. I would like to hear from you. I can be reached at 416-651-1659 or at [drapaport@opseu.org](mailto:drapaport@opseu.org).