

The Rapaport Report

Volume 2, Number 5

January 2008

Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent.

Dr. Martin Luther King

A Tale of Two Struggles

January 16th was quite a day. Two issues, two struggles; racism and privatized health care.

Racism

In the early hours of the morning, about 50 members of Local 530 – the Toronto (Don) Jail walked off the job to protest an unsafe work environment. Black corrections officers have been receiving anonymous racist death threats for almost three years. The latest threats appeared on the last day of 2007. There are some twisted minds on the prowl at the Toronto Jail. They use offensive and violent language and a discourse that many of us thought was long gone.

It is sad and ironic that the guards had to rely on the Ministry of Labour, through the Occupational Health and Safety Act to attract the attention of the Ministry of Corrections. Some very brave members had to step forward publicly to draw attention to these threats. It is sad that the Ministry Health and Safety Committee is repeatedly stonewalled on simple health and safety concerns.

Racism is a disease; a social disease. Racism causes harm to its victims; physical harm and

psychological harm. The threats cannot be simply viewed as the work of a few twisted individuals. They are part of an historic and persistent systemic problem in the jails.

OPSEU and the employer have established the Systemic Anti-Racism and Organizational Change Committee (SAROCC) to address these systemic human rights issues. That process must work if there is any hope of solving these problems.

Charlene Tardiel and **Hayton Morrison** stepped forward, at risk, to speak to the media and for all the victims of the racist death threats on January 16th. Solidarity forever.

Four of the victims and about 40 supporters visited the Executive Board meeting on Thursday. There was an important and positive exchange with the union executive. The Corrections MERC, the President's Office, the Executive Board and the victims are working together to address this problem.

Privatized Health Care

In the evening of January 16th, I joined a group of Region 5 activists at a health care rally in

The Rapaport Report is the newsletter of **David Rapaport**, Region 5 Executive Board Member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, OPSEU. Contact information is on the back page.

Hamilton to protest the potential loss of about 80 jobs in home health care. The rally was huge; backed by the community, by home care recipients and their families, by politicians and by unions, particularly OPSEU. There were 1500 people crammed into a banquet hall.

Smokey addressed the rally.

The Victoria Order of Nurses (OPSEU Local 269) and St. Josephs Health Care have been providing home health care in Hamilton for decades.

That relationship was then threatened by a competitive bidding process. There were noises that the City of Hamilton was threatening to award the contract to a private health care provider. Employees from VON were going to lose their jobs, their seniority and their union. Successor rights do not apply in those instances.

I owe these folks an apology. Three years ago I addressed the Convention incorrectly. I stated that among all OPSEU bargaining units, only the OPS did not have successor rights. How wrong I was.

There is a happy ending. Less than a week later, the City of Hamilton saw the light and listened to the community/labour coalition that organized the rally. Visit <http://www.opseu.org/news/press2008/jan23a2008.htm>.

We have one guest writer in this issue. **Gloria David** is the Region 5 representative on the Provincial Women's Committee and the president of Local 532. She writes about the history of International Women's Day. Her article is found on page 4.



The Executive Board Meeting

The Executive Board adjourned the meeting early on Wednesday so that EBM's could attend the celebration in Hamilton for the home care workers at VON. On Thursday, we heard a 90 minute

presentation from the victims of the racist death threats at the Don Jail. See page 1.

The Budget

We passed a budget for 2008. It now goes to Convention for final ratification. It is estimated that OPSEU will receive almost \$80 million in revenue in 2008. I believe that it is a good budget. It is well rounded to continue

servicing the membership and to set the stage for a period of much collective bargaining and organizing. The details will come in your Convention packages. Pay close attention. It is your money. It is your union.

One noteworthy component of the budget debate was the restructuring of mileage allowance. For one member in a vehicle, OPSEU compensates 45 cents a kilometer, for two members 50 cents, for three members 55 cents and so on. That is a green approach to travel expenses. It encourages car pooling.

The Strike Fund

We had a full report on the strike fund portfolio being managed by Jones Heward of the Bank of Montreal. The strike fund is heavily invested in fixed rate bonds. Of the \$33.6 million in the portfolio about \$4.5 million is in T-Bills, \$23.7 million is in bonds and \$5.4 million is in equity. The Executive Board re-affirmed our commitment to this approach and to this asset allocation. The strike fund is also invested in real estate and a loan to the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees (NAPE).

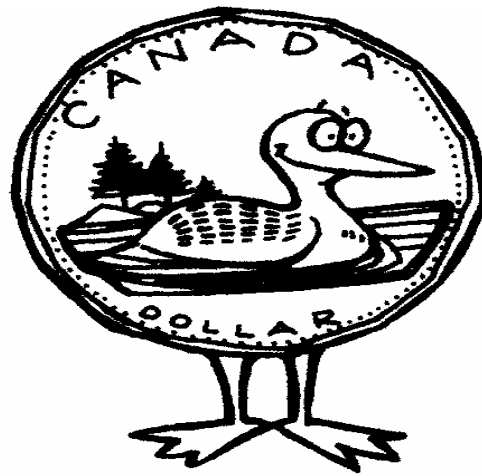
CAAT Pension Plan Appointments

We appointed **Damian Wiechula** of Local 556 and **Cathy Richardson** of Local 561 as plan sponsors for a three-year period. We re-appointed **Donald Wright** of Local 557 and **Alec Ip** of Local 124 as trustees also for a three year period.

TILMA

The Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement was negotiated between Alberta and British Columbia and is being considered by other provincial governments. This is a

continuation of agreements such as NAFTA. TILMA limits the ability of governments, at all local levels, to regulate and legislate social programs. Private corporations will have the ability to challenge and sue governments where it is deemed that they limit trade through legislation or implementation of a social or economic program. Visit <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/MonitorIssues/2007/02/MonitorIssue1592/>



CLC – NUPGE

We heard from **Larry Brown**, secretary treasurer of our national union, the National Union of Public and General Employees, NUPGE. OPSEU, along with other provincial government unions across Canada is affiliated to NUPGE.

NUPGE has a dispute with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) regarding a raid by the Teamsters on our Manitoba affiliate, the Manitoba Government Employees Union about two years ago. NUPGE charges that the CLC is too lax in opposing and curtailing raiding. As a result, NUPGE is withholding \$20,000 monthly of its (and our) dues to CLC to compensate for estimated lost revenue and costs by MGEU. There is uncertainty how this might effect our relationship with the CLC.

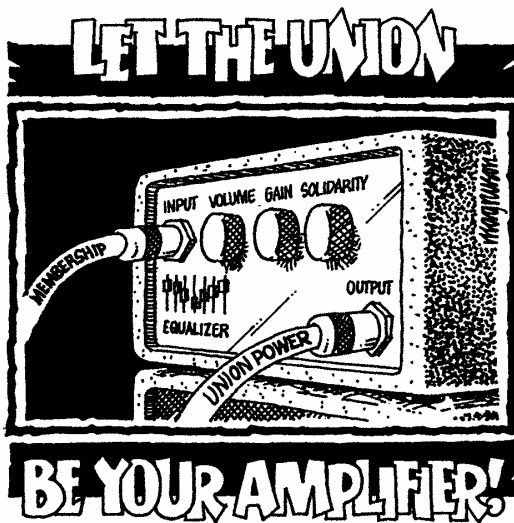
Shelley Martel Retirement Dinner

Shelley Martel, NDP MPP from Sudbury has retired. Shelley was a strong supporter of OPSEU. The Board purchased two tables at her retirement dinner at a cost of \$2,300.

ODSP Campaign

OPSEU activists at the Ministry of Community and Social Services who work at the Ontario Disability Support Program have launched a campaign to oppose and challenge increased workload. They plan a stewards' mobilization on February 26th and an ODSP Day of Action on March 6th. The Board approved \$55,000 for the campaign. To read the Lewchuk Report which describes the situation at ODSP offices visit

<http://www.opseu.org/ops/ministry/June%2007%20Lewchuk%20report.pdf>.



Family Day

After their re-election in October, the McGuinty Government announced a new holiday, Family Day. Apparently, not all workers are entitled to the day off due to restrictions under the Employment Standards

Act. The Board directed OPSEU to lobby the Ministry of Labour and the Government to correct that.

CAAT Part-Time Campaign

We heard from the organizers of this campaign. We are getting cards signed. We are conducting a media blitz. We are challenging some colleges that are preventing us from posting information about the organizing, particularly Algonquin College in Ottawa. Visit

<http://www.opseu.org/caat/parttime/parttimeindex.htm>.

International Women's Day

by Gloria David

Women's Day was first recognized internationally in 1910 at the International Conference of Socialist Women from 17 different countries. The date of March 8th was not officially designated until 1913 as a commemoration of a crucial strike by women textile workers in New York that took place in the 1880s.

In the decades since, International Women's Day has been celebrated and marked in countries all over the globe. In North America, International Women's Day demonstrations and rallies gained prominence during the 1960s with the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Public sentiments about women's role in society have always been influenced by changing economic realities, and attitudes toward women during and after World War I were no exception. Women workers were seen as productive, cheap and disposable.

The Women's Liberation Movement flourished in the 1960s and was part of a global wave of radicalization. Massive protests against the U.S. war in Vietnam, the rise of the Black Power, Lesbian and Gay Rights and Indian Rights movements were powerful forces that represented a rejection of the ideas and values that had created misery for millions of people around the world.

The Women's Liberation Movement rocked every corner of Canadian society and, in doing so, fundamentally altered the prospects for future generations. The anger and frustration of being held down and held back for so many decades fuelled mass organizing and protests on university campuses, in workplaces and on the streets. No institution was spared women's demands for equality.

In 1977, the United Nations finally proclaimed International Women's Day.

In 1978, Toronto's first International Women's Day kicked off with a 2000 strong women's march and seven (7) key demands, one of the central being an end to the deportation of Jamaican mothers. Another revolution was also in the works. Maternity leave was becoming an important focus of unions and women's organizations.

In November 1999, tens of thousands of people, including women, indigenous peoples, trade unionists and youth from all over North America and beyond, marched in Seattle to the doors of the World Trade Organization with a message "Ya basta! – Enough!" - enough of trade practices that impoverish women and children and those in the developing world; enough of social policies that favour corporations over people; enough of the corporate practices that destroy the environment. The WTO meeting was shut down and, in the process, a new re-galvanized movement swept the globe setting the stage for the next millennium.

In February 2003, the largest internationally co-ordinated demonstration for peace and justice took place on every continent in the world, involving tens of millions of people. As ever, women were at the heart of these mobilizations calling for an end to war, and for social and economic justice.

The International Women's Day marks a revitalization and, indeed, a new provincial, national and global women's movement. In Canada and around the world, inside unions and out, at universities and in workplaces, at home and in public gatherings, women and their organizations are re-committing to win the final, necessary victories in their century-long struggle for social and economic equality.

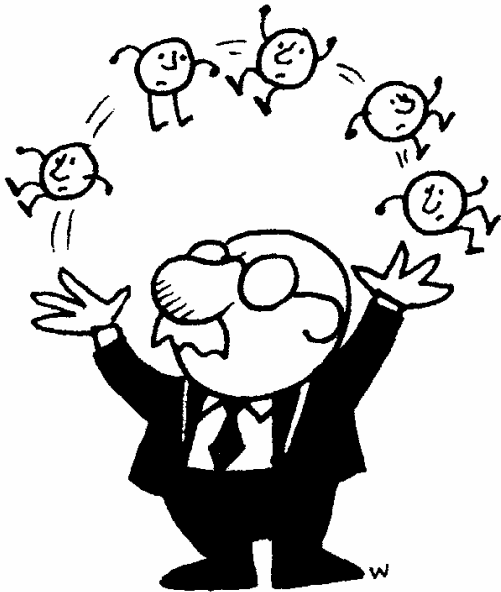


On International Women's Day, we celebrate the vitality, creativity and courage of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers and their collective accomplishments. We have won – we have lost. But we have always fought. In doing so, generations of working women have created a different – and better – future for daughters and sons, and for their children.

This and That

Sister Cindy Haynes

The chair of the Provincial Women's Committee, **Cindy Haynes**, was in a terrible fire in her house in late December. As of late January, she was still in the critical care unit of Victoria Hospital in London. Her family is accruing extraordinary costs in addition to their grief. If you or your Local would like to make a donation, Local 108 will gratefully accept donations and make disbursements. Please forward cheques to Sister **Marianne Fowler**, Steward Local 108, payable to **Marianne Fowler**. Please note in the memo section of the cheque, Sister **Cindy Haynes** Fund.



Information Knowledge Workers

There will be a workshop for information workers in OPSEU on Saturday, February 9th at 31 Wellesley. If interested, please get in touch with me.

Region 5 Weekend Education

Our next education weekend is scheduled for March 1st and 2nd. We received 140 applications for the course on Bullying which we are offering for the first time. Wow!!! What is going on at our work sites? It is going to take us about a year to meet demand.

OPS Local Presidents Workshop

On Saturday, March 1st, OPS Local presidents are at a workshop on organizing and mobilizing for our new contract. The Region 5 meeting will happen at 31 Wellesley.

Sister Louise Rose

With the new organization at OPSEU, Region 5 has a new staff supervisor. **Louise Rose**, a former Region 5 staff rep is now in the supervisor position. **Sister Rose** was my staff rep about twenty years ago. I look forward to working with her again.

Bargaining Unit Integrity in the OPS

As reported in previous issues of *The Rapaport Report*, too many positions are being assigned to the AMAPCEO bargaining unit which should be in OPSEU. We need your help. There will be training/information sessions in Region 5 over the next six weeks. For details visit

<http://www.opseu.org/ops/campaigns/index.htm>.

CAAT Part-Time Campaign

The part-time organizing campaign's "It's Time" bus will visit Humber North campus on Tuesday, January 29. We're inviting part-time

and sessional folks out to the bus from 11 - 2 for cider, snacks and a chat (and we hope to witness signatures on their OPSEU cards as well). The bus will be parked in Lot 10 - the VIP lot near the Registration entrance Link to Map -

<http://www.humber.ca/maps/northmap.htm>.

Silent Auction for Convention

During the OPSEU convention in April there will be a Silent Auction to fund raise for the Social Justice Fund projects. OPSEU is extending solidarity to some very worthwhile projects through our Social Justice Fund. We are also committed to combating HIV/AIDS through the Live and Let Live Fund. Can you contribute something very special for this Silent Auction? If you need any further information on shipping of any material, or on any other matter, please contact **Sharon Beresford** at OPSEU Head Office ext. 8788.

Labour Council Elections

The bi-annual elections at Labour Council occur on Thursday, March 6th. Nominations are on Thursday, February 7th. Elections are for the Executive Board, the Women's Committee, the Equity Committee, the Education Committee and the Municipal Committee. If interested and if you are a delegate to Labour Council, please get in touch with me.

Black History Month

February is Black History month. For more information visit <http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/Upcoming%20Events.htm>

Union Education

We are looking forward to an inspiring year for union education in Region 5. We are piloting a new model on February 9th, a half-day on Saturday and targeting a particular occupation grouping, IT workers. We are considering using the same half-day approach in other realms; P3's, human rights, etc. We are examining a one-day mini-education, targeting very specific union skills; DFR, health and safety legislation, representation, etc. Following up on the great success of last year's out-of-town education, we are hoping to repeat in the fall.



Happy New Year to Wealthy Canadians

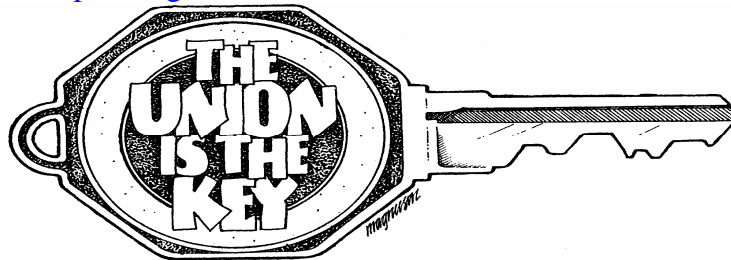
By the time most Canadians roll up their sleeves to begin a new year of work, Canada's best paid 100 CEOs will already be having a good year: They'll pocket the national average wage of \$38,998 by 10:33 am January 2nd. http://www.policyalternatives.ca/News/2008/01/PressRelease1791/index.cfm?act=news&do=list&call=BB736455&topic_ID=0&pa=BB736455&subject_ID=10

Calendar of Events

Humber College part-time organizing event – Tue, January 29 – see page 6
Greater Toronto Area Council – Wed, January 30, 5:30 PM, 31 Wellesley
Labour Council Membership Meeting–Thur, February 7, 7:30, OFL Building, 15 Gervais Dr.
Region 5 Women’s Caucus – Tue, February 5, 5:30 PM, 31 Wellesley
Information Knowledge Workers Workshop, Sat, February 9, 10:00 AM, 31 Wellesley East
Greater Toronto Area Council – Wed, February 20, 5:30 PM, 31 Wellesley
Region 5 Education Weekend – March 1-2
OPS Local Presidents Meeting – Saturday, March 1st, 31 Wellesley
Annual Women of Labour Brunch – March 2, OFL Building
Region 5 Women’s Caucus – Tue, March 4, 5:30 PM, 31 Wellesley
Executive Board Meeting – March 5-6
ODSP Day of Action –March 6 – see page 4
Labour Council Membership Meeting–Thur, March 6, 7:30, OFL Building
International Women’s Day – March 8th
Convention – April 17-19, Sheraton Centre

Region 5/OPSEU Contact Information

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Jennifer Ahamed, Region 5 Member, Provincial Human Rights Committee -
jenniferahamed@rogers.com
Krista Maracle, Region 5 Member, Provincial Young Workers Committee -
kmaracle@rogers.com
Bob Taylor, President, Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC) - 416-482-6680
Cecil Beckford, OPSEU representative on Labour Council Executive - ceceilb@rom.on.ca
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



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 drapaport@opseu.org or at 416-651-1659.