

# The Rapaport Report

Volume 1, Number 7

March 2006

In Solidarity with International Women's Day

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## CAAT-Academic is on Strike

After months of frustrating bargaining, the CAAT-Academic bargaining unit went on strike last Tuesday. The CAAT-A bargaining unit includes 9,100 professors, librarians and counsellors in 24 Colleges across Ontario. There are four colleges in Toronto; George Brown College, Centennial College, Humber College and Seneca College.

The goal of the OPSEU bargaining team is quality education in the College System. That means smaller class size, more full-time faculty and more student-faculty contact.

You can show your support for the faculty on Thursday at a Toronto rally, March 16 at Dundas Square at 11:00 AM and at Bay and Wellesley at 12:30 PM.

Visit [http://www.opseu.org/caat/caat\\_ac/2006bargaining/caatabargainingindex.htm](http://www.opseu.org/caat/caat_ac/2006bargaining/caatabargainingindex.htm)

*Capitalism is the astounding belief that the  
wickedest of men will do the wickedest of things  
for the greatest good of everyone.*

John Maynard Keynes (1883 -1946)

In early February, a class of aggrieved stockholders negotiated a tentative settlement with Nortel Corporation. It has a value of approximately \$2.4 billion. The OPSEU Pension Trust (OPT) is the lead plaintiff in the class action. The settlement includes a second class of stockholders covering a later period.

Some details of the case can now be made known. Until this tentative settlement we were bound by a strict court-ordered confidentiality agreement. Knowledge of the details of the case could easily have affected the price of Nortel stock.

Essentially, our argument was that Nortel had, during the class period, October 24, 2000 to February 15, 2001, exaggerated revenues to artificially inflate the value of their stock. Our claim alleged that investors, like the OPT, made buy-sell decisions on Nortel stocks based on this false information and therefore suffered losses when the stock price fell.

There were some peculiarities in the case; a Canadian public sector pension plan, with a union sponsor as lead plaintiff in a class action against a Canadian telecommunications

giant in an American court. We were asked about that many times. To me it seemed like a logical extension of NAFTA. If big corporations can move freely over international borders to avoid unions, taxes and environmental rules then union sponsored pension plans can sue big corporations in U.S. courts. Sadly, American securities legislation and enforcement are far more progressive than the Canadian versions.

Pension trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to members and retirees. What about large corporations who eagerly accept the assets of those pension funds as investments? They have a fiduciary responsibility to be honest, particularly when dealing with the retirement income of working people. We hear of too many stories where wealthy executives run away with piles of money when working class investors become impoverished. This is a union issue.

Our union activism goes beyond the bargaining table into many other venues. We have learned over the years that to protect the interests of working people and public services, we must confront our opponents in many venues; on picket lines, at the polls, on the streets, in the courtroom and in the boardroom. The drive for super-profits by too many corporations has the flip side of lowering wages and weakening social services. The fight against the LHINs is a fight against competitive bidding which compromises health services and lowers wages. The same can be said for the campaign to keep the Trillium Drug Program as a public service, the CAAT-A strike, the campaign to allow college part-timers to participate in collective bargaining, the OPT grandparenting campaign, the campaign to save the three regional centres, etc, etc, etc.

The struggle to defend members is more complex and far-reaching than collective bargaining. It includes lobbying for progressive legislation, for holding large corporations accountable, for fair taxation, for a public health care system. We need politicians and political parties speaking for us, working with us. We take political positions that are not always popular with some members. Yet, that's how we defend OPSEU members against unfair labour legislation, rollbacks in Employment Insurance, reduced pension rights, overly aggressive corporations, regressive taxation schemes, privatization of our health care system and discrimination against part-time workers.

The OPSEU legal victory against Merv Lavigne and the National Citizens Coalition was a recognition of this important right. We cannot properly represent the membership without a political program that is coherent and comprehensive.

The OPSEU appointed trustees at the OPT took a stroll into the corporate boardrooms. We did not hang our union principles at the door. We see greedy corporate executives, soliciting the assets of pension funds and other investors. We take action. We get justice. That's the union way.

The Executive Board met on Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. Here is another issue of *The Rapaport Report*.

## Executive Board Meeting – March 8 and 9

### The 2006 Budget

It took the board about one and half days of the meeting, but we finally completed a budget to present to Convention in April.

### Report on the Campaign Against the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)

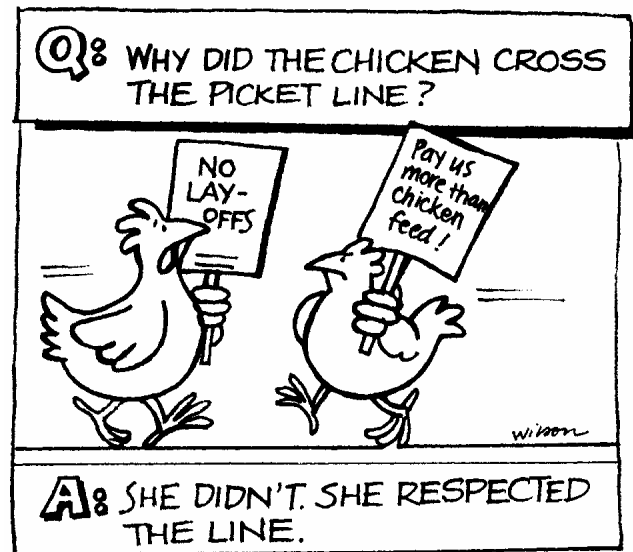
In early March, the provincial government passed Bill 36 creating LHINs. That's bad news for members in OPSEU, ONA, CUPE and SEIU. But the battle is not yet over.

The four unions are meeting with George Smitherman, Minister of Health on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We are hoping that we can have an impact on the actual implementation of Bill 36 through the regulations.

We will still be pushing the campaign at the local level, focusing on the November municipal elections.

### CAAT Part-Time Campaign

The CAAT-A strike has highlighted the importance of this campaign. The colleges are hiring way too many part-time workers who are not permitted, by legislation, to be in unions. Imagine that. They are paid less and have far fewer benefits, if any. We will be conducting this campaign by local mobilizing, postcards and lobbying. We are trying to amend the legislation to allow part-timers to be in unions.



### Ontario Human Rights Commission

The Ontario Government has announced plans to adopt a direct access program to the OHRC. This means eliminating the mediation and investigation functions at the Commission. This action creates more work for lawyers as well as limit access to complainants with the resources to hire a lawyer. OPSEU produced a report on this matter, with recommendations. Please visit <http://www.opseu.org/ops/ministry/attorneygen/OntarioHumanRightsCommissionReport.pdf>

We allocated \$8,000 for a campaign to oppose this move.

### Defending the OPS Bargaining Unit

The OPS bargaining unit continues to erode; contracting-out, divestment, privatization and too many positions going to the AMAPCEO bargaining unit. I brought a proposal to the Board to create an ad-hoc working group to deal with these problems, particularly the AMAPCEO matter. The working group includes a CERC member, the Inclusions

Officer, Region 5 EBM **Peggy Maybury** and myself. We will report back with a plan.

### **CLC Solidarity and Pride Conference**

We voted \$7,500 to the Rainbow Coalition to send delegates to this conference in Montreal in July.

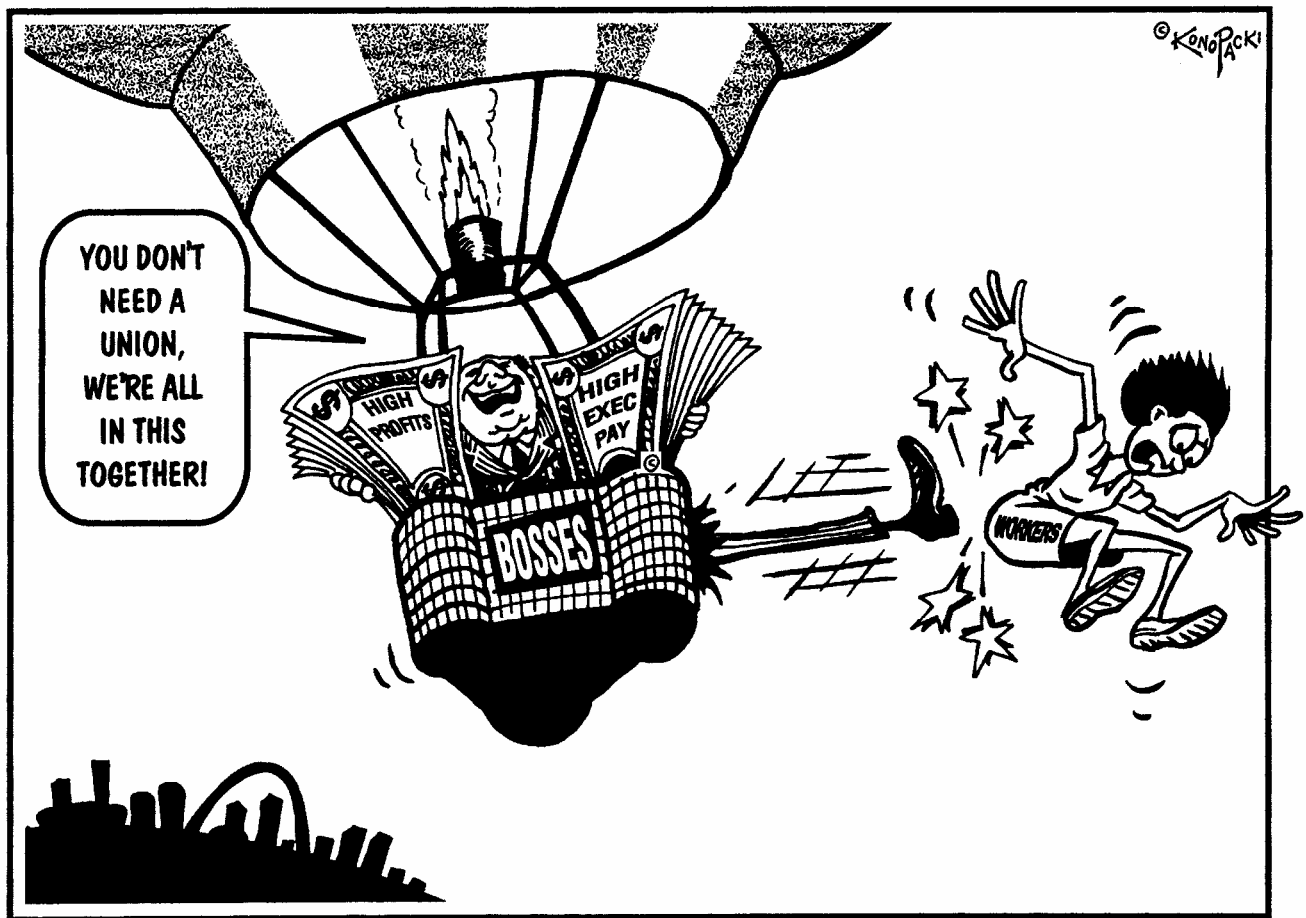
### **Political Action**

We voted \$12,200 for work on the three provincial by-elections scheduled for late March.

### **Convention Resolutions**

We passed the following resolutions to be presented and debated at Convention.

- Support OPSEU affiliation to the NDP.
- Defend municipal infrastructure from privatization.
- Protect the Ontario Human Rights Commission.
- Reinvest in social programs to address youth violence.
- Support high quality child care.
- Support programs to protect the environment, at work, in the community and in OPSEU.



## Human Rights and Unionism

By Ceceil Beckford, Region 5 Member of PHRC

**H**uman Rights nourish what is good within ourselves. It is the dignity and the respect that we transfer to those with whom we come in contact each and every moment. Human Rights is our conscious that allows us as human beings to treat others as we would like to be treated. It is what allows us to bring our whole self to our working environments and home again each day.

During the week of January 16<sup>th</sup> several of us attended a 'Train the Trainer' course. The subject of the course was 'Human Rights, Union Rights and Global Solidarity'. I learned much about those terminologies. This course was indeed an eye opening experience for me. I'd like to share that with you.

OPSEU members need to look beyond our own regions, communities, and beyond the immediate borders to see all the connections that bind us. What do we talk about when we talk about Human Rights? Do we just look at what is happening within our communities or do we question what is taking place in other communities as well. We need to look at how we confront ourselves to question and challenge what is taking place. How do we support the Human Rights in other communities or countries? Do we look at the labels of the clothes we purchase to see where they have been made? If we don't, why is that? The awareness and the connections need to be made. During the course we looked at labels of each others clothing to see how many were made in Canada or in a third world country by workers who may only make a dollar a day, or even less.

At the Provincial Women's Conference in November I heard Dr. Roz Roach speak about the "isms". In the 'Human Rights, Union Rights and Global Solidarity' program, I once again came upon those "isms". The "isms" include words such as "ableism", "racism", "sexism", and "classism." All this "isms" are what hold us back from moving forward, from working together. They create a divide within our groups.

I recently attended a forum with members from many unions. The forum opened my eyes to the similarities and differences that we all experience in the struggle to achieve equity. Differences allow us to learn and to grow. I learned from a member of the Rainbow Alliance how I can be an ally as well as have an ally. By definition, an ally is a member of the dominant group who acts against oppression out of a belief that eliminating oppression will benefit the targets of oppression as well as members of the dominant group (*Dancing with Embers: Challenging Racism*, Lopez and Thomas 2006.) An ally knows the struggles of someone and asks how assistance can make that struggle seem a bit lighter. We as union activists need to make the connections. We need to look around to take note of what the needs are of others and figure out how to be an ally. That's true solidarity.

## Other News

### Labour Council Elections

On Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Labour Council held its biennial elections. Here are the results.

**John Cartwright** of the Building Trades – President,

**Michael Seaward** of the Steelworkers – Vice President,

**Helen Kennedy** of CUPE - Secretary,  
**Sonia Reynolds** of SEIU – Treasurer.

**Cecil Beckford**, president of OPSEU Local 543 at the Royal Ontario Museum was re-elected to the Executive Board.

Labour Council also elects members to committees. OPSEU results are as follows. **Ed Larocque** of Local 556 – Education Committee; **Gloria David** of Local 532 – Women’s Committee; **Carl Mohan** of Local 540 – Municipal Affairs Committee; **Paul Myers** of Local 526 – International Affairs Committee. **Terry Downey**, now of the OFL, also was elected to the Women’s Committee.

Congratulations to all of you.



Ok class, sing it with feeling...she's got the low down, low wage blues.

### Young Workers Committee (YWC)

The Region 5 YWC is holding a series of seminars/discussions on three key topics.

OPSEU History – Monday, April 3

OPSEU Structure – Monday, May 1

Human Rights – Monday, June 5

All events are at the membership centre, 31 Wellesley East at 5:45. Contact **Carl Mohan** to RSVP.

### Labour Council Activism

Labour Council is the voice of labour in Toronto and York Region. I highly recommend affiliation. For more information visit the labour council web site at <http://www.labourcouncil.ca/>.

Labour Council is sponsoring a conference on organizing for the November municipal elections. Speakers include **Zanana Akande**, Mayor **David Miller** and **Bob White**, former president of the CAW and the CLC. Workshops start at 8:30 AM at the OFL Building.

### MPAC Settles

Members working for the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation have a tentative settlement. Bargaining team members are visiting locals. Ratification is scheduled for early April. Visit [www.opseu.org/bps/opac/main.htm](http://www.opseu.org/bps/opac/main.htm)

### Region 5 Women’s Caucus Picnic

It might still seem cold out there but the Region 5 Women’s Caucus is already organizing this year’s picnic. It is

scheduled for Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup> at Wilket Creek Park. For more information contact **Gloria David**.

### **More OPSEU members at Ryerson**

OPSEU organizers and Local 596 organized 72 full-time and part-time workers at Oakham House, the Ryerson student centre. Local 596 President **Louise Lichacz** is thrilled. "This is a great step forward for us. And we see it as a step in organizing more part-time workers at Ryerson." The Oakham House members will be in their own bargaining unit.

### **OPT Grandparenting Campaign**

OPSEU is conducting a very important pension campaign. Many members in the OPS have been and continue to be divested and privatized. Grandparenting allows divested employees to negotiate continued membership in the OPT.

**Gerry Phillips**, chair of Management Board is refusing to sign-off on the expansion of grandparenting rights. We are trying to change his mind.

### **Region 5 Women's Caucus**

The Region 5 Women's Caucus is holding their next meeting on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm at 31 Wellesley East. Contact **Yvonne Bobb** or **Gloria David** for details.

### **Child Care Petition**

The new Stephen Harper government is threatening to rip-up the child care agreements signed between the federal government and provincial governments. That would be a disaster for young people, parents and communities. There is a national petition opposing such a move which can be found at <http://buildchildcare.ca/>



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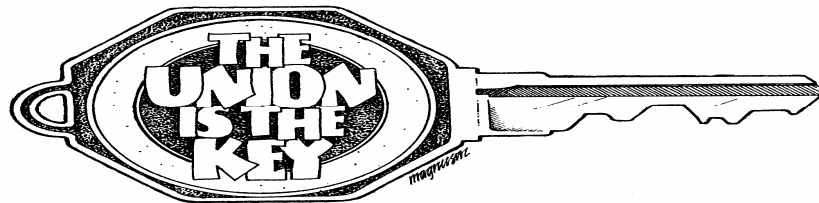
## Notices and Events

Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC) Meeting – Wed, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 5:30, 31 Wellesley  
 CAAT-A Rally – Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:00, Dundas Square & 12:30, Bay/Wellesley  
 International Day for the Elimination of Racism Event Sun, March 19, 12:30, 25 Cecil St  
 Region 5 Young Workers Committee - Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5:45 PM, 31 Wellesley East  
 Region 5 Women's Caucus – Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5:30, 31 Wellesley East  
 Labour Council Membership Meeting – Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM, OFL Building  
 OPSEU Executive Board Meeting – April 19<sup>th</sup>  
 OPSEU Convention – April 20-22  
 Day of Mourning for Workers Who Died on the Job – April 28<sup>th</sup>  
 Region 5 Young Workers Committee - Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 5:45 PM, 31 Wellesley East  
 Labour Council Political Conference, Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, OFL Building  
 Region 5 Weekend Union School – June 3-4  
 Region 5 Young Workers Committee - Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 5:45 PM, 31 Wellesley East

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## Region 5/OPSEU Contact Information

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**Peggy Maybury**, Executive Board Member - [pegmaybury@hotmail.com](mailto:pegmaybury@hotmail.com)  
**David Rapaport**, Executive Board Member – [drapaport@opseu.org](mailto:drapaport@opseu.org)  
**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).