

The Rapaport Report

Volume 1, Number 10

May, 2006

To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing.

Raymond Williams

On April 28th, across communities in Ontario, the labour movement stopped for an hour to commemorate workers who were either killed or injured on the job during the previous year. I have attended many of these commemorations over the years. It is fitting for unions to honour and remember. It is a reminder to all of us that we have failed; failed as a community to prevent these unnecessary deaths. It is also a reminder that we need to do more about employers that use different measures of economic success than we use.

They point to the bottom line. We point to the quality of life. They point to economic growth. We point to the working conditions of Ontario workers. They point to profits and return on investment. We point to the quality of the living conditions of all Ontarians. These differences are sometimes called 'the class struggle'.

It is no wonder that we fight for the preservation of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is our main tool to maintain and enhance our quality of life. It is no wonder that the organizing of the unorganized is a major priority for OPSEU and for all unions. Like most of you, I have worked in unionized work places and non-unionized workplaces. There is no doubt in my mind where I would rather work.

Fighting for collective bargaining sometimes means standing on a picket line. The CAAT-Academic folks were on strike in March and April. **John Stammers** of Local 558, Centennial College was doing his picket duty on March 20th. There was an altercation with a young driver. **Brother Stammers** sustained head injuries and died on March 25th. The police did not lay charges.

This is the first picket line death in Toronto in thirty years. The Labour Council decided to hold this year's Day of Mourning at the picket line site at Centennial College.

It was solemn event. It brought home the point of the severity and the significance of what we do as a union; as defenders of collective agreements and collective bargaining. There were many OPSEU members at the Day of Mourning and I would imagine that they were all thinking similar thoughts.

Three Strikes

There are three OPSEU strikes in the Greater Toronto Area.

- Ontario Teachers Pension Plan (Local 598) – On strike since April 22nd.
Visit <http://www.local598.ca/>
- Kennedy House, Ajax (Local 361) – On strike since March 28th. Donations can be sent to OPSEU Local 361 (Kennedy House) c/o OPSEU Regional Office, 1800 Dundas Street East, Unit 8, Whitby, Ontario L1N 2L4
- Community Living Mississauga (Local 251). On strike since April 10th.
Visit <http://www.opseu.org/bps/development/strike.htm>.

We have a guest writer in this issue of *The Rapaport Report*. **Crystal Lawrence** is the daughter of an OPSEU activist and a CUPE activist. She has organized a fundraiser for Saturday, May 28th at the Membership Center at 31 Wellesley. African Relief: One Love Fundraiser is for an HIV/AIDS project in Kenya. You can read the details on page 6.

Rally for strikers at the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan

Day: Tuesday, May 23rd

Time: 12 noon

Where: 5650 Yonge Street (Finch).

The Executive Board met on May 17/18. Here is another issue of *The Rapaport Report*.

Executive Board Meeting

– **May 17 and 18**

For me, this was a difficult board meeting. It was our first meeting since Convention. Also, we had to make some tough decisions on money matters, matters effecting arbitrations and strike pay. Two items jump out – CAAT arbitrations and a request to enhance strike pay.

We also had a presentation and a discussion about strike fund investments and allocations.

What I heard from Convention was that the Board should get the union's spending under control. And we are trying to do that. There is no stomach for a dues increase right now. Our ever-expanding debt collided with our strike fund. We have an expanding asset, the strike fund, growing alongside an expanding debt. Convention chose to bring down the debt with a compromise solution, in deference to the strike fund. See the last issue of *The Rapaport Report*.

Changing the Statement of Respect

At the start of every OPSEU meeting, we read the Statement of Respect. The Board amended the Statement. From now on, respect shall not be denied because of 'political affiliation'.

Zero Tolerance for Racism and Homophobia at the Toronto (Don) Jail – Local 530

The Board heard about the anonymous letters, intimidations and threats against workers of colour and Gay workers at the Toronto Jail. Local 530 posted a \$2500 reward for information leading to the identification of the perpetrators.

The Board contributed another \$2500.

CAAT Grievances

In a difficult decision, the Board postponed CAAT(A) and CAAT(S) arbitration hearings to be heard in the late fall. Following the Convention budget debate – see the previous issue of *The Rapaport Report*, this item could have been as much as \$360,000 over budget if allowed to proceed.

Kennedy House Strike

The strike at Kennedy House started March 28th. The strikers requested that strike pay be increased by 100% to \$400 a week. We denied the request. It seemed inappropriate when we have two other strikes in progress. Dealing with strike pay in an ad-hoc way is not the best way to deal with such an important issue. However, we did contribute \$10,000 to their hardship fund.



Investing the Strike Fund

The investment firm, Jones-Heward, now manages our approximately \$30 million in cash from the strike fund. They made a presentation to the Board meeting on how we might want to re-allocate those investments. I am on a special Board group with **Dave Lundy** and **Smokey Thomas** to investigate and make recommendations.

Leave of Absence Policy

This policy allows for one full-time book off for a local with more than 750 members. The Board made some changes to this policy; a work plan must be developed with the LEC, the aim of the book-off is to move the local towards self-sufficiency, and the policy is to be administered by the Local Services Division at Head Office.

Advisory Committee on French-Language Postsecondary Education

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities established this committee. OPSEU representatives are **Fernand Begin** from La Cite and **Pierre Perreault** from Boreal.



Local Time-Off Policy

This policy allows for a local to book-off members. For each member in good-standing, OPSEU pays \$10 per year and the local pays \$2.50 a year. The Board made some changes to the policy. The purpose of a book-off is to address members' issues and administer the local. The application must go through the staff representative and be signed by two local officers. Locals who access the fund must account for the funds. The fund may not be used to send alternates and observers to Convention.

OPSEU as Employer

OPSEU employees are in two bargaining units. The Administrative Staff Union (ASU) represents supervisors and some administrative staff. The Ontario Public Service Staff Union (OPSSU) represents the vast majority of employees. At this board meeting, we ratified a two-year contract with ASU, ending July 30, 2007. The current collective agreement with OPSSU expires on June 30th.

Financial Report

We discussed the financial report with figures until the end of April. It is too early to draw any conclusions or see any patterns. Dues revenue is down from the budget expectations. The June Executive Board Meeting will focus on developing a long term plan.

The AMAPCEO/BUI Committee

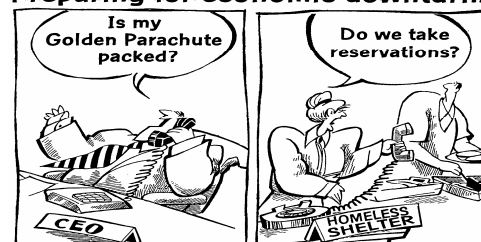
Peggy Maybury and I reported on this important matter. The committee has had two meetings. We have determined that AMAPCEO is growing at our expense. The Board agreed that something must be done. The Committee will be developing a campaign and a legal strategy.

The Pension Liaison Committee

Nancy Pridham reported on OMERS, the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System. OMERS is one of the largest pension plans in Canada.

OPSEU has over 5,000 members and retirees in OMERS, making us the fifth largest union in the plan. Last winter, the government made big changes in OMERS governance. OPSEU has a seat on the new OMERS Sponsors Corporation. **Marnie Niemi**, of the OPSEU Membership Benefits department will represent OPSEU.

Preparing for economic downturns



The immediate task of this committee is to write by-laws. Hopefully, OPSEU will have permanent representation.

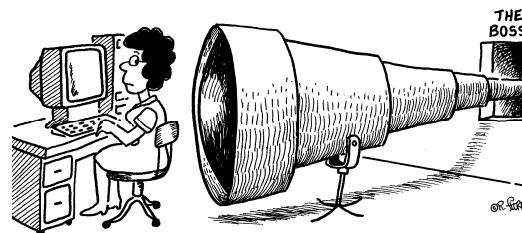
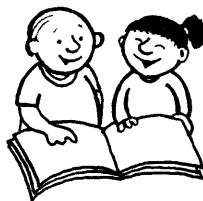
I reported on the BPS Pension Working Group. As reported in an earlier issue of *The Rapaport Report*, the mandate of this group is develop a made-in-OPSEU pension plan to suit the needs of thousands of BPS OPSEU members. The working group has met three times. We are doing research, determining the best pension approach for the widest participation level.

Board Contact With Equity Committees and Caucuses

The Board turned down a motion that would have permitted Board members to visit all committees and caucuses. I support closer EBM and committee/caucus communication. I did not see this as the way to achieve that. There are more effective ways. Another motion that assigns an EBM to each Equity Committee was postponed until the June meeting.

On A Personal Note

My daughter, **Rachel**, gave birth to a healthy baby boy on Saturday, May 6th. **Sebastian** joins six year old sister **Alexandra**. **Rachel, Olivier** (son-in-law) and family live in Winnipeg. I go on May 28 for a too short visit.



Around OPSEU and Region 5

OFL Anti-P3 Rally

OPSEU and the Ontario Federation of Labour, with coalition partners, are holding an anti-P3 rally at Queen's Park on June 3rd. Private-public partnerships are another form of privatization, the movement of social services into the private market. OPSEU is organizing buses from many locations in Toronto. Try to drop by.

Teachers Pension Plan Rally

There will be a rally to support the striking workers at the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan. The details: Tuesday, May 23rd, at 12 noon at the corner of Yonge and Finch. If at all possible, show up to support these brave workers. They are up against **Claude Lamoureux**, CEO of the OTPP. This is not an easy task. Our members there are young, educated and skilled and remain strong. We are proud of their struggle. It is about who will influence the new workplace –information based, highly technical, service sector, requiring strong skill sets.

Visit at <http://www.local598.ca>.

More News on Page 7

African Relief: “ONE LOVE FUNDRAISER”

By Crystal Lawrence, a Registered Nurse living in Toronto

You wouldn't be able to locate the village of Matangwe on a map of Africa but thanks to the efforts of a Kenyan Canadian couple, Silvia and Stephen Scott, from Waterloo Ontario it now has its own medical clinic. The clinic serves the medical needs of 14,000 people in the Bondo region of Western Kenya. It is sorely needed. Matangwe has been hit hard by the effects of poverty and HIV/AIDS. Experiencing the highest poverty rate in Kenya, 57% of its families live on less than \$1 US per day. The estimated HIV/AIDS rate is 29.4% with 30% of their children infected with HIV at birth. Life expectancy is 55 years for females and 48 for males.

Silvia, a Registered Nurse, experienced first hand the lack of adequate medical care when she visited her sick mother a decade ago. At the request of local community leaders and with Stephen, a school teacher, they raised the resources to found the clinic. The clinic was built and opened in 2001, staffed by Kenyans. It is now equipped with running water, solar/generator power supply, a lab, pharmacy and room for seven in-patients. Realizing that the health of a community extends beyond their acute care needs, CPI has also supported the community in accessing safe and potable drinking water, the provision of prophylactic medication for HIV positive expectant mothers, and improvement to small livestock productivities. Since 1998, the Scotts have returned nearly every summer along with volunteers to relieve staff and expand services.

I am a young nurse who wants to learn from my sisters and brothers in Africa. After hearing this story and being approached by a friend and colleague who is volunteering her time, I was inspired to volunteer my time this summer. Being raised as part of a union family I learned that health care is a global responsibility. Poverty and injustice is not necessary. We need to work together around the world to eradicate it.

My contributions include providing:

- HIV/AIDS education, counseling and health promotion activities;
- Care for HIV orphans and their elderly care givers; and
- Home based palliative care.

ONE LOVE FUNDRAISER



There are a number of nurses traveling from Ontario to Kenya. We need to raise \$5,000 to cover transportation, food and lodging for each volunteer. With the help of OPSEU we are having a fundraiser on May 27th. Please contribute if you can.

Around OPSEU and Region 5 - continued

Community Rising

The hotel workers union, UNITE-HERE, along with a host of allies from the labour movement, faith-based groups and the community will be having a rally for 'good jobs and a strong community'. Details: Wed, May 31st, 5:30 PM, Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen East. Contact UNITE HERE Local 75 at 416-510-0887 x 310 or by email at acalver@unitehere.ca.

African Relief - One Love Fundraiser

A night of celebration to support the community of Matangwe, Kenya. Details: Saturday, May 27th, 7 PM, 31 Wellesley East. See page 6. Suggested donations of \$15 will receive a charitable tax receipt

A Woman Stuck in Poverty is a Woman Stuck in Abuse – Rally/Picket

at the Minister's Office. Demands are for a 40% increase in social assistance rates, an end to the clawback on the National Child Tax credit and reinstatement of the special diet supplement. Details: Wed, June 7th, 12 noon, 80 Grosvenor, Queens Park.

Injured Workers Day – Rally for injured workers. This event is held every year. Show support for injured workers. Details: Thurs, June 1st, 11:00 AM, Ontario Legislature, Queens Park.

Region 5 Women's Caucus Picnic

The Region 5 Women's Caucus is organizing this year's picnic. It is scheduled for Saturday, July 15th at Wilket Creek Park. For more information contact **Gloria David**.

Young Workers Committee (YWC)

The Region 5 YWC continues its series of seminars/discussions on Monday, June 5th at 5:45 PM at 31 Wellesley. Contact **Carl Mohan**.

4th Annual Workers of Colour/Aboriginal Workers Conference

The Labour Council is organizing this conference for Saturday, June 17th, at Earl Haig Secondary School, North York. Region 5 picks up the \$30 fee. Click

<http://www.labourcouncil.ca/WC06.pdf>

North Membership Center - Celebration

There will be a celebration/party at the North Membership Center on Thursday, June 15th at 5:30 PM. The North Membership Center is at 620 Wilson West – at Dufferin. RSVP to a Region 5 EBM.

'David Miller for Mayor' Launch

It is now official. **David Miller** launched his campaign for re-election as Mayor of Toronto on Wednesday, May 17th. David is a great friend of labour. "Every day is Labour Day".

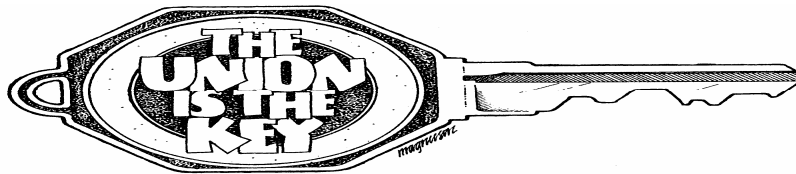


Calendar of Events

Rally to Support Teachers Pension Plan Strikers - Tue, May 23rd, 12 noon, Yonge & Finch
Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC) Meeting – Wed, May 24th, 5:30 PM, 31 Wellesley
African Relief - One Love Fundraiser – Sat, May 27th, 7 PM – 1 AM, 31 Wellesley
Support Rally for Hotel Workers–Wed, May 31, 5:30, Metropolitan Church, 56 Queen E.
Injured Workers Day – Thurs, June 1st, 11:00 AM, Ontario Legislature, Queens Park
Labour Council Membership Meeting, Thurs, June 1st, 7:30 PM, OFL Building
OFL Anti-P3 Rally at Queens Park – Saturday, June 3rd
Region 5 Weekend Union School – June 3-4
Region 5 Party at 31 Wellesley – June 3rd, 6:00 PM, 31 Wellesley East
Region 5 Young Workers Committee - Monday, June 5th, 5:45 PM, 31 Wellesley
Region 5 Women’s Caucus, Tuesday, June 6th, 6:00 PM, 31 Wellesley
Rally for Abused Women – Wed, June 7th, 12 noon, 80 Grosvenor St, Queens Park
North Membership Center Celebration, Thurs, June 15th, 5:30, 620 Wilson W (Dufferin)
Workers of Colour/Aboriginal Workers Conference – Saturday, June 17th, Earl Haig S.S.
Executive Board Meeting, June 19-21
Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC) Meeting – Wed, June 28th, 5:30, 31 Wellesley

Region 5/OPSEU Contact Information

Nancy Pridham, Regional Vice President - nancypridham@look.ca
Peggy Maybury, Executive Board Member - pegmaybury@hotmail.com
David Rapaport, Executive Board Member – drapaport@opseu.org
Yvonne Bobb, Region 5 Member, Provincial Woman’s Committee - ybobbl@sympatico.ca
Cecil Beckford, Region 5 Member, Provincial Human Rights Committee
OPSEU representative on Labour Council Executive - ceceilb@rom.on.ca
Carl Mohan, Region 5 Member, Provincial Youth Committee -
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



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.