



WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 493

Issue 1, Winter 2006

OPEIU Distributes \$125,000 to Members Impacted by Hurricanes

Soon after Hurricane Katrina blew ashore along the Gulf Coast, OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin appointed a committee to investigate the impact on OPEIU Local Union members employed in the area. The committee, comprised of International Vice Presidents John Conley, Philip Pope, Green Lewis and Dan Dyer immediately recommended letters be sent to the OPEIU Local Unions along the Gulf Coast to identify the members who suffered losses. Letters were also sent to all U.S. Locals seeking donations to assist the Gulf Coast OPEIU members.

Acting on a recommendation from the OPEIU Hurricane Katrina/Rita Relief Fund Committee, the International Executive Board approved matching dollar for dollar all contributions collected. The combined total of contributions and OPEIU matching funds amounted to more than \$125,000.

The Relief Fund Committee met to review and evaluate all information that had been collected regarding the devastation and losses incurred by OPEIU members.

The committee, working with the funds available, found some monetary assistance for every member who reported losses. *(Continued on page 3)*



OPEIU Hurricane Katrina/Rita Relief Fund Committee members (left to right) Region III Vice Presidents Green Lewis, John Conley (Chair) and Philip Pope. Not pictured is Region II Vice President Dan Dyer.

Contract Reopener at GHI Yields Big Gains

Three years ago, 1,200 members of Local 153 employed by Group Health Inc. went on strike for four weeks to protect health care benefits negotiated over a 50-year period.

The contract that settled that strike was

scheduled to expire on December 31, 2005. Both parties realized that another strike of any length would be devastating for both the employer and the members. In the spring of 2005, an idea was advanced for the union to approach the company and seek

early bargaining in an effort to reach an agreement without the stress of a December 31 deadline. The union approached the company with the idea, which was accepted several weeks later.

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Editorial



Attack On Workers' Rights Must Be Stopped

By Michael Goodwin, International President

On December 20, 2005, the Transport Workers Union Local 100 was forced out on strike by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) of New York City.

Someone in the MTA made the erroneous decision to test the workers, and the strike was the result. It could have been avoided if management was bargaining in good faith. Instead, the MTA was using the transit workers as the “cat’s paw” for the negotiation of other city contracts covering such workers as teachers, police, and firemen.

The MTA’s insidious plot was to demand that pension benefits payable at age 55 be pushed seven years down the line to age 62. Although this proposal was withdrawn in the MTA’s second “final offer,” they insisted that all new employees pay 6 percent of wages for the first ten years of employment to fund pension benefits. Pension and health benefits provided by the public entity have always been a core benefit and the primary reason why public employees worked for so little pay. The system of fully paid benefits goes as far back to the terms of Mayor LaGuardia. No one is interested in turning back the clock.

All New Yorkers know how difficult it is to live in the city at the current wage and benefit levels without adding a 6 percent payroll deduction from employees’ paychecks. We also know that once you “open the window,” it won’t be long before the door is wide open. And, as the number of new employees grows and starts to outnumber current employees, the chances of ever reversing employee payments for health and pension benefits will never happen.

That’s why we tip our hats to the leadership of Roger Toussaint, president of TWU Local 100. He is providing the leadership, not only for public employees, but for all employees both in the public and private sectors. He has drawn the line in the sand and said “no” to givebacks and concessions. He is fighting for all of us. The wolves may not be at our doors just yet, but as sure as the sun rises in the morning, if the MTA’s attack on workers’ rights is not stopped, the wolves will be at our door next.

The strength and courage that President Toussaint has demonstrated is remarkable. He faced jail, fines, and bankruptcy of his union. His members faced two days’ lost pay for each day of the

(Continued on page 4)

December 21, 2005

Roger Toussaint
President
Transport Workers Union, Local 100
80 West End Avenue
New York, NY 10023

Subject: NYC Transit Strike

Dear Roger:

On behalf of the 115,000 members of OPEIU and its New York based Local 153, we want to thank you for standing up so forcefully for workers’ rights.

You have clearly identified the threat, not only to transit workers, but to all workers in the public and private sectors. And with that threat identified, you have shown great leadership and determination that will enable all of us to prevail in our own situations.

The OPEIU and Local 153 hereby commit to a \$50,000 contribution to your cause. You may make a call for this money at any time you think best and payable to the fund of your choice. We wish we could contribute millions of dollars more, but as a small union, this contribution is within our means.

We know how stressful your situation is, and we send to you our heartfelt support and best wishes. We also know that good always triumphs over evil — and there is no question that you are dealing with evildoers.

We are confident that you will bring this matter to a successful conclusion and wish you and your members a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year!

In solidarity,

Michael Goodwin
International President

Richard Lanigan
Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer

OPEIU Distributes \$125,000 to Members Impacted by Hurricanes

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amounts distributed to members varied depending on the severity of reported losses and based on recommendations from Local Union officers from the Gulf Coast area. According to Conley, who served as committee chair, “a lot of members had losses, but those not to ask for assistance to

make sure the money went to those who needed it the most.”

“The International Union Officers are extremely proud of the response to our request for donations to help our members during the most devastating natural disaster to ever hit the United States,” President Goodwin said. “Many thanks

go out to Local Unions, members, officers and others who contributed time and money to help our members along the Gulf Coast.” Goodwin also thanked the committee for its efforts in this situation, as well as the officers of Local Unions 107, 108, 204 and 4873 for reporting member losses.



Photos taken by members of the OPEIU Hurricane Katrina/Rita Relief Fund Committee during a tour of the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina, primarily in the Gulfport/Biloxi, Mississippi area.



International President Michael Goodwin joins in ringing the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on September 2, 2005. Pictured are Dr. Annie B. Martin, president of the New York Chapter of the NAACP, Goodwin, Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin and other New York City labor leaders. OPEIU represents employees at the NYSE.

Tully Honored As “Man of the Year”

Local 32 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Steven M. Tully was honored in June by the Essex-West Hudson County Labor Council as the 2005 “Man of the Year.”

Tully also received proclamations from Acting New Jersey Governor Richard Codey and from New Jersey Congressman Robert Menedez, honoring him for his commitment and dedication on behalf of the working people in New Jersey.

“We are all proud of Steve and the work he does,” Local 32 Vice President Mary Short said. “It’s nice to see him get the recognition from his peers in the labor movement in New Jersey.”

Attack On Workers’ Rights Must Be Stopped

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strike and a \$25,000 per employee fine. The union was fined \$1 million a day for each day of the strike, and yet, despite all these burdens, he has stoically stood fast, and said I will go to jail, I will suffer or even die for this great cause.

We can all appreciate the responsibility of public employees to the public and the inconvenience that the strike has caused. It has been estimated that the city’s economy has lost \$400 million a day, while millions of New Yorkers were trapped for hours each day on other means of transportation. We know that the Taylor law prohibits strikes by public employees, but we must remember that if Rosa Parks obeyed the law, many of the transit workers would still be sitting on the back of the bus, instead of driving it in the front.

Transit workers are not afraid. They drive trains in the dark. They are not afraid of the darkness, and by not being afraid of the dark, they are not afraid of the MTA in the light!

During the negotiations, it was learned

that there was no economic necessity for the MTA to insist on its concessionary demands. The trains and buses are full and the economy is doing well. We applaud President Toussaint and the transit workers for their stand and look to them as truly the heart and soul of the New York City labor movement. They waged a fight for a just cause—and a just cause always wins!

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC
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President

NANCY WOHLFORTH
Secretary-Treasurer



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International Union Finances Improve

Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth has reported that the finances of the International Union have improved when compared to previous fiscal years.

She reported that as of February 28, 2005, General Fund net assets decreased by 28.7% with a balance of \$2,435,189 as compared to a year earlier balance of \$3,417,025. However, an interim report for the period ending August 31, 2005 reflects a General Fund net assets increase of 10.7% with a balance of \$2,694,901.

Likewise, as of February 28, 2005, the Strike Benefit and Defense Fund net assets decreased by 8.9% with a balance of \$5,188,978 as compared to a year earlier of \$5,696,790. Here again, the interim report for the period ending August 31, 2005 reflects a Strike Benefit and Defense Fund net assets increase of 2.7% with a bal-

ance of \$5,326,634.

Secretary-Treasurer Wohlforth stated “the numbers are going in the right direction for the first time in a long while.” She attributed balancing International Union revenue and disbursements to the restructuring plan implemented in the spring of 2005.

She stated that much of the International Union’s financial woes resulted from the loss of cash flow revenues when 35,000 members in the Canadian sector suddenly withdrew from OPEIU on June 20, 2004. While expenditures in the Canadian sector were an overall loss to the OPEIU, the International Union had to restructure to adjust its staffing needs to reflect this reality.

Secretary-Treasurer Wohlforth forecasts that the period ending February 28, 2006 should show further improvement.



International Union Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth reports on improved finances.

Update On Canada

As reported in the last issue of *White Collar*, the International Union received a call from Jerri New informing the union that the Canadian Executive members of COPE (the organization set up on June 20, 2004 in Florida to replace OPEIU) plan to attend the OPEIU scheduled meeting in Toronto, Ontario, on December 7, 2005.

The OPEIU called the meeting and invited the Canadian Executive of COPE and select Local Union officers to attend the meeting to “extend an olive branch and develop a process where the parties can have a dialogue on the issues facing us all.” New stated that the attendance of the Canadian Executive was subject to working out the details for the meeting.

On December 5, 2005, the International Union received a letter from New stating that: “It is unfortunate at this late hour the parties have been unable to mutually agree on the conditions needed for our respective Unions to meet ... and due to a labour crisis that has developed in Québec which will affect the participation of our Officers from Québec, we must advise that the COPE Executive will not attend the proposed December 7, 2005 meeting.” On December

6, 2005, President Goodwin responded to New, stating that issues can only be resolved with the sincere commitment and participation by all parties.

The December 7, 2005 meeting was held without the presence of the COPE Executive but attended by representatives of Local 386 in Thunder Bay, ON and Local 378 in Vancouver, BC. Attending for OPEIU was a committee consisting of President Goodwin, General Counsel Mel Schwarzwald, Assistant to the President Gary D. Kirkland, and Vice Presidents Kathleen Kinnick, Richard Lanigan, Walter Allen Jr., Therese Kandt, and OPEIU consultant Ron Tuckwood.

The meeting was chaired by Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Vice President and General Executive Board member, Randy Graham, who is a Canadian. A productive dialogue was held and the parties agreed to continue to examine the issues and exchange information.

As of this writing, no new meeting date has been set. The litigation in Vancouver, BC is scheduled to commence mid-year 2006. An examination (deposition) of New was held in December 2005 by legal counsel, and additional examinations of

Canadians involved in the matter have been scheduled.

The OPEIU continues to seek a non-court remedy to this matter to avoid expending enormous amounts of money, time and energy on legal representation. It is our belief that dues money can be better spent.

President Franklin Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms

Freedom of Speech, Fear, Want and Worship

Contract Reopener at GHI Yields Big Gains

(Continued from page 1)

The union formed a “kitchen cabinet” committee consisting of long-service stewards and headed up by Local 153 President and Chief Steward, Neysa Griffith. The committee consisted of Griffith, William Fiallo, Barbara LaGoff, Sandra Monroe, Devora Moss and Stephen Weisman.

The committee worked through the union to communicate its proposals for a renewed agreement, which contained a demand for a wage increase to be effective October 1, 2005, a full three months earlier than the expiration date of the contract. Also, the committee was pressing for a voluntary early retirement program that would grant severance pay to employees age 55 and over with ten or more years of service, which otherwise would not be available to retiring or terminating employees.

The company demanded that all employees pay increased co-pays for home, office, x-ray, lab, and prescription drugs, along with increased premium cost sharing.

As a result of the discussions, a proposal was finally agreed to for submission to the membership, which included a 4 percent wage increase retroactive to October 1, 2005, 4 percent

effective January 1, 2007, and a wage reopener to be effective January 1, 2008. Under the new agreement, wages will range from a minimum \$14.73 an hour for Labor Grade II to a maximum \$32.50 an hour for Labor Grade X. These amounts will be increased when the wage increases to be effective January 1, 2008 are established.

The union also won the demand for the voluntary early retirement program, which provides long service employees with as much as \$60,000 in voluntary severance pay.

Employees will now be able to carry over up to two Personal/Religious days into the next calendar year. A retraining program will also be established through an e-learning center that will be available to employees with five or more years of service who may be subject to layoff.

In consideration of the demands won by the union, the contract provides for minimal increases in co-pays and premium cost sharing applicable only to employees hired on or after May 14, 2002, and the introduction of a co-pay for “Lifestyle Drugs” for employees on the payroll as of May 13, 2002 or before.

The contract expires December 31, 2008.



GHI employees ratifying their new contract.



Members of the GHI negotiating committee.



Local 153 Business Manager Michael Goodwin arrives to applause from GHI employees.

OPEIU Lobbies for Passage of Employee Free Choice Act

The Employee Free Choice Act (S. 842, H.R. 1696), a vital piece of worker protection supported by OPEIU, was introduced as bipartisan legislation in the 109th Congress on April 19 by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Reps. George Miller (D-Calif.) and Peter King (R-N.Y.). Following is a summary of the measure's key provisions:

1. Certification on the Basis of Signed Authorizations

Provides for certification of a union as the bargaining representative, if the National Labor Relations Board finds that a majority of employees in an appropriate unit have signed authorizations designating the union as its bargaining representative. Requires the board to develop model authorization language and procedures for establishing the authenticity of signed authorizations.

2. First-Contract Mediation and Arbitration

Provides that if an employer and a union are engaged in bargaining for their first contract and are unable to reach agreement within 90 days, either party may refer the dispute to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) for mediation. If the FMCS has been unable to bring the parties to agreement after 30 days of mediation, the dispute will be referred to arbitration and the results of the arbitration shall be binding on the parties for two years. Time limits may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties.

3. Stronger Penalties for Violations While Employees are Attempting to Organize or Obtain a First Contract

Makes the following new provisions applicable to violations of the National Labor Relations Act committed by employers against employees during any period while employees are attempting to organize a union or negotiate a first contract with the employer:

a. Mandatory Applications for Injunctions: Provides that just as the NLRB is required to seek a federal court injunction against a union whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that the union has violated the secondary boycott prohibitions in the act, the NLRB must seek a federal court injunction against an employer whenever there is reasonable cause to believe the employer has discharged or discriminated against employees, threatened to discharge or discriminate against employees or engaged in conduct that significantly interferes with employee rights during an organizing or first contract drive. Authorizes the courts to grant temporary restraining orders or other appropriate injunctive relief.

b. Treble Back Pay: Increases the amount an employer is required to pay when an employee is discharged or discriminated against during an organizing campaign or first contract drive to three times back pay.

c. Civil Penalties: Provides for civil fines of up to \$20,000 per violation against employers found to have willfully or repeatedly violated employees' rights during an organizing campaign or first contract drive.

Cost of Living Increases

The International Union has prepared the following chart that highlights the cost of living figures for urban wage earners and cler-

ical workers, as published monthly by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov) based on 1982-84=100.

As the chart indicates, the cost of living for urban wage earners and clerical workers has increased 3.3 percent over the past twelve months.

Consumer Price Index (COLA) Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers U.S. City Average – All Items

Description	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2004	180.9	181.9	182.9	183.5	184.7	185.3	184.9	185.0	185.4	186.5	186.8	186.0
2005	186.3	187.3	188.6	190.2	190.0	190.1	191.0	192.1	195.0	195.2	193.4	---
Annual Index Change	5.4	5.4	5.7	6.7	5.3	4.8	6.1	7.1	9.6	8.7	6.6	---
Annual % Change	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.7%	2.9%	2.6%	3.3%	3.8%	5.2%	4.7%	3.5%	---

The Consumer Price Index (COLA) is issued by the U.S. Department of Labor on the second or third Wednesday every month.

Local 251 Helps Homeless Children

The members of Local 251 of Albuquerque, New Mexico, initiated a project to help provide a 15-seat van for *Cuidando Los Niños* (Caring for the Children), a non-profit program. The Local supplied “seed” money of \$1,000 for a small school bus by setting up an account at Sandia Labs Federal Credit Union under the Local’s name, OPEIU Local 251-Charity Donations. The program’s van has more than 300,000 miles on it and goes each day to three Albuquerque area locations to pick up 45 homeless children and return them each evening after a day of refuge, hope and new beginnings.

This project was beyond the provision of existing charities now in place in the Albuquerque area. It was Local 251’s special project for a very worthy cause with no administrative costs involved. The fund was supplemented by two other unions at the Sandia National Labs (SNL). To date, the fund received the \$1,000 from OPEIU 251 and the Security Police Organization (SPO) 7002 donated another \$1,000. Metal Trades Council (MTC) gathered \$800 from their individual members to add to the \$2,800 total. Along with the unions’ donations of \$2,800, the upper management of Sandia National Labs donated an addition-

al amount through the United Way, and Lockheed Martin’s corporate contribution of an additional \$2,000 meant a grand total of \$8,124.77 that *Cuidando Los Niños* used as an initial down payment.

A cashier’s check for the unions’ donation plus interest was presented by Local 251 President Sue Rivas and Secretary-Treasurer Peggy Collins to *Cuidando Los Niños* on June 14, 2005 at its offices on Walter Street in Albuquerque.

Cuidando Los Niños has acquired a “new,” used small 15-seat school bus from the efforts of three caring unions and donations from SNL upper management.

Two OPEIU Generations Tell Their Story

Two generations, Eleanor Nadobny and her granddaughter, Susan Rosebrock, share their experiences as members of OPEIU.

My name is Eleanor Nadobny. I am a retired member of Local 393 OPEIU. My husband passed away in 1960 of a heart attack. At the time, I had three children — Barbara 17, Carolyn 13 and Arthur 9. I had to get work, so I went back to coloring photographs for a studio in Bay City. I also went to night school to take a refresher course in typing.

On March 28, 1967, I was fortunate enough to be hired at Local 362 UAW. Local 362 UAW office staff was covered by Local 1719 CIO at the time. At the Erie Conference in September of 1967, it was decided that the secretaries who worked at GM plants were within the jurisdiction for organizing by Local 393. As a result of this action, I was accepted as a new member on September 26, 1967. In November of 1967, I was elected as an Executive Board Member at Large. At the time I was hired the initiation fee was \$3.00 and the dues were \$1.00 per month.

I retired on January 1, 2000. Through the years I worked under the leadership of nine presidents. Local 362 UAW was a unique office for me to work for. The members and retirees were more like friends. The friendships are still there today. I will always say, whatever I have I owe to my

union, Local 393 OPEIU, and to Local 362 UAW. They were great.

And in addition, my granddaughter, Susan Rosebrock, is the bookkeeper at Local 362 UAW. I know she is doing well and I wish her the best. How much better can it get?

* * * * *

My name is Susan Rosebrock. I am a member of OPEIU Local 393. I work at Local 362 UAW, which is the UAW Local for GM Powertrain in Bay City, Michigan.

From the time I was a teenager, I told my grandmother that when she retired I wanted to have her job. No matter when we would stop to visit her, her office was always a pleasant place to be. In February 2002, I was informed that Local 362 was hiring. I put in my resume and had an interview. My husband and I own Laracey House Movers and I perform all the bookkeeping duties for the business, which I believe helped me obtain the job at Local 362.

I was hired and started on March 18, 2002, 35 years after my grandmother was hired. Charlene Zimmerman was the bookkeeper when I was hired and she had worked with my grandmother. Charlene felt comfortable enough handing the reins to me and retired on January 1, 2003. When Charlene retired, the office became a one person office — me.

I truly enjoy my job at Local 362 and



Susan Rosebrock, member of Local 393, and her grandmother, Eleanor Nadobny, a retired member of Local 393.

being part of OPEIU Local 393. Never before have I had the benefits and opportunities that I have now as a member of OPEIU. My grandmother is right when she says whatever she has is because of her union.

My mother is a member of United Steelworkers of America #15157 and was Vice President and President before she retired. My father is a retired member of UAW Local 362 and several of my uncles and cousins are active and retired members of UAW. Belonging to a union has been a big part of my family and we all have better lives because we are union members. I am very proud to say that I am a second generation member of OPEIU Local 393.

PHPA Dedicates New Headquarters



Local 102 President Steve Rush welcomes pilots to a dedication ceremony of PHPA headquarters in Daleville, Alabama on December 12, 2005.



Local 107 Vice President Chris Bingham, Local 107 President Ken Bruner, and Local 102 Treasurer Richard White (far right) enjoy a moment with OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler (center) and OPEIU President Michael Goodwin (second from right).



President Goodwin, PHPA President Butch Grafton and Kevin Kistler.



PHPA Test Center Supervisor Ron Arsenault in the new training facility at PHPA headquarters. Arsenault trains approximately 120 pilots per month for the FAA licensing test.



The new PHPA headquarters and site of the offices of Local 102, Daleville, Ala.

Lobbyist Corner

A Letter to the 109th Congress

Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis

American workers have seen their government retreat from the basic foundation of what this nation has worked so hard to become: A nation of laws to assist working families obtain a decent standard of living. America's greatness was that everyone who worked hard had a chance to own a home, raise a family, send their children to college, and retire with dignity. Today that greatness that we once knew no longer exists. The 109th Congress has failed working families.

Health care costs are rising; pensions are being reduced or wiped out. Trade treaties are allowing good-paying jobs to be shipped abroad. Medicare costs for seniors are rising. Medicaid for the poor and the disabled is being restructured to ensure fewer people receive care all in the name of budget reductions. Our nation must protect its human resources. No amount of tax cuts can be a substitute for sound economic policy that ensures continued growth in an expanding global economy. The goal should be to foster a higher standard of living for all American workers, and simply transferring money from one group to another does not achieve this end.

OPEIU's Agenda for the Second Session of the 109th Congress is to:

- Continue to protect Social Security from private accounts
- Enact an employee "Free Choice Act" that allows freedom of choice to form unions
- Support legislation that will enhance the quality of education for our children
- Support legislation to protect private pensions
- Restore funds to the Medicare and Medicaid programs
- Provide an increase in the minimum wage (currently \$5.15 an hour)
- Provide legislation for a new prescription drug program without "donut holes" that will control cost without confusion
- Continue to provide funds for Hurricane Katrina victims
- Continue to fight for specific legislation important to individual Local Unions and Guilds
- Support fair and balanced immigration legislation

Take Action — Your Involvement is More Important Than Ever!

Many people ask—how can I make a difference? Can one voice alone make the president stop his assault on working families, or make Congress protect our rights? It's true that one voice alone is easy to dismiss. But the sound of our voices strongly united cannot be silenced. We must take action together to protect our rights. Your involvement is more important than ever! Here's how you can take action today:

Contact your local representatives. Every letter counts. Every phone call can make a difference. If you prefer to make written contact, OPEIU advises you to either mail or e-mail all correspondence.

If you don't know who your House representative is, the Clerk of the House maintains addresses and phone numbers of all Members and Committees: Clerk of the House, US Capitol, Room H154, Washington, DC 20515; phone (202) 225-7000; hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please direct your questions about communication with your Senators to the specific office(s) in question, using the following format: Office of Senator (Name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

You may also phone the U.S. Capitol's switchboard at (202) 224-3121. An operator will connect you directly with the House or Senate office you request.

If you are not sure who your representative is, the following websites contain links to congressional directories: <http://www.house.gov/writerep> and <http://www.senate.gov>. You can also access this information at your local library, or call the International Union at 212-675-3210 for a booklet listing of congressional representatives.

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



WASHINGTON WINDOW

The Bums' Rush

The first session of the Republican-run 109th Congress cleared out of town just before the holidays, in a bum's rush to get back to their districts and ingratiate themselves with constituents. But given the legislative record of the 435 representatives and 100 senators, maybe we should term it "the bums' rush," instead.

That's because Congress did very little this year. And when they did do something, they usually got it wrong. Among the high, or low, lights:

* Rejection, twice, of an increase in the minimum wage, which has been stuck at \$5.15 an hour for almost a decade. Virtually unanimous GOP opposition in the Senate killed a proposed, and labor-backed, increase to \$7.25 an hour, in three installments.

Of course, to give themselves a "fig leaf," some Senate Republicans rallied behind their own minimum wage scheme by anti-worker Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.).

The Radical Right Republican, trailing in polls for his 2006 race, would have given the lowest-paid workers a \$1.10 hourly raise in two installments, while

stripping millions of them of overtime protection and depriving millions more, ostensibly working for so-called "small businesses," of any minimum wage coverage. Santorum lost, too.

* CAFTA. GOP leaders strong-armed the job-losing Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) through the GOP-run House by 217-215. There were 15 defecting Democrats. The AFL-CIO is publicizing their names as part of its just-begun political education campaign and may seek foes to run against them in primaries.

* Invasion of privacy. Lawmakers, catering to Radical Right lobbies, inserted themselves in a family's emotional struggle over the right to die with their idiotic legislation in the Terry Schiavo case. The question of 2006: How vigorously Congress will probe the widespread, illegal, arbitrary snooping, bugging and spying program of GOP President George W. Bush – and his "I am the law" dictatorial justification of it.

* Tax cuts for the rich, budget cuts for everybody else. Congress is on the verge of approving a \$40 billion-over-5-years budget-cutting "reconciliation"

bill that hurts, among others, people who need Medicaid, food stamps and student loans. It also funnels money from tariffs from dumped foreign goods, such as steel, away from companies and workers hurt by the dumping and to the Treasury. Meanwhile, a package of \$70 billion further tax cuts for the rich was held over until 2006.

* Bush threw millions to politically potent contractors after Katrina clobbered New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. He also scrapped prevailing wages, mandated by Davis-Bacon, so those fat cats could pay imported workers rock-bottom wages on reconstruction projects. Labor and Congress forced him, two months later, to restore Davis-Bacon. One of every eight workers returning to Katrina-hit hometowns is jobless. Among those who haven't returned yet, more than one of every four is unemployed.

* The GOP-run House shoved through a punitive anti-immigrant bill, aimed squarely at Hispanics, though not by name. Its sponsor, Rep. Thomas Tancredo (R-Colo.) also wants to strip immigrants' kids, born here, of their citizenship.

“Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

—Albert Einstein (1879-1955), attributed

Work and Health

Smoking: Those Risks Just Keep Increasing

Submitted by **Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D.**

Associate Professor of Surgery, The Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NYC

As we all know, smoking is a dangerous habit with more and more life-threatening side effects being described all the time. It is already known to be the major factor in the development of lung cancer, emphysema, chronic obstructive lung disease, heart disease, vascular disease and a plethora of other lethal and debilitating conditions. Smoking is thought to be at least partially responsible for approximately 40 percent of the deaths in the United States every year.

It has now been demonstrated that smoking also increases the risk of developing cancer of the colon and rectum. This is especially evident in women who smoke. It has

also been shown that men and women smokers are diagnosed with colon and rectal cancer at a younger age.


These are very sad facts. At a time when aggressive screening, especially with colonoscopy and removal of polyps, has apparently stopped the increase of colon and rectal cancers, the population of smokers continues to show a rise in the incidence of the disease. It is a situation that once again is completely preventable by not starting to smoke or ceasing smoking. However, we continue to see young people start smoking, and their adult counterparts continue to smoke.

The lack of space in this column to discuss the possible ways to stop smoking pres-

ents a difficult problem. However, I can leave you with the three rules of successful smoking cessation: (1) most long-term smokers need pharmacologic help (a pill or patch); (2) a support group is extremely helpful, just as in drug or alcohol cessation; and, (3) the person must really want to stop smoking. Just saying you want to stop is not sufficient; one must be willing to suffer the pain, frustration and discomfort of stopping if the process is to be effective. Take it from a long time ex-smoker — it is well worth the effort.

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

Union Privilege Program Benefits Members



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Feeling taxed? As a union member, you don't have to worry about the high cost of preparing taxes online. The Union Plus Online Tax Service, with its full suite of online services like H&M Block® and Quick® — and it's just as easy to use. Simply answer some questions, fill in your numbers, and the program does the rest.


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WEB-03/05

January is Cervical Cancer Screening Month



Quick Facts About Cervical Cancer & HPV

- Cervical cancer is highly preventable through regular screening.
- Cervical cancer is almost always caused by a common virus – human papillomavirus (HPV).
- Most women will have HPV at some point in their lives, but few will develop cervical cancer.
- Only HPV infection that persists for several years can put a woman at risk for cervical cancer.
- Screening for cervical cancer can be done by your doctor using a Pap test if you're younger than 30 or a Pap and HPV test if you're 30 or older.
- A Pap test looks for cell changes in the cervix that might lead to cancer.
- The HPV test looks for the virus that causes cervical cancer.
- When used together in women 30 and older, the Pap and HPV test can better identify women needing early intervention to prevent cervical cancer.
- Women should ask their healthcare providers for the test that best meets their screening needs.

**Call your healthcare
provider today for
an appointment.**

<http://www.cluw.org/cervcancer.html>



Coalition of Labor Union Women
1925 K Street, NW, Suite 402
Washington, DC 20006
Tel.: 202-223-8360 Fax: 202-776-0537
E-mail: info@cluw.org Website: www.cluw.org



Congratulations to OPEIU 2005 Scholarship Winners



The OPEIU Scholarship Committee reviews applications and chooses 2005 scholarship winners. Pictured are Professor Edgar Lee, Professor Grace Pallandino, Professor John R. MacKenzie and Tina Roberson.

Howard Coughlin Scholarship Winners



Carey D. Shockey
Local 6
Region II



Sonya R. Abrams
Local 32
Region II



Elizabeth D. Pickard
Local 102
Region III (Part-Time)



Chi L.N. Mai
Local 277
Region IV



Tegan A.L. Neustatter
Local 49
Region II



Celia R. Barry
Local 153
Region II



Brandon M. Carballo
Local 29
Region V



Brittni C. Ramp
Local 11
Region VI



Michael E. Brunt
Local 153
Region II



Valerie M. Pollard
Local 102
Region III



Kathryn R. Childs
Local 1
Region VII



Ellen E. Foot
Local 2002
Region VII

(Not pictured is Whitney M. Ricco, Local 1794, Region VII)

John Kelly Labor Scholarship Winners

Genea D. Morris
Local 32
Region II



Amanda Magalhaes
Local Union 153
Region II

(Not pictured are Felisa Goldsmith, Local 42, Region VII and Kelly M. Rankin-Gomez, Local 512, Region VII)

Attention:

Every Local Union is urged to bring the availability of OPEIU Scholarships to the attention of every member. Applications are published periodically in *White Collar* and are available by calling Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth at 202-393-4464.

Local 42 Contributes to Eagle Scout Project

On September 9, 2005, 16-year-old Zachary Bahr, Life Scout Crew 340, was able to complete his Eagle Scout Project with the help of OPEIU Local 42 and their membership.

Zachary is the son of Duane Spencer, who works for UAW Local 5960 in Lake Orion, Michigan. Duane has been

a member of Local 42 for 18 years.

A brand new play set for the young people to play on was built at Crossroads Church of the Nazarene in Goodrich, Mich. Local 42 members made donations, which were appreciated by the church and Zachary. To see the kids happy and their smiling faces made the project worthwhile for Local 42.



Zachary Bahr and the play set made possible in part by Local 42.

Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beaugard 2005 Summer Camp

Tyler Bennett	New York, NY	Local 153
Kimberly Blake	Farmington Hills, MI	Local 42
Ashley DeAngelis	Hubertus, WI	Local 35
Gabriel Frias	Murrieta, CA	Local 30
Cole Oleson	Milwaukee, WI	Local 35
Robert Scanlon Jr.	Willow Grove, PA	Local 45
Kenneth Smith	Detroit, MI	Local 494
Samantha Trombley	Riverview, MI	Local 494
Kevin Wild	Philadelphia, PA	Local 45
Stephen Williams	Milwaukee, WI	Local 35
Antwon Winder	Temple Hills, PA	Local 153



Campers at the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beaugard 2005 Summer Camp.

2006 Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beaugard Summer Camp

To Be Held

**JULY 29 TO
AUGUST 5, 2006**

2006 OPEIU ROMEO CORBEIL/GILLES BEAUREGARD MEMORIAL FUND

TO ALL OPEIU LOCAL UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES:

This Memorial Fund offers an opportunity for children of OPEIU members to attend a summer camp and learn about unions and issues such as sex discrimination and racism while having fun.

The application **deadline** for the Scholarship Program is **March 31, 2006** and is offered to children between the ages of **thirteen (13)** and **sixteen (16)**.

We are printing a copy of the **OPEIU**

Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beaugard Memorial Fund informational application. You will notice that this can be posted on union bulletin boards. We encourage you to do so whenever possible. Information and applications can also be obtained from our web site at **www.opeiu.org**, click on benefits.

The **Summer Camp** is held during **August** of each year at University Forest, 153 University Forest Drive, Wappapello, MO 63966, telephone (573) 222-8373, fax (573) 222-8829.

Office and Professional Employees International Union Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Scholarship Fund "Summer Camp"

Twelve (12) scholarships will be awarded on the basis of at least one (1) per region and not to exceed one (1) per family for a lifetime. Applications are open to children (between ages 13 and 16 **ONLY**) of OPEIU members in good standing or associate members, all of whom must meet the eligibility requirements and comply with the Rules and Regulations as established by the OPEIU Executive Board. Each scholarship has a total maximum value of \$2,000.00.

ELIGIBILITY:

An applicant must be the son, daughter, stepchild or legally adopted child (between ages 13 and 16 **ONLY**) of an OPEIU member in good standing or an associate member.

PROCEDURES:

Each applicant must file an official OPEIU scholarship fund application. Application forms must be endorsed by the Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer attesting that a parent of an applicant is a member or an associate member in good standing on the date of award. Such endorsement

must be obtained before the application is submitted.

FORMS:

Application forms may be obtained at your Local Union office or at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union.

APPLICATIONS:

All applications must be received at the Secretary-Treasurer's office of the International Union, 1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D. C. 20036, no later than March 31 of each year.

TIME AND PLACE:

The **Summer Camp** will be held in August of each year at University Forest, 153 University Forest Drive, Wappapello, MO 63966, (573) 222-8373, fax (573) 222-8829.

SELECTION OF SCHOLARSHIPS:

Announcement of the winners will be made during the month of June of each year.

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION ROMEO CORBEIL/GILLES BEAUREGARD MEMORIAL FUND "SUMMER CAMP" APPLICATION FORM APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 31, 2006

Name of Applicant _____
Last First M.I.

Home Address _____
Street

City State Zip Code Telephone

Date of Birth _____ Sex M _____ F _____ Soc.Sec. # _____
(MUST BE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 16 ONLY)

Member/Associate Member Name _____
Last First M.I.

Home Address _____
Street City State Zip Code

Member/Associate Member Employed By _____ OPEIU Local Union _____

Relationship to Member/Associate Member: Son _____ Daughter _____ Other _____

If my child is selected for this scholarship, I fully agree to adhere to the rules that have been established by the Scholarship Committee.

Signature of Parent of Applicant _____ Date _____

Signature of Local Union President or Secretary-Treasurer: _____ Date _____ Local Union Number _____

(Print name of signing officer)

The **Summer Camp** is in **August** of each year, at University Forest, 153 University Forest Drive, Wappapello, MO 63966, (573) 222-8373, fax (573) 222-8829.

Send applications and inquiries to: Office and Professional Employees International Union
Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Scholarship Fund "**Summer Camp**"
1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 393-4464 Fax: (202) 347-0649

Notice to Employees Subject to Union Security Clauses

This Notice is for all employees working in the United States under an OPEIU contract containing a union security clause which requires, as a condition of employment, that an employee pay dues or fees to the Union. The obligation stated in this Notice is the only obligation under such clause regardless of the wording of the clause. Individuals who are members pay dues, while individuals who are non-members pay equivalent fees. These dues or fees, which are authorized by law, are your fair share of sustaining your Union's broad range of programs in support of you and your co-workers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process and thereby be obligated to pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process.

Only if you are not a member of the Union or if you resign your membership, and in either case, file an objection to the funding of expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process, may you pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process. However, if you resign your membership, the many rights and opportunities available to Union members will not be open to you. For example, if you resign your membership you will no longer be able to:

- Vote on the terms of your contract;
- Participate in strike votes;
- Participate in the development of contract proposals;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as an officer of your Local Union;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as a delegate to the International Convention; and
- Enjoy discounts and other benefits available only to members, including eligibility for OPEIU scholarships for you and your family.

Individuals who are employed by public employers in the states of New Jersey and Minnesota are covered by the demand and return system applicable to them and are not covered by this procedure. Other individuals who elect to be nonmembers may object to funding expenditures which are not germane to the collective bargaining

process. Expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process ("chargeable" expenditures) represent that portion of the Union's expenditures devoted to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievances, arbitration, and other matters affecting wages, hours and other conditions of employment. Examples of "chargeable" expenditures include: the costs of negotiations with employers; contract administration expenses; communication with employers in regard to work-related issues; handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance and arbitration procedure; and Union administration.

Examples of expenditures not germane to the collective bargaining process ("non-chargeable" expenditures) include: expenses made for community services; for political purposes; for certain affiliation fees; and for benefits available only to members and their families. The fee reduction will represent these non-chargeable expenditures. The International Union's Voice Of The Electorate fund ("VOTE"), is an independent, segregated fund that receives voluntary donations and contributes to political candidates who support the needs of working men and women. No money received from dues or fees goes to the VOTE fund. Accordingly, the VOTE fund is not considered in the calculation of the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses.

Individuals who choose to file an objection will receive a rebate of their fees equal to the percentage of the Local Union's expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses. The Local Union's expenditures include those amounts it remits to the International Union as per capita payments. In determining the Local Union's percentage of non-chargeable expenses, the percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union is applied only to the Local Union's per capita payments to the International Union. The percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union, which will be effective starting with the month of January 2006, and continuing until a new percentage is issued, is 12.12%. The major portion of a Local Union's expenditures is for items

other than per capita to the OPEIU. Studies show that the final percentage of rebate for non-chargeable Local Union expenditures ranges between 0% and 8%.

Individuals who choose to file objections to funding expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process should file them in writing with the Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L Street, N. W., Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036, Attention: Nancy Wohlforth, Secretary-Treasurer. The objection must include the objector's name, home address, Social Security number, employer, job title, department, work location, local union number, and business telephone number.

In order for an objection to be recognized at this time, it must be postmarked during the month of June, except that new hires who choose not to join the union may also submit their objection postmarked within thirty (30) days of being compelled to pay dues or fees to the Union or within thirty (30) days of the new hire's receipt of a new employee letter from a Local Union, and except that newly resigned members may also submit their objections postmarked within thirty (30) days from the receipt by the Union of the resigning member's letter of resignation. All objections must be renewed each year in writing and all renewed objections must be postmarked during the month of June. All objections will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the objection was received by the Union.

In addition to any other avenue of relief available under the law, an objector may challenge the International Union's and/or the Local Union's classification or calculation of expenditures before a neutral arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Any challenge a nonmember makes may be coordinated or consolidated with other challenges to the Local Union or International Union determinations before a single arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association. Such challenges may also be coordinated or consolidated

(Continued on page 18)

Notice to Employees

(Continued from page 17)

with challenges to other OPEIU Local Union classifications or calculations.

Challengers must notify Nancy Wohlforth, Secretary-Treasurer, Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036, in writing, of any challenge he or she wishes to make through this arbitration procedure. Such notification must be received by the Secretary-Treasurer within thirty (30) days of the challenger's receipt of a letter from the Local Union informing the challenger of the amount of the rebate, the basis for the calculation, and the internal procedures for filing a challenge. That challenge should specify which classifications and/or calculations of the International Union and/or Local Union are being challenged.

The Unions shall bear the burden of justifying their classifications and calculations. If a hearing at which the parties or witnesses may be present is held by the arbitrator, it will be held at a location most convenient to the largest number of involved challengers. The cost of any arbitration proceedings will be paid for by the Unions. However, a challenger will have to pay his or her own lost time and travel expenses, and the fees, costs, and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

Once a written challenge is received from an objector, the Local Union will place an amount equal to the challenged portion of the fee into an interest-bearing escrow account. It shall remain in that account until the arbitrator issues a decision. Should the decision lower the percentage of chargeable expenditures, the appropriate portion of the escrowed fees, plus the interest earned by that portion while in the escrow account, will be refunded to the challenger. All objectors in each Local Union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will then pay the adjusted fee amount determined by the arbitrator. If the arbitrator approves the Unions' classifications and/or calculations, the escrowed money and interest will revert to the Local and International Unions.

Here's Hoping For A Better 2006!

By Joe Darby
OPEIU Local 459

I don't know about you all, but I for one cannot be happier that 2005 is over. Just like so many other working Americans, 2005 was a rough year for my family and me. It seems that all over my home state of Michigan, employers were slashing jobs, drastically reducing health benefits, and getting rid of pensions plans. My family definitely wasn't left out of this benefits slashing free-for-all. Nope, in fact, the attorney general of the State of Michigan stepped in to see that the domestic partner benefits, negotiated by my union — which my partner and I depend on to sustain our family — were challenged in the courts of Michigan. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident; this tactic could be coming to your state soon.

You see, in 2004 voters in my state approved a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. Despite assurances from the backers of the amendment that it would not affect domestic partner benefits, the first thing these backers did after the amendment passed was file a lawsuit in the state challenging domestic partner benefits on the grounds that they violated the recently passed amendment. In a moment, the benefits that my family depends on were threatened, and it couldn't have come at a worse time.

My partner Ken and I have been together for 19 years. As we grow older, we worry about being able to take care of each other in our times of need. This worry escalated last year when Ken was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. As if his diagnosis was not difficult enough to deal with, we had to contend with the very real threat that we would be stripped of the domestic partner benefits that were helping us pay for the numerous doctor and hospital visits that Ken was racking up as he sought out treatment. I knew that we couldn't stand idly by and let the attorney general strip us of our benefits. I knew that we had to fight.

I'm a longtime member of OPEIU Local 459, a member of the National

Executive Board of Pride At Work, and I have worked as a service representative for Local 459 for the last four years, so I know how to stand up and fight for my rights as a worker. Taking my union's call for worker justice to heart, Ken and I joined 20 other same-sex couples and filed a suit challenging the attorney general, and defending the benefits that sustain our families — benefits we had negotiated through our union contracts. The court battle rages on, and we definitely hope for an outcome that preserves our domestic partner benefits.

As a member of OPEIU, I have one simple request for you, union member to union member: Don't be fooled. The same groups that passed a constitutional amendment in Michigan banning same-sex marriage are peddling similar amendments in 10 other states in the next two years. I have no doubt that if these amendments pass, these same groups will begin to attack domestic partner benefits in other states, harming families, just like mine.

We all know that once we allow employers to strip away one benefit, it won't be long before they come for another. It's domestic partner benefits now, it could be your access to FMLA next.

So, my union brothers and sisters, don't be fooled. Please stand with my partner and me and help defeat these mean-spirited and anti-family marriage amendments when they come to your state. No one deserves to have a 2006 like my family's 2005.



Joe Darby (left) of OPEIU Local 459 and Stan Kiino of AFA-CWA, discuss model contract language.

Report of ITPE President John F. Conley – 2005 in Review

As we look back and review the year 2005, we should not claim it as a year of achievements for the ITPE. Organizing was at its lowest level in many years. It was a year we lost the services of two of our long-time representatives. In April, Vice President Mary Williams suffered a stroke that left her with some physical problems denying her the ability to return to work. In May, Representative Pat Hasard retired. Mary and Pat had a combined time of 42 years of experience in labor relations. Both are missed. Fortunately, we have a number of dedicated representatives who worked diligently and picked up the workload. I am proud to say all the contracts in Mary and Pat's areas with an October 1 renewal were successfully and timely negotiated.

Unfortunately, 2005 was the only year since the inception of the ITPE Health and Welfare Plan in 1971 that the Board of Trustees was forced to make unfavorable changes to our medical plan. Certainly our plan is not alone in having to restructure, as anyone knows. We learn everyday through the news media of major corporations requiring employees to pay a higher share for their health care. We also know there are more than 45 million Americans without health insurance and that number is growing. It is always difficult to accept any reduction in benefits. If it is any consolation, all ITPE officers, representatives and staff employees are also feeling the effects as they are in the same plan. The good news is your representatives are negotiating with your employers for a higher hourly contribution rate. Let's hope that along with a reduction of medical inflation and the change of our PPO from Beech Street to Blue Cross/Blue Shield that these changes will be substantial enough to allow us to reinstate, in time, those lost benefits. Remember it is important that you use the Blue Cross/Blue Shield in-network providers for greater savings for yourself and the Plan.

Another event in 2005 that affected 350 or more of our union brothers and sisters was Hurricane Katrina. Most of our members were employed and made their homes in Gulfport/Biloxi, Mississippi. They were all victims of the devastation brought upon them by the wrath of Hurricane Katrina. Thanks to our parent organization, OPEIU, for their wisdom in opening a relief fund on behalf of our ITPE members. My sincere thanks to OPEIU President Michael Goodwin and the OPEIU Executive Board for their commitment to our members by the matching of funds. My sincere thanks to all of you who have opened up your hearts and wallets to donate to this most worthy cause. Surely we are affected by the recent change in our health plan, but can you imagine the suffering our union brothers and sisters who have lost everything must be enduring?

The year 2005 is also the year when several unions left the AFL-CIO and formed the "Change to Win Coalition." The departure of those unions could not have come at a worse time. This certainly is not in the best interest of organized labor, especially with the political climate being so anti-worker by the present administration. Now is not the time to have the House of Labor divided. I am hopeful that history will repeat itself.

Over the years, labor, like many marriages, has experienced many in-house quarrels. Several unions have left the AFL-CIO, with most returning after a year or so. Let's all hope that the differences between the AFL-CIO leadership and the Change to Win Coalition can be resolved amicably, resulting in bringing all labor organizations under one umbrella, all working together for the economic, political and educational objectives of our members.



John Conley

I am optimistic that 2006 will be a much better year. The ITPE Convention is scheduled for the week of March 26- 29 in Savannah, Georgia. It is my intent to propose to the delegates a restructuring of our organization that will bring us into the 21st century. We also have an Election of Officers and Delegates scheduled for 2006, therefore the timing for change could not be better.

2006 will also have importance to every union brother and sister. It will present an opportunity for the Democratic Party to take back the House and Senate with a higher percentage of legislators that support America's workers. George W. Bush is in his second four-year term, corporate profits are escalating while our wages and living standards are declining. American corporations are investing overseas rather than in the United States. Jobs continue to be outsourced. The rich are getting richer from the labor of American and foreign workers. Gas prices are at an all-time high. Oil company profits are in the billions. Who pays? You pay. More and more Americans are falling below the poverty level, our national debt is increasing daily. The war in Iraq is a national disaster for Americans. Medical inflation is causing more and more Americans to go without health insurance. The American dream has turned into an American nightmare. Are we as Americans going to accept this? I say no. You should also. Together we can make a difference. We will have that opportunity on November 7, 2006. Make a resolution to commit to voting on November 7, 2006, Election Day. Choose your candidate carefully. Make sure he or she has a voting record supporting labor. This year make several resolutions that are easy to keep. Get active in your union and your community. Commit to helping your union organize those friends, relatives, neighbors in your community who don't enjoy higher wages and benefits unions provide through a collective bargaining agreement.

It is a fact that union members receive higher wages and get more benefits than workers who don't have a voice on the job through a union.

To the elected ITPE delegates, I am looking forward to seeing you at the convention.

Let's make 2006 a year to remember!

American Labor Museum Honors Outstanding Achievement

The American Labor Museum bestowed its annual Sol Stetin awards to four people who have made outstanding contributions on behalf of working people. The awards are named for Stetin, a long-time Paterson, New Jersey labor leader who died in 2005 at 95.

OPEIU President Michael Goodwin serves as president of the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark (ALM/BHNL), located in North Haledon, New Jersey. President Goodwin attended a banquet held on November 17, 2005, where award recipients were honored and shared their visions for boosting the labor movement and enabling American manufacturers to compete.

Buy American, urged recipient Eli Fishman, owner of Cape Shoes, a union manufacturer in Missouri that went out of business in August. Fishman founded the store in 1999, and the company's 70 employees manufactured shoes and boots using only materials made in the United States. Angelica Santomauro, the museum's director, said Fishman organized his own workers into a union and doubled or tripled their pay. But Fishman's company went out of business due to low sales volume. "We think it's something that needs to be discussed," Santomauro said. "A company went out of business in America because it was making products in America."

"If you don't start supporting other American workers, you're gone," Fishman said. "You can't take the paychecks and run to Wal-Mart with them."

"We are watching the evaporation of the

middle class," warned award recipient Ron Gettelfinger, president of the United Auto Workers.

Also presented were two posthumous awards. The first honored Jessica Govea Thorbourne, a founding organizer of the United Farm Workers, who died of breast

cancer in 2004. The second honored Jose Gilberto Soto, a Teamster organizer from Cliffside Park who was killed in his native El Salvador while on an organizing drive in November 2004. Some believe Soto may have been targeted for his union activities.



Pictured (left to right) are Ron Gettelfinger, UAW president; Angelica Santomauro, American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark director; Joe Ashton, assistant director of UAW Region 9; and Michael Goodwin, OPEIU president and president of the ALM/BHNL.

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AFL-CIO-CLC