



WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 486

Issue 1, Spring 2004

Canadian Director Lajeunesse retires

On Friday, March 12, 2004, OPEIU President Michael Goodwin, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler and Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan traveled to Montreal to join in the celebration honoring Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse for his service to OPEIU and the labor movement.

Lajeunesse served as Canadian Director

from June 1990 until his retirement on April 1, 2004. His wife, Suzanne, and family accompanied him at the celebration.

The evening was full of testimonials acknowledging Lajeunesse's contribution to the advancement of the union in Québec. Speakers included Hassan Yussuff, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress; Henri Massé, President of the Québec

Federation of Labour; Serge Cadieux, the new Director of the SEPB-Québec; and Region I Vice President Maurice Laplante. Claude Grenier, former Region I Vice

President and former Local 434 President, served as mistress of ceremonies for the evening's events.

(Continued on page 4)



Former Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse with OPEIU Region I Vice President Maurice Laplante and President Goodwin at a retirement event on March 12th in Montreal, PQ. Photo compliments of Mireille Fillon, Local 575, Montreal, PQ



Lajeunesse with his wife, Suzanne (left), and Jerri New, the new OPEIU Canadian Director.

Canadian National Committee rejects per capita proposal

At a meeting held March 22-23, 2004 in Vancouver, BC, the Canadian National Committee (CNC) informed President Michael Goodwin that the CNC has rejected a proposal for an increase in per capita to the International Union.

The proposal was drafted by the OPEIU Finance Committee consisting of former Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse, Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan, Region IV Vice President Becky Turner, Region VI Senior Vice President Gary Kirkland, Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth and President Goodwin. The proposal was designed to address deficits accrued

by both the OPEIU General Fund and Strike Benefit and Defense Fund in support of Canadian operations.

In accordance with Article XIV, Section 4 – FINANCE of the International Union constitution, an accounting of each year's revenue and expenditures (including overhead costs) is required. This "Canadian Report" has been submitted to the Executive Board each year since its inception for approval. At a CNC meeting in November 2002, the Canadian Director reported that he and Canadian Legal Counsel have examined OPEIU records and found the "Canadian Report" to be accurate.

A review of the "Canadian Report" reveals the Canadian membership has incurred an accumulated deficit of more than \$3 million in the General Fund and the Strike Benefit and Defense Fund has incurred a deficit in excess of \$7 million, for a total of more than \$10 million. It is these deficits, which threaten the stability of both funds, which prompted the Finance Committee to make its proposal.

A special Executive Board meeting was held April 6-7, 2004, where the rejection by the CNC of a proposal for an increase in per capita was discussed. In response, a committee consisting of Canadian Director Jerri New, Region VIII Vice President Doug Hill,

SEPB-Québec Director Serge Cadieux and Canadian Legal Counsel Pierre Gingras met with President Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth and made the following proposal:

"The Canadian membership will completely sever all ties with the U.S. membership with the exception of payment of an affiliation fee of 70 cents per member per month to maintain a "link" to the International Union."

There are many issues associated with the proposal, which breaks nearly sixty years of working together. This matter will be fully addressed at the OPEIU Convention in June.

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

	I	N	S	I	D	E	
2	OPEIU mourns William Lowe	3	Warner Gear votes for OPEIU	7	Rights and responsibilities under LMRDA	10	Jerri New elected Canadian Director

Canadian News

SEPB-Québec - Montréal, Québec

SEPB-Québec under new leadership

As of January 1, 2004, Serge Cadieux is the second Director for Québec in the young history of SEPB-Québec following Michel Lajeunesse's retirement.

Cadieux has been a union activist since 1977, originally working nights in a garage where mechanics were unionized with the Auto Workers' Union. He worked as a union representative for Local 298 of the Service Employees' Union from 1982 to 1983.

Cadieux, who joined OPEIU Local 57 in 1983, obtained his law degree from the Université du Québec à Montréal in 1989. Cadieux has concentrated on labor law since his admission to the Québec Bar in 1992. In addition to his role of union representative, he teaches part-time occupational health law at the Université de Montréal.

Cadieux replaces Michel Lajeunesse who is retiring after many years of dedicated service to the OPEIU. "Serge Cadieux is a qualified and dedicated trade unionist and while it is very difficult to fill the shoes of someone like Michel Lajeunesse, I feel our progress will continue under his leadership," SEPB-Québec President Maurice Laplante said.

SEPB-Québec, the new OPEIU structure that was created in 2003, provides representational services for OPEIU Local Unions across the province. It represents more than 13,000 members in Québec.

Local 434 - Montréal, Québec

SEPB 434 activist becomes union representative

Sophie Drouin has joined the staff of SEPB 434 to provide representational services to the 2,300 employees of the Laurentian Bank of Canada and CIBC-Visa.

In 1992, Drouin became an OPEIU member and activist. She has served as an Executive Council member of the local

union, and as First Vice President from 2001 until August 2003.

Drouin attended the Université de Montréal to attain her Bachelor's degree in Labour Relations. She also studied business and is currently furthering her education in occupational health and safety.

Local 575 - Montréal, Québec

SEPB wins pay equity dispute

SEPB, which represents the largest group of unionized Desjardins caisses populaires workers in Québec, hails a judgment from Québec's Pay Equity Commission ordering 164 small caisses populaires to rebuild their pay equity programs.

"For the workers we represent in caisses populaires that employ 10 to 49 employees, this is a significant victory," said Serge Cadieux, Director of SEPB-Québec. "We have always been convinced that Desjardins had maladjusted the com-

penetration levels required by the Act. The decision confirms the validity and relevancy of our comments before the Commission. Our determination paid off."

Compensation adjustments to be paid to the workers are owed since November 21, 2001. The judgment gives Desjardins until April 8 next to re-introduce pay equity programs and make the compensation adjustments retroactively to November 21, 2001.

SEPB-Québec represents 5,000 members in caisses populaires of Mouvement Desjardins.

Jerri New elected Canadian Director

Jerri New, former Region VIII Vice President, has been elected Canadian Director by the Canadian National Committee to replace the retiring Michel Lajeunesse. Doug Hill will replace New as Region VIII Vice President. Serge Cadieux succeeded Lajeunesse as Director of the SEPB-Québec in December 2003.

Prior to her election as Canadian Director, New led an organization with 11,000 members in 29 private and public sector companies in British Columbia. Before that, she served as a Local 378 Vice President.

An officer at the B.C. Federation of Labour, New has held a variety of elected positions in Local 378 since 1978. She serves on B.C. Federation and Canadian Labour Congress committees and is a representative to OPEIU's Canadian National Committee. She has also acted as a labor instructor and served on several Local 378 negotiating committees.

Before she was elected Local 378 President, New worked in the BC Hydro Kamloops office. In the past, she has acted as a union representative at the Local 378 office, an appointee to the Labour Relations Board, and as an arbitration nominee for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).



Jerri New

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

Six (6) 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 May 31st 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 MEMORIAL FUND "SUMMER CAMP"
APPLICATION FORM
APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 31st**

Name of Applicant _____
Last First M.I. Telephone

Home Address _____
Street

_____ City State Zip Code

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 to: Romeo Corbeil Memorial Scholarship Fund "Summer Camp"
 Office and Professional Employees International Union
 1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036
 PHONE: (202) 393-4464 FAX: (202) 347-0649

Kids live it up at Romeo Corbeil Summer Camp



Scholarship winners have a great time at the Romeo Corbeil Summer Camp in August 2003. This year's winners will be chosen in June. All children of OPEIU members in good standing are encouraged to fill out the above application form and submit it to OPEIU before the May 31st deadline.

Editorial



A review of the Bush administration

By Michael Goodwin, International President

While the Bush administration proudly announced the creation of 300,000 U.S. jobs in the month of March, the truth is that more than 20 percent of the jobs that were supposedly created were actually 70,000 Southern California supermarket workers who had returned to their jobs after a strike. In reality, the Bush administration has the worst record of job creation in the last 58 years. As an example, 240,000 jobs were created each month during President Clinton's first term in office and 233,000 jobs were created each month during his second term. In its more than three years in office, the Bush administration has lost an average of 63,000 jobs per month. Almost three million fewer Americans are working now than when Mr. Bush was inaugurated in 2001.

For more than three years we have heard President Bush say his tax cuts would create jobs. But the evidence is clear that the tax cuts have not created jobs, they have only created the largest federal budget deficit in history.

Under President Bush's economic policies the U.S. has lost jobs for three consecutive years. In the manufacturing sector alone, the U.S. has lost three million jobs since Mr. Bush took office. He recently addressed this problem by creating a new post in the Commerce Department to concentrate on creating manufacturing jobs. Then Mr. Bush ended up embarrassed when it was reported that his first nominee for the post turned out to be a manufacturer who laid off 3,000 workers two years ago when he moved his plants

to China. The nomination was withdrawn.

A week after that incident, Mr. Bush's Treasury Secretary announced that outsourcing jobs to India and other countries was good for the U.S. economy! But try telling that to the U.S. workers whose jobs were outsourced.

While the economic performance of the Bush administration causes alarm, so do its proposals for Social Security and Medicare.

A bill to provide prescription drug coverage to seniors was passed last year, but there are so many problems with the proposed program that many believe it is nothing more than a government giveaway to drug manufacturers and insurance companies. In fact, it is probably no coincidence that this program will not take effect until 2006, well past the coming election.

Regarding Social Security, President Bush has continued to propose that workers should be allowed to invest part of their payroll taxes into private accounts. But since the payroll taxes President Bush wants to allow workers to invest in private accounts is currently used to pay the monthly benefits of Social Security recipients, how would benefits be paid if the Bush plan were enacted? No one in the Bush administration has even attempted to answer that question.

To see how well the Bush administration has taken care of Social Security and Medicare we have to look no further than the remarks made before Congress last month by Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Chairman. Mr. Greenspan, President Bush's financial czar, told Congress that because of the huge budget deficits being racked up by the Bush administration it will become necessary to raise the age of retirement and reduce the benefits for Social Security and Medicare recipients.

Most economists had strongly predicted there would be a price to pay for the huge budget deficits caused by the Bush administration's generous tax cuts for the wealthy. According to Mr. Greenspan's remarks it appears the price will be paid by those who depend on Social Security and Medicare!

There's more. Under the Bush administration, the income gap between rich and poor in the U.S. has grown wider than ever. And unless the Bush administration reverses its tax cut program that

clearly benefits the wealthiest Americans, the gap between rich and poor will grow even larger in the years ahead. But don't count on the tax breaks for the rich being reversed. President Bush has spent the last month demanding that Congress make these tax cuts permanent.

Our nation's foreign trade gap has grown larger than ever under President Bush, setting a new record in just the last year.

The Bush administration has also set a record for budget deficits. The federal deficit for this year will be \$541 billion and it doesn't include the money that is still to be spent on the war in Iraq and in Afghanistan, estimated to be more than \$100 billion. It also doesn't include the \$55 billion the Bush administration is "borrowing" from this year's Social Security surplus. If those expenses are added in, the Bush administration's deficit for this year will be almost \$700

billion, or almost \$2,700 in debt for each person living in the U.S.!

It is now clear that the surplus the federal government enjoyed over the last four years of the Clinton administration has completely disappeared, with little to show for the money that was spent. Jobs have not been created. Social Security and Medicare are being threatened. The trade gap is bigger than ever, and so is the federal budget deficit.

Under President Bush, the Clinton budget surplus has been replaced by a huge debt brought on by a double tax cut for the wealthy. It is an I.O.U. that we, as well as our children and grandchildren, will have to repay!

The economic future of the U.S., which only three years ago was so bright, is now looking cloudy for many. The best way to change that and to determine your own future will come this November in the elections.



International President Goodwin meets with the presumptive Democratic party presidential nominee, John Kerry, at an endorsement meeting February 17, 2004 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

AFL-CIO-CLC



Printed in USA

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Who isn't for protecting marriage?

I am all for people getting together and staying together for whatever reason. Personally I think we should wholeheartedly support people who say, "I do." I also applaud those with children. I am a proponent of public education: accessible child care, early childhood programs, affordable health insurance, solvent Social Security system and a whole myriad of other wonderful social and economic benefits which help keep families whole.

I am all for protecting marriage. Tinkering with the Constitution, that's a whole other issue. Gay, straight, adulterers, divorcees, those who serial marry, well, it quite frankly isn't the government's business.

A Constitutional Amendment explicitly written to limit the rights and benefits of one class of citizens, in this case gays and lesbians, would be the FIRST ever to legitimize discrimination as part of our Constitution. Each and every Amendment added to date has expanded and guaranteed individual liberty and rights. This Amendment is a fatal misstep down a very slippery slope.

For those who argue the moral and religious aspects, policy issues can be debated without threatening to undermine the principles of pluralism, the bedrock of our Constitution.

This Amendment is simply a mean-spirited attack, a pandering to fear, and a slap in the face to a majority of fair-minded Americans who embrace and expect equal



Again, we reprint letters from our members on various issues. We invite our readers to continue to share their opinions with us, whether in support of or in opposition to our own. Debate is healthy and welcome in this union. Letters are edited for length only, not content. Remember: anonymous letters will not be printed.

You can also reach us on the Web: <http://www.opeiu.org>

protection under the law, for all Americans.

This amendment is not about "defining" marriage; it is about denying rights. When wrapping ourselves in the piety of documents, let's not confuse our personal religious vows and moral covenants with the words of our Constitution.

"We the people," is and should remain

inclusive of all Americans. Our Constitution is the American sanctuary that allows each of us to worship at the altar of equality. That is what needs to be honored.

Denise Bowyer
Member
Local 227
Waco, Texas

Dear President Goodwin:

In September 2003, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney came to the Florida AFL-CIO Convention held in Jacksonville, Fla. and spoke on NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and FTAA (Free Trade Area of Americas).

Here are some excerpts of the speech I would like to share:

As some of you may already know, trade ministers from 34 countries in the Western Hemisphere will gather in Miami in November 2003 to plan the next steps in creating the largest free-trade zone in the world, the Free Trade Area of Americas — NAFTA times ten.

FTAA will create more job loss and more jobs will be shipped overseas, but FTAA also means privatization of social services like health care, schools, prescription drugs, and the environment — issues that affect all workers across the board. The trade ministers will hear from corporate America, business leaders and the Bush administration of FTAA's impact on workers without ANY input from international or domestic union leaders or workers.

The FTAA trade agreement undermines workers' rights and environmental protections, increases job loss and decreases living

conditions for working families throughout the hemisphere.

AFL-CIO leaders John Sweeney, Richard Trumka and Linda Chavez-Thompson will join many others in Miami as well as Teamster President James Hoffa, UNITE President Bruce Raynor, Steelworker President Leo Gerard, and UAW President Ron Gettlefinger just to name a few.

On November 20-21, trade leaders from throughout the Americas will be meeting behind closed doors in Miami to plan the next step in creating the FTAA. The FTAA would create the largest free-trade zone in the world and would cover the whole Western Hemisphere — 34 countries except for Cuba — and take in 800 million people. President Bush will be in Miami leading the negotiations for the United States, and Bush and his corporate buddies are attempting to ramrod the FTAA through in order to have it implemented by 2005.

The FTAA is NAFTA all over again, but ten times bigger and potentially far more dangerous. Since NAFTA (the free trade agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico) came into effect nearly a decade ago, the U.S. has lost millions of jobs linked to NAFTA, including 27,000 in Florida and our trade deficit with Mexico and Canada has mushroomed from 9 billion to 90 billion dollars. NAFTA has been used to destroy good jobs, bust unions and increase inequality and poverty in all three countries.

I thought that everyone would be interested in this article.

In Solidarity,
Paul Mari
President
Local 73
Jacksonville, Florida

OPEIU mourns loss of former Secretary-Treasurer William Lowe

OPEIU is mourning the loss of one of its true leaders, former Secretary-Treasurer William A. Lowe. Lowe, who served as Secretary-Treasurer for the decade 1973-1983, died March 7 at the age of 82.

"Bill was a true union man who cared deeply about the membership and spent his life dedicated to making lives better for working women and men," President Michael Goodwin said. "I had the privilege of working with Bill for many years and will greatly miss his wisdom, experience and great spirit."

Born in Port Moody, British Columbia, Lowe joined the labor movement in 1945 when employed by the B.C. Hydro Power Company. He became an active member of the B.C. Electric Employees Union, and was president of the independent union when it voted to affiliate with OPEIU. He was named an OPEIU International Representative in 1955 and was elected Vice President in 1959.

In 1962, at the invitation of the Canadian Labour Congress and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Lowe traveled extensively throughout Europe, studying the role of office employees, technicians and engineers in social and economic development.

Prior to his appointment as Secretary-Treasurer, he was OPEIU Regional Director and Vice President for Region VI. He was a member of the Operating Committee of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE) and was also on the Executive Board of the Council of AFL-CIO Union for Professional Employees; the Public Employee Department, AFL-CIO; and the Inter-American Regional Organization of the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees (IRO-FIET).



William A. Lowe

Workers at Warner Gear vote for OPEIU representation

Workers at Warner Gear Employees Federal Credit Union in Muncie, Indiana, cast their vote for representation by OPEIU Local 287 and assured their fifty members fair pay, good benefits and reasonable working conditions.

The credit union managers and board of directors hired a law firm and conducted union-busting tactics such as anti-union meetings, one-on-one meetings, questionnaires geared to their agenda, anti-union letters and more.

To counter these activities — some of which were illegal — OPEIU requested and received help from other AFL-CIO related unions in the area: UAW, IBEW, Teamsters, Carpenters, Laborers, Plumbers and Pipefitters. Also involved were OPEIU Credit Unions Aradison County, Lamco, and Independent. Speakers and representatives came in from these organizations to assure and convince the members to vote for union representation. Numerous meetings were held

and a large rally at Local 287 U.A.W. was held in Muncie.

According to Local 1 Business Agent Jim Hensley and President Karen Perryman, the

organizing process moved very quickly. The first organizing meeting was held on September 30, 2003, and 33 request cards were signed. The union filed for a vote on

October 7, employees voted for the union on November 13, and, on December 15, the first bargaining session with management was held to negotiate a first contract.



Warner Gear Employees Federal Credit Union workers celebrate the victory vote. Pictured are Jim Hensley (standing, back left), and Karen Perryman (seated, third from left).

A fight for fairness — Ozaukee County employees win WERC ruling

In June 2002, forty-four members of the Ozaukee County Highway Association began negotiations for a new contract. Little did they know as they began negotiations that they were in for the fight of their lives. "We always felt we could represent ourselves" Highway Association Bargaining Committee Association President, Kurt Krause, said. "We used to just sit down and hammer out an agreement with the County Highway Committee. All of that changed with this contract."

Right from the beginning, things were different. The County had already bargained with two other unions in the County and reached a new agreement with changes in the health care plan in exchange for higher wage increases and longevity pay. OPEIU Local 35 represented the administration employees and was also in negotiations with the County. Unable to reach a new agreement with either the Highway Association or Local 35, the County chose to implement the health care deductibles and copayments they were proposing effective January 1, 2003. Local 35 and the Highway Association jointly filed a prohibited practice with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

The WERC awarded a victory to both Local 35 and the Highway Association in September 2003, ordering the County to reinstate the previous health insurance plan and make employees whole for any out-of-pocket losses caused by the County's changes in the health insurance plan with 12 percent interest. The County promptly appealed the decision. At the same time, the Local 35 bargaining unit began to move toward settling their contract. The County, however, wouldn't meet with the Highway Association.

"The County bargained with Local 35 and reached an agreement, but stonewalled us," Krause said. "We knew we could no longer go it alone. We needed the backing of a strong Local and International Union. We saw how

hard Local 35 was fighting for their members and voted to join Local 35," Krause said.

Since the Highway Association became part of Local 35, the union has aggressively pursued unfair labor practice charges against the County with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission. Ozaukee County lost their appeal this March and the WERC again ordered the County to make employees whole for any losses they incurred as a result of the changes in the health care plan the County

implemented. The County also has to pay employees 12 percent interest on those losses.

"Thanks to the support of the Local and International Union, we won the unfair labor practice charges" Krause said. "Our members are very pleased that they are part of the OPEIU. The WERC decision is now final."

With the unfair labor practice charges resolved, the 2003-2004 contract for the Highway department employees is now in the hands of an arbitrator. When the arbitra-

tor's decision is issued, wages and benefits will be retroactive to January 1, 2003. Throughout the entire process, employees in the Highway department have remained united. With the support and help of the OPEIU, their determination has resulted in a tremendous victory for employees.

"After our experience with the County, I would strongly urge workers to support their union and stick together. Unity is the force you need to bargain a fair contract," Krause advised.

Local 2 Organizes

Kaiser Permanente member services reps choose Local 2

By an overwhelming majority, the 80 workers at Kaiser Permanente Customer Service Center in Silver Spring, Maryland voted for Local 2 representation. A card check by an independent arbitrator authenticated cards and signatures on February 25.

Heading up the internal effort was Shunnar Mitchell, who contacted Local 2 Organizer Lou Wolf. The workers were already aware of some of the benefits of union membership since they worked in the same building as other Kaiser Permanente employees represented by Local 2.

An organizing committee was quickly formed that included Myrka Forbes, Michelle Armstead, Candra Jones, Cecelia Tyson and Enia Walker. The committee members quickly secured signed authorization cards from more than 70 percent of the staff. The committee also did an excellent job of keeping the supporters' eyes on the prize.

These workers wanted the power to stand up for themselves, their families and their futures. They demanded better pay, decent working conditions, better benefits, dignity, respect and fairness on the job. They realized that only a union could protect their families.

ADT Security Services in Baltimore votes Yes!

The 95 technicians and administrative workers at ADT Security Services Inc., in Baltimore, Maryland voted by a large majority on March 24 to join Local 2. Baltimore is the fifth ADT office to be represented by Local 2.

Without a union, the Baltimore employees watched helplessly as they were given pay raises of just pennies an hour, or nothing at all. They also watched as their benefits and holidays were taken away — so they contacted Local 2 for help.

Local 2 Organizer Lou Wolf began discussions with internal activists at ADT. Throughout the cold days of winter, authorization cards were signed. An internal organizing committee of ten workers worked diligently to keep everyone informed and committed to the cause.

The employer tried every tactic to thwart the effort, yet the core group of supporters was unwavering and never lost sight of their goal.

The technicians and administrative staff have begun using their new organizing skills to mobilize for the challenges of a contract campaign.

Support for Local 30 fire victims

When the devastating wild fires tore through Southern California late last year, thousands were left homeless and families in the area suffered terrible losses. The fires in San Diego were especially intense and burned in heavily populated areas, causing even more damage and destruction. Many OPEIU members and their families were affected.

Local 30's Executive Board immediately

reached out to their members to offer assistance. Executive Director and International Vice President Walter Allen contacted International President Michael Goodwin, asking for his assistance in notifying other OPEIU locals of their plight and to ask for their support. Even before the fires were under control, the OPEIU family had already begun to reach out to Local 30 families.

As a result of the generosity of so many,

Local 30 members who lost their homes in the fires were given \$1,500 each to assist with their expenses. Assistance was also given to a number of Local 30 members who were evacuated from their homes for an extended period of time, or who suffered losses other than the total loss of their homes.

"Without the help of OPEIU members across the United States and Canada, we

would not have been able to assist our members and their families to the extent we did," Allen said. "Thanks to President Goodwin, the members of Local 30 who have suffered the most have been helped when they needed it most. I would like to thank all the Locals who reached out to us during this tragedy, and thank my colleagues on the OPEIU Executive Board as well for their support."

Canadian Director Lajeunesse retires

(Continued from page 1)

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a framed photo of Lajeunesse to be prominently displayed at the SEP-

Québec offices in Montreal.

The OPEIU expresses its sincere appreciation to Lajeunesse for the many contributions he has made on a national and international level.



Henri Massé, Lajeunesse, Michael Goodwin, Richard Lanigan, Maurice Laplante and Kevin Kistler.

Court upholds rule implementing revised Form LM-2 and Form T-1

On January 22, 2004, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia issued an order upholding the rule implementing the revised Form LM-2 and the new Form T-1. The court found the rule to be a valid exercise of the Secretary's statutory authority, reasonable and adequately explained, but enjoined it from becoming effective until July 1, 2004 or 90 days after the Department of Labor makes a fully tested version of the reporting software available, whichever is later. Therefore, unions with \$200,000 or more in annual receipts may use the old Form LM-2 to file their financial reports for fiscal years beginning on any date between January 1 and June 30, 2004. The Department anticipates that the reporting software will be available on the OLMS web site shortly and that unions with \$250,000 or more in annual receipts will be required to use the revised Form LM-2 and the new Form T-1 for fiscal years beginning July 1, 2004, and thereafter.

Attention All Members!

Help update our records by completing the following information and returning it to the International Union (please include email address):

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email Address

Local Union No.

Phone No.

Please clip and return to:
OPEIU, AFL-CIO
Attention: Nancy Wohlforth
1660 L Street, NW
Suite 801
Washington, D.C. 20036

CONVENTION TIMELINE

Credentials — Must be returned to the Secretary-Treasurer of the International Union by May 24, 2004, together with the \$125.00 registration fee for each delegate.

Resolutions — All resolutions, petitions, memorials or appeals to be considered by the Convention, shall be written and submitted in duplicate signed copies to the Secretary-Treasurer of the International Union and received by the Secretary-Treasurer no later than June 1, 2004. If possible, also please e-mail them to opeiu@opeiudc.org.

Hotel Reservations — Must be made on forms provided by the International Union as soon as possible. A copy must be sent to The Westin Diplomat Hotel, 3555 S. Ocean Drive, Hollywood, Florida 33019; a copy must also be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer's office, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036; and a copy is to be retained by the delegate.

Podiatrist's Guild —

The Guild: adding more clout to podiatric medicine's toolbox

EXPERTS IN CREATIVITY say that it occurs when someone puts together two or more previously unrelated concepts or phenomena, resulting in something that hasn't existed before.

It might be stretching the point to describe what took place in Philadelphia seven or eight years ago as pure creativity. The melding of the concepts of trade unionism and medical practice had occurred before, involving government-employed physicians and public hospitals.



Dr. John Mattiacci

But there is no disputing the fact that, for the first time in history, a profession created a union—to be sure, one without the power to bargain collectively, and one properly described as a guild, but a historic first, nevertheless.

It was born, said its chief architect, John Mattiacci, DPM, of the need for physicians and surgeons to recapture their profession from managed care.

In his first speech as the president of the First National Guild for Healthcare Providers of the Lower Extremity, in October 1996, Dr. Mattiacci said that those who deliver medical care had watched their ability to control their professions and practices usurped by the managed care industry. They had seen their ability to control the quality of their medical services and to retain patients disappear, in some cases, they even lost their ability to survive in the fields of their choices, he said.

"With the structure and organizational ability of labor, we can return health care where it belongs; under the direction of the physicians of this country," he said. The Guild became Local 45 of the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU).

There was a mixed reaction from orga-

nized podiatric medicine.

"Labor union? We're professionals," some podiatrists said or thought.

In some states, podiatric medicine's leaders were enthusiastic, but their members were not. In other states, it was just the opposite, with wary leaders and receptive members.

From the very beginning, Dr. Mattiacci told APMA members in the many states he visited, "The Guild does not intend to be a lost cost alternative to APMA," and would not recruit podiatrists outside APMA mem-

bership. Rather, he said, it seeks to bring the clout of organized labor and its millions of members to bear on those who are in a position to restore practitioners to their rightful role.

APMA responded cautiously. The Board of Trustees formed a Labor Committee and named a former president, Rosario LaBarbera, DPM to chair it.

Dr. Mattiacci himself may have contributed to the caution. Reporting on a nascent move toward unionization among Pennsylvania MDs in August 1999, the Pennsylvania newspaper *Physician's News Digest* said (with the condescension of the time):

"When asked why medical societies needed the assistance of labor unions

to regain control of medical practice, podiatrist Mattiacci answered rhetorically: 'When you need protection, which would you rather have: a pit bull or a toothless dog?' Mattiacci's massive frame and gruff South Philadelphia accent reinforced the blunt reply, which resonated in future medical society discussion of the issue.

"Mattiacci personifies power at a time that physicians feel powerless against the dictates of government, managed care organizations, and consolidated hospital systems," reported the *Physician's News Digest*. "But power at what costs? Mattiacci in particular and traditional labor unions in general evoke attraction or repulsion among physicians, and frequently both. Ironically, the OPEIU attempts to distinguish itself as a white collar union, but Mattiacci's appearance, manner, and podiatric pedigree strike most physicians as decidedly blue collar."

Blue collar? Well, Dr. Mattiacci certainly isn't one to deny his roots, but he has since become dean and chief executive officer of the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine, as well as president of the Guild and an international vice president of OPEIU.

Regardless, that was then, this is now, and there is a decided air of mutual respect and cooperation blooming. No small part of that

are direct and conclusive interventions by OPEIU and AFL-CIO to help state podiatric medical associations win legislative, regulatory, and insurance victories.

(The Guild has always restricted its members target to APMA's state component membership, and it has members in 15 states who pay annual Guild dues of \$100.)

The Guild and APMA are expressing their respect for one another in similar language:

"In the beginning, the Guild was created to be another tool for APMA," Dr. Mattiacci said recently. "I think APMA didn't have a strong advocacy orientation, but it's more aggressive today."

"APMA has become much more inclusive," said Glenn B. Gastwirth, DPM, APMA executive director. "We're taking a fresh look at everything in our toolbox, and the Guild is one tool that we should be using more wisely."

Leaders and staff of the Guild and APMA met August 8 at APMA's Annual Scientific Meeting in Washington. Several of those in attendance characterized the meeting as congenial and open, with an abundance of cooperative spirit. A variety of avenues of action were explored, and there was agreement that such meetings should be scheduled on a regular basis. Lloyd S. Smith, DPM, president elect of APMA, said, "Both organizations have matured to the point where they can work cooperatively. The Guild has been very helpful in a variety of ways."

The ways have both national and local dimensions, which is as it should be, according to Dr. Mattiacci. "As 'Tip' O' Neill said, all politics is local, and that's what podiatrists are, after all."

But to start with the national aspect, as long ago as November of 2002, it was known that Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) was preparing legislation dubbed the Diabetes Treatment Prevention Act, and APMA wanted to have some input.

"We hadn't been able to arrange a meeting to express our support," Dr. Smith said, "but Dr. Mattiacci and I had a discussion about how APMA and the Guild might manage issues in a cooperative manner. Early in March this year, Michael Goodwin, the international president of OPEIU, wrote a letter to the senator, and less than three weeks later, he; OPEIU lobbyists; APMA Trustee Michael King, DPM; Martha Rinker, APMA legislative counsel; and I were in a meeting with Senator Kennedy's staff. [Both Dr. Smith and Dr. King are from Massachusetts.] The bill probably won't get to the floor anytime soon, but the staff listened carefully to our pitch and knows our interest."

Also on a national level, Michael Q. Davis, executive director of the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association (PPMA), who was involved in the Guild's formation, thinks this says it all about the Guild's importance:

"Some time ago," he said, "I was with John [Mattiacci] and some other podiatrists in a meeting with the then administrator of the Health Care Financing Administration, along

with two lobbyists from the AFL-CIO. Things went very well, and the meeting was closing when this guy turned to the AFL-CIO people, who had just been sitting quietly in the room.

"He said, 'OK, what do you guys want?'"

"One of them said, 'We want what they want.'"

Franklin Kase, DPM, now president of the California Podiatric Medical Association (CPMA), says he's one who saw the Guild's potential and sought its assistance early.

As chair of CPMA's Health Insurance Policy Committee, he focused first on the opportunity the Guild affiliation presented to contact more union members and to increase the patient volume of California's podiatrists.

But he was also seeking to eliminate discrimination against podiatrists in private insurance plans, indemnification plans, and PPOs, and he recognized that the Guild was one avenue of ensuring that AFL-CIO members would become aware of the brotherhood-sisterhood of podiatrists.

In one significant act, OPEIU President Goodwin sent a letter to the United Farm Workers of America, an important union in California. The letter ensured that DPMs would be included in the farmworkers' health plans.

"There were ERISA plans [essentially, self-insured plans that were established under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act] that steered patients to nonpodiatrists after initial visits," he said, "and some of them were plans that were administered by unions. We can't change ERISA, of course, but the Guild helped us change some administrators' habits," said Dr. Kase.

Dr. Kase said that even though California has an antidiscrimination law forbidding insurance companies from restricting access to DPMs, it was being flouted, and union members have been helpful in bringing about some changes.

He also said that OPEIU helped seal the appointment of Glenn Ocker, DPM, to the Industrial Medical Council of California, which administers worker's compensation. "There was no discrimination involved in that instance," he said, "but we now have the advantage of direct involvement."

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Guild lies immediately ahead.

There is legislation pending, Dr. Kase said, that would permit California DPMs to perform partial foot amputations, assist in surgery outside their scope of practice, and treat wounds above the ankle that originated with that joint.

"We have reasons to believe we're going to get these features in the law," Dr. Kase said, "and one of the reasons is that the Guild helped us identify and hire a lobbyist with a marvelous labor background and track record."

In Nebraska, OPEIU helped rectify a discriminatory payment inequity that Blue Cross/Blue Shield was observing.

(Continued on page 5)

Podiatrist's Guild

(Continued from page 5)

Kevin Larsen, DPM, of Grand Island, Nebraska, who recently became the OPEIU liaison in the state, said the Nebraska Podiatric Medical Association had been protesting the inequity for two years without progress, before turning to the OPEIU for assistance.

"In a short period of time, we were in a meeting set up by the AFL-CIO with OPEIU's Kathy Carr and the Blue Cross/Blue Shield vice president of provider relations. He professed to being unaware of the situation, and we have a promise that it will be corrected in January 2004," Dr. Larsen said.

There were other dividends: All parties were guests at a labor golf outing, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield is submitting material for newsletters. "Things are really congenial," Dr. Larsen said.

In Florida, Donald Popper, DPM, said,

"Tremendous strides have been made in cooperation between podiatrists and the AFL-CIO," He thinks that labor is highly receptive to suggestions and recommendations. He recently approached the Florida AFL-CIO with a recommendation that resulted in the establishment of a health care committee. With its creation, he became a member.

The Guild is especially supportive of podiatric medicine's efforts to achieve parity in payment schedules, Dr. Popper said.

He also said that the Guild was instrumental in resisting efforts by the Medicare carrier in Florida to collect refunds from DPMs after the carrier tried to apply new reimbursement rules to old bills.

"They open doors to us, and they've facilitated a number of meetings that have been very valuable to us," he said.

OPEIU's Kathy Carr has also been active in Florida, and Dr. Popper praised her devotion to her work. "She's been 110 percent

instrumental in educating us on the interaction between union people," he said. "She's very tenacious."

(The Guild's leaders and others also had positive observations regarding OPEIU President Goodwin. "He's tireless, he's articulate, and he's selfless," said Dr. Mattiacci, and the favorable comments on Kathy Carr's work indicate that Goodwin's style rubs off on his subordinates.)

In Pennsylvania, the AFL-CIO lent key support to the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association to legislatively extract DPMs from some obligations of the state's Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error Fund (M-Care Fund).

The effort began four years ago, and versions of the legislation have been back and forth between the House and Senate three times.

At critical points, the AFL-CIO has sent lobbyists to the chambers to keep the language of the legislation intact, said PPMA's Davis.

Pennsylvania law requires all MDs, DOs, DPMs, and hospitals to carry \$1 million/\$3 million in malpractice insurance coverage. The first \$500,000 coverage can be bought on the open market, and throughout the industry, the excess layer costs a small percentage of the base.

But not in Pennsylvania: The excess layer is calculated at 140 percent of the base, and it's not a premium; it's an annual assessment that is paid to M-Care to equal all judgments and settlements of the previous year.

In 2002, doctors and hospitals were assessed \$350 million.

An actuarial study on the privatization is planned, but the belief is that substantial savings will accrue to every licensed DPM in the state.

Dr. Mattiacci is optimistic about the potential success of the move, and he has to be restrained from pacing a dollar estimate on the savings.

In a number of other states — Tennessee and Texas are two — the Guild is actively cooperating with the state podiatric medical associations to beat back efforts to truncate scope-of-practice laws that DPMs now enjoy in those states.

One sign of the maturing relationship between the two organizations could be that DPMs in the Guild states are reassessing the way they have called on the Guild for spot assignments and are taking a longer range look at a list of problems the Guild could influence.

The guild would certainly like to be helpful in a more comprehensive and organized way, and APMA appears to be getting that message and passing it along.

So is there a true value in Guild membership?

Dr. Mattiacci had a surprisingly cool comment on that.

"It's like joining a health club," he said. "You pay your dues and you can use it or not."

This article originally appeared in the APMA News, October 2003.

Union Privilege awards computer to OPEIU member

Sharon Reine, OPEIU Local 383 in Baton Rouge, La., recently won a Dell Computer from Union Privilege. As a union leader, Reine, receives *UPdate*, a Union Privilege publication, which is distributed three times a year to union leaders. Last year, *UPdate* offered leaders a chance to win a computer. All they had to do was sign-up to receive Union Plus *UPdate* and E-News, which are sent to leaders electronically.

Reine took advantage of the offer, and now she has a Dell Computer, Dimension 4550 Series, with Pentium 4 Processor, 2.4 GHz, 30GB, HD, and 17" monitor.

"I am so very excited to be the winner of the Dell Computer! To win something is exciting in itself — but to win a computer is unbelievable," Reine said. "In fact, when I first got the call, I wasn't sure if it was legitimate — you know, too good to be true. It puts a whole new meaning on 'Dude, you're getting a Dell!'"

Reine continued by saying, "Since I was

a little girl, I've known about the benefits to the union and the protections and benefits that workers in general share because of the AFL-CIO. And this drawing/give-away is truly the icing on the cake for me. I feel privileged to have been able to participate."

Reine is a staff secretary at Local 383. She plans to use the computer at home for personal use, some local union business and to help her children with their homework.

Dell computers are offered through the Union Plus Computer Discounts program. Through the program members receive a 5 – 10 percent discount on selected products purchased through Dell. The discount prices are listed online at www.unionplus.org/computers or you can receive a quote by calling 1-800-934-1652. When ordering online or over the phone, you must use reference number: PS16626766.

To learn more about all of the Union Plus programs visit www.unionplus.org and sign-up for E-News.

Employees at Notre Dame de Namur University vote union

It's official — on March 9, 2004 the National Labor Relations Board certified the election victory for employees at the Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU), as employees voted to join OPEIU Local 3. The nearly 100 percent turnout at the February 20 election by all non-exempt staff resulted in a vote of 3-1 in favor of joining Local 3, and is another major step toward the employees' goal of having the University treat each employee equally, with dignity and respect. Established in 1865, NDNU is one of the oldest chartered colleges in California, and is the only four-year accredited university in San Mateo County.

Throughout the past several years, employees at NDNU watched without any input as the University made arbitrary and seemingly unfair decisions. Now, according to Local 3's Organizer, Myra Hepburn, these employees will have their voice heard; they will be able to have a seat at the table where decisions regarding their hours, wages and working conditions will be discussed, negotiated and put into a legally binding collective bargaining agreement.

"We are a loyal and hard-working group of professionals who genuinely care about our University and would like it to be a place

where we can grow, as well as contribute," said Mary Vice, registrar's assistant, NDNU. "I'm very proud of the unity we have shown thus far and I am confident that our solidarity will continue to sustain us as we go forward into the negotiation process."

The University will soon be receiving a letter requesting a start date for contract negotiations, according to Conny Ford, Local 3's Secretary-Treasurer. "Just as we have with all of the other universities that we represent, we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Notre Dame de Namur," Ford said.

Bush Watch

As Election Day draws near, the Bush White House is trying to sweep up the mess they created with the loss of more than 2.9 million manufacturing jobs offshore. Deciding late in the game that they needed to do something, Bush created a new assistant secretary of commerce for manufacturing.

After six months of attempting to try to fill this new position, Bush got around to appointing his new "Manufacturing Czar." Anthony Raimondo, a Bush campaign contributor and CEO of Behlen Manufacturing, is from the world of manufacturing. One would think he might be the right person for the job, the right person to have an idea of how to stop sending American jobs offshore, until you realize that Raimondo has a long record of anti-worker actions.

Recently, Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry pointed out that Bush's "manufacturing czar" fired 17 percent of his own corporation's U.S. workers in 2002 and built a new \$3 million factory in China to employ 180 workers. With these embarrassing turns of event, Raimondo's name was withdrawn.

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC
<http://www.opetu.org>

MICHAEL GOODWIN
President

NANCY WOHLFORTH
Secretary-Treasurer



CALM
ACPS

WHITE COLLAR (ISSN 0043-4876) is published quarterly by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Reproduction by the Labor Press of any or all material herein contained is not only permitted, but wholly desirable in the interest of workers' education.

Subscription Price \$1 a Year

Union Member Rights and Officer Responsibilities Under the LMRDA

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) guarantees certain rights to union members and imposes certain responsibilities on union officers. The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) enforces many LMRDA provisions while other provisions, such as the bill of rights, may only be enforced by union members through private suit in Federal Court.

Union Member Rights

Bill of Rights — Union members have:

- equal rights to participate in union activities
- freedom of speech and assembly
- voice in setting rates of dues, fees, and assessments
- protection of the right to sue
- safeguards against improper discipline

Copies of Collective Bargaining Agreements — Union members and nonunion employees have the right to receive or inspect copies of collective bargaining agreements.

Reports — Unions are required to file an initial information report (Form LM-1), copies of constitutions and bylaws, and an annual financial report (Form LM-2/3/4) with OLMS. Unions must make the reports available to members and permit members to examine supporting records for just cause. The reports are public information and copies are available from OLMS.

Officer Elections — Union members have the right to:

- nominate candidates for office
- run for office
- cast a secret ballot
- protest the conduct of an election

Officer Removal — Local union members have the right to an adequate procedure for the removal of an elected officer guilty of serious misconduct.

Trusteeships — Unions may only be placed in trusteeship by a parent body for the reasons specified in the LMRDA.

Prohibition Against Certain Discipline — A union or any of its officials may not fine, expel, or otherwise discipline a member for exercising any LMRDA right.

Prohibition Against Violence — No one may use or threaten to use force or violence to interfere with a union member in the exercise of LMRDA rights.

Union Officer Responsibilities

Financial Safeguards — Union officers have a duty to manage the

funds and property of the union solely for the benefit of the union and its members in accordance with the union's constitution and bylaws. Union officers or employees who embezzle or steal union funds or other assets commit a Federal crime punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Bonding — Union officers or employees who handle union funds or property must be bonded to provide protection against losses if their union has property and annual financial receipts which exceed \$5,000.

Labor Organization Reports — Union officers must:

File an initial information report (Form LM-1) and annual financial reports (Forms LM-2/3/4) with OLMS.

Retain the records necessary to verify the reports for at least five years.

Officer Reports — Union officers and employees must file reports concerning any loans and benefits received from, or certain financial interests in, employers whose employees their unions represent and businesses that deal with their unions.

Officer Elections — Unions must:

- hold elections of officers of local unions by secret ballot at least every three years.
- conduct regular elections in accordance with their constitution and bylaws and preserve all records for one year.
- mail a notice of election to every member at least 15 days prior to the election.
- comply with a candidate's request to distribute campaign material.
- not use union funds or resources to promote any candidate (nor may employer funds or resources be used).
- permit candidates to have election observers.
- allow candidates to inspect the union's membership list once within 30 days prior to the election.

Restrictions on Holding Office — A person convicted of certain crimes may not serve as a union officer, employee, or other representative of a union for up to 13 years.

Loans — A union may not have outstanding loans to any one officer or employee that in total exceed \$2,000 at any time.

Fines — A union may not pay the fine of any officer or employee convicted of any willful violation of the LMRDA.

The above is only a summary of the LMRDA. Full text of the Act, which comprises Sections 401-531 of Title 29 of the United States Code, may be found in many public libraries, or by writing the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Room N-5616, Washington, D.C., 20210, or on the Internet at www.dol.gov.

Half way there and a long way to go

Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis

As we approach the half way point in the second session of the 108th Congress, the Republican Congressional Leadership continues to resist moving legislation that will assist working families.

Minimum Wage

No action by the Republican Leadership on S. 224 introduced by Senator Daschle (D-SD) and a House bill, H.R. 965, introduced by Congressman George Miller (D-CA).

OPEIU urges you to contact your representative to pass this legislation.

Overtime Pay Protections

The Bush administration has sent a final rule getting workers' pay to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review. After review, the OMB can issue the rule to revise overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and other Democratic leaders have said they will continue to fight to protect workers' overtime pay, offering amendments to other bills to stop the Bush overtime rule.

Please contact your senators and urge them to support Senator Harkin's amendment.

Protect the Freedom to Choose a Union

The Employee Free Choice Act was introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (S. 1925) and U.S. Representative George Miller (H.R. 3619). The act amends the National Labor Relations Act establishing an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations and provides for mandatory injunction against employers who engage in unfair labor practices. S. 1925 has 40 cosponsors and H.R. 3619 has 178. OPEIU joins with the AFL-CIO and the entire labor movement to protect your rights.

OPEIU urges you to write to your representatives and senators to be cosponsors.

Mental Health Parity

Senator Edward Kennedy continues to ask the Republican Leadership in the Senate for a vote on S. 1832, "The Senator Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2003." The bill has been placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. It can be voted on at any time.

OPEIU urges you to call your senators and request a vote on S. 1832.

Diabetes Prevention

OPEIU supports S. 1666, the "Diabetes Prevention and Treatment Act of 2003." Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, contributing to more than 200,000 deaths every year. The bill would establish comprehensive state diabetes control and prevention programs and requires the expansion of research programs in

underserved populations of minority groups and children. It also provides for development of early detection and protection programs, such as screening to identify diabetic retinopathy to prevent blindness, podiatric examinations to prevent foot ulcers and lower extremity amputations.

Please contact your senators and ask them to cosponsor and support S. 1666.

Amend the Medicare Prescription Drug Law of 2003

When the Republican Leadership and President Bush signed into law the so-called Medicare Prescription Drug legislation, OPEIU and the AFL-CIO requested that Congress review the law. After careful review, Senator Edward Kennedy introduced S. 1992, a bill to amend the "Medicare Prescription Drug Act of 2003" to eliminate discriminatory treatment of employer plans.

OPEIU urges you to contact you senator to support S. 1992

Patients' Bill of Rights

Both the House and Senate have passed bills that were sent to conference to work out the difference. However, the Republican Leadership of the Senate and House has not scheduled a conference meeting in four months. When it comes to affordable health care, working families and their doctors need to be afforded a say in their care. A strong Patients' Bill of Rights would protect working families by letting doctors, not insurance companies, practice medicine.

Urge your representatives and senators to go back to Conference and pass a responsible Patients' Bill of Rights. WE NEED YOUR HELP TODAY!

Getting Involved

Grassroots involvement significantly amplifies our Union's lobbying efforts. Phone calls and personal letters encouraging your congressional representatives to back labor-friendly measures are invaluable. Elected officials need direct feedback from our members urging them to sponsor and support OPEIU-endorsed legislation. Every letter counts. Every phone call can make a difference. If you prefer to make written contact, OPEIU strongly advises you to mail or fax all correspondence as opposed to sending an e-mail. With your support, we can press for more immediate action on key bills awaiting resolution in both the House and Senate, such as the Minimum Wage and the Patients' Bill of Rights.

If you 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, U.S. Capitol, Room H154, Washington, DC 20515; phone: (202) 225-7000; hours 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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

You may also phone the United States 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 Web sites contain links to congressional directories: <http://www.house.gov/writerep> and http://www.senate.gov/learn_faqs.html. You can also access this information at your local library.

Work and Health

Tomatoes Beat Lycopene Alone For Prostate Cancer Protection Or ... Diet Really Does Make A Difference

Submitted by Jeffrey S. Freed

OPEIU, Local 153, Health Fund Medical Director

There is strong scientific evidence that what we eat is important. Important enough to determine to some degree whether we develop cancer and other diseases. The perfect diet has never quite been determined. However, scientists are investigating this matter aggressively and are trying to develop some answers to the questions we all have.

Several studies of large numbers of people have suggested that lycopene-rich tomato products effect against prostate cancer. But the question of whether lycopene (a natural food chemical) acts alone or in concert with other components of tomatoes had been difficult to ascertain.

A study from researchers at the Ohio State University and the University of Illinois found that rats that were fed tomato powder (including seeds and skins) had a lower risk of dying with prostate cancer than rats fed either a control diet or the control diet supplemented with lycopene.

This study suggests we need to put at least as much emphasis into looking at whole foods as cancer preventive agents and not just single substances derived from them. The most obvious example of this would be eating the natural foods rich in vitamins rather than taking vitamin pills.

Also, the finding that decreasing calories reduces tumor growth in animals supports

the American Cancer Society study published recently that found obesity is a contributing factor in many cancers, including prostate cancer. It appears that what we are seeing in animal studies is probably relevant to humans and reaffirms concern about excessive calorie intake and lack of exercise that are now really common in our society.

The recommendation now for the best chance of preventing cancer by a dietary change is to eat a varied diet rich in fruits and vegetables, with at least 5 servings a day. Tomato and tomato products appear to be one of the items that should be included in this program. Right now the best tomato product to accomplish this purpose is not clear, but starting with at least one serving of tomato or any of its products would be a good beginning on the road to better health.

You can do something that increases your health and decreases the likelihood of developing cancer and many other diseases including diabetes and hypertension: eat a significant amount of fruits and vegetables, lose weight by decreasing your intake of calories, and exercise at least 3 times per week. You are responsible for your health.

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



Washington Window China is Wal-Mart

Does this scenario sound familiar?

- Workers toil for rock-bottom wages, putting in long hours and sometimes not getting paid at all.

- Health insurance is minimal or non-existent.

- Workers' rights are repressed, unions are banned and workers who speak up are ostracized, punished or fired.

- Other workers — outside the entity involved — get hurt, because its size and market power are so large it can dictate terms not just to its workers, but to suppliers and competitors — who must "race to the bottom" to match it, or go out of business.

If that sounds familiar, it should. Those are conditions workers face at Wal-Mart, the largest U.S. employer.

Wal-Mart's 1 million workers toil in that environment. The firm is so large that it can force its competitors to try to match its inhumane work setting, as the recent Southern California grocery lockout showed.

Remember, the chains locked out 70,000 unionized workers because they wouldn't accept wage and health benefit cuts the grocers claimed they needed to stay competitive with Wal-Mart.

But Wal-Mart is a small version of a much larger identical threat: China. The trade case that the AFL-CIO filed against the Chinese shows that. And the pro-China, pro-Wal-Mart Bush regime must decide whether to be with workers or against them.

Just listen to Wei Jinsheng, an émigré electrician, about what hundreds of millions of workers suffer in China's "free enterprise" economic system, geared to attracting Western companies who want to exploit Chinese labor:

"Chinese workers' lives are miserable and their salaries have been pushed to the bottom of the line," he said through an interpreter. "According to the information we obtained from China directly, the situation could be even worse" than the AFL-CIO presented.

The case showed, among other abuses, that wages are at least 47 percent below where Chinese law orders them to be.

"The Chinese government took away the rights of the workers and had them work at a minimum salary, to make money. They don't use that money to improve the lives of workers — they use it to purchase weapons.

"It's an unfair competition, by U.S. companies that enter China and exploit the lower wages. It's unfair to other U.S. companies that try to be fair" to their workers.

The Chinese workers, Wei Jinsheng said, are often locked into their factories for 13- to 14-hour shifts — with no overtime. They don't have health insurance. Their mobility, in terms of moving from the poor countryside to the richer, and somewhat freer, cities, is restricted by government "residence permits."

"Many harmful and hazardous materials are banned in the U.S., and even in China, but the Chinese workers have to deal with them every day.

"The Chinese dictatorship has not only made Chinese workers sacrifice, but has impacted world trade" by forcing other nations to compete on those terms, he added.

Does that sound like Wal-Mart? Yes. It locks workers in its stores and refuses to pay them overtime. Oregon is just the latest state, of many, whose courts ordered Wal-Mart to comply.

Wal-Mart working conditions are abominable. It pays workers so little — and charges them so much for health insurance — that 85 percent of them get health care from public agencies or Medicaid.

Unions are banned in China, and virtually banned — through rampant company-ordered vicious labor law breaking — at Wal-Mart.

And, as we said, Wal-Mart forces its competitors in a "race to the bottom" through low wages and low prices. And it buys products from China while claiming all its goods are U.S.-made.

"Do they both systematically violate workers' rights? Yes. Do they both pay drastically low wages? Yes. Do they both violate human rights? Yes," says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka.

Yes, China is Wal-Mart — and vice versa.

A trade case may not halt China, just as U.S. labor law penalties don't stop Wal-Mart. So it may be time to recognize Wal-Mart is evil and China is close to that, that they war on workers and subject them to virtual slavery, and act accordingly.

We'll leave it to the experts to figure out details on how to wage that war. But it's a war we must fight, against both China and Wal-Mart — to defend ourselves.