



# CASe Notes

This Newsletter is produced by and for OPSEU CAS Workers

March 2007

## Sector Chair Report

**Rick Pybus, Chair**

Since my election as the Chair of our Sector I have been on a steep learning curve. It has been exciting to be involved with OACAS, the All Chairs, Organizing, the CAS Executive, the Bargaining Council and the Health and Safety Campaign to name a few of my duties. With the hundreds of e-mails, numerous conference calls and the amount of reading of new Bills and articles it is quite a commitment.

Recently I have delegated some of my responsibilities as Chair to some of my very competent executive officers.

Brenda Malott has taken over as Chair for the Bargaining Council. I will attend and be supportive and assume the co-chair's position, but feel that Brenda's desire, commitment and leadership in this area are better suited to that committee than my own.

Jane Kaija and Sue Corlett are working together with the Treasurer's duties; Jane is also the editor of our newsletter CASe Notes, along with being the co-facilitator from our executive for the Workplace Violence Campaign. Sue Corlett is our official Secretary/Treasurer and has done an excellent job at keeping our minutes and other correspondence.

As a Sector we have suffered yet another attack with the Auditor General's report. We have tried to obtain the specific results from York CAS (the one OPSEU Agency in the review) but as yet have been unsuccessful. The government appears to be intent on forcing CASs to follow their recommendations. There will be a report to the Ministry from the CAS sector on how we are doing by March 31, 2007.

We have been informed that a follow-up from the audit report with each of the four agencies will be completed in October 2007.

Meeting with the OACAS has been very fruitful. Our relationship with OACAS is very positive and informative. OACAS has asked the Ministry for an independent third-party operational review of workload in the CAS. We are hoping to hear if the Ministry will grant this request in the near future.

Convention dates are April 19, 20 & 21, 2007. At convention we will be having a BPS meeting on Thursday (April 19, 2007) at 8 a.m. to discuss resolutions that affect ALL BPS workers. Please attend. There will also be a CAS specific meeting on the Thursday evening in the ELGIN Room from 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

The BPS Conference will be June 1 and 2 with Divisional meetings on June 3, 2007. Please note that the Divisional meetings are early this year by approximately four months. This means that our current by-laws for the sector will need to be amended to reflect a longer term for the next executive.

Amendments to the by-laws will follow in a separate mailing regarding this and other issues. Elections for your new executive and bargaining council positions will take place at that meeting if the by-laws are amended.

The BPS conference will have a Sector specific workshop for the Saturday and on the Friday afternoon we will be joining a few other sectors to work on the issues of violence in the workplace, etc.

## **OPSEU/CUPE/OACAS Meeting Update**

**Brenda Malott, Vice Chair**

The OACAS reports that the number of children across the province coming into care is down. Currently agencies are experiencing deficits totaling between \$30 and \$48 million as a result of the block funding and movement of monies from block 2 to block 1. Agencies are being told to balance the budget or the Ministry will. This is happening at the same time as having to implement transformation initiatives and recommendations from the Auditor General by the target date of April 1, 2007.

Agencies are interpreting and implementing varying degrees of the recommendations. The four agencies previously audited can expect a return of the auditors. As well, expect a visit from the Child Advocacy Office to review if they are in compliance and to speak to the consumers themselves.

The issues in regards to lack of funding affecting agencies north of the 50<sup>th</sup> parallel is also being discussed.

In January the Ministry announced the Grand Parenting initiative, however failed to inform the agencies and were very vague about the parameters such as eligibility, expectations, etc. ***Sometimes we are the last to know.***

**BILL 171 is expected to reach the legislature for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in March 2007. The question however is how this act may impact the work of social work staff across the province as the bill attempts to regulate psychotherapy by a newly created health college. Both OACAS and OPSEU are seeking legal advice and preparing a brief.**

## **Transformation Agenda Update**

Transformation agenda initiatives are expected by the Ministry, to be implemented by April 1, 2007. Many questions remain unanswered as to the standards and practices in regards to initiatives such as

Kinship, PRIDE, SAFE and OnLAC (and this list could go on and on).

We, the frontline workers, are feeling the strain of training and implementing new tools that are supposed to make our jobs more focused on peoplework not paperwork (***many of you will remember that campaign***) as well as alleviate our ongoing workload issues. But the workload strains and concerns appear to be growing across the province, not diminishing. The minimalist approach to changing how we do things may not be in the best interest of children.

## **CAS Bargaining Council Update**

**York Local 304, Rainy River Local 739 and Timiskaming Local 665** have geared up and are coordinating their bargaining for 2007.

The Bargaining Council met in the fall to discuss the gains made by the seven OPSEU locals in the 2006 coordinated round that included wage increases of 3-3-3, mileage rates ranging from .36 to .42 cents per kilometer and a sliding mileage scale, as well as improvements to benefits and workload language. The top five demands for 2007 continue to be wages, benefits, mileage, liability and workload. Furthermore, inclusion of language to address violence in the workplace and bullying are also on the tables.

As in the past we continue to meet with CUPE to ensure a coordinated strategy across the province. We also want mechanisms in place to ensure ongoing communication to make certain that all negotiating teams have the most up-to-date information as to what is happening at tables across this province. CUPE has ten locals bargaining and have tabled similar top five demands proposals. To date all three OPSEU locals have been to the table with one agency filing for conciliation.

## Violence in the Workplace Campaign

Jane Kaija, Member at Large

In January 2007, the Sector Executives, CAS Union Health and Safety Co-Chairs, as well as staff members Luisa Quarta, Lisa Walter and Terri Aversa from OPSEU Head Office attended a one-day workshop on Violence in the Workplace.

This workshop was developed because of a resolution brought to the Executive Board by Lynn Orzel, Ottawa CAS, Local 454, calling for a Health and Safety campaign for Sector 4.

The objective of the workshop was to mobilize sector members, locals, and Joint Health and Safety members to prevent violence at work. We also worked to develop strategies to ensure that employers implement effective workplace violence prevention programs in the workplace.

Along with a letter from Leah Casselman to the employer, the Sector handed out reference cards and mugs with the slogan



“My Health and Safety Matters - Stop Workplace Violence”. This was very well received by employers and members.

During the next few months we will be contacting the Locals to offer support to our members to have better policies and protect the health and safety of workers on the job.

### Who We Are and How To Contact Us

The C.A.S. Sector represents workers at 16 Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario. *CASe Notes* is written by and for those workers.

#### C.A.S. Sector Executive

**Chair:** Rick Pybus, Local 441  
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**Secretary/  
Treasurer:** Sue Corlett, Local 454

**Vice-Chair:** Brenda Malott, Local 116

**Member at Large:** Jane Kaija