

Convention 2007

Daily Update

April 21st
Day 3

Brought to you by the OPSEU In Solidarity Editorial Committee

Thomas Elected

In a rousing speech to convention delegates, OPSEU's newly-elected president Warren "Smokey" Thomas promised to empower members and staff and move the union into the future.

Thomas, a long-time union activist and the 1st Vice-President/Treasurer for the past six years, says his gut instinct for what is right and wrong will serve him well as president.

"We are going to re-ignite the fire," he said. "We are going to build on our strengths. I promise I won't let you down."

Thomas reflected on his roots, growing up in Kingston, and marveled at the opportunities he has had.

"Where else but OPSEU could someone like me get to do something like this?"

Thomas told an anecdote on how his kids once threatened to go on strike at home. "I told them they weren't going on strike, because I was going to lock them out. That backfired when they started job actions. I quickly learned not to threaten a lockout."

When the laughter died down, Thomas was thankful for the support he has received from his wife Val and his family. "They are behind me 100 per cent," he said. "I would never have run for this job otherwise."

Thomas said it is an enormous honour to



represent the members, and congratulated candidates Nancy Pridham and David Rapaport on their campaigns.

"I look forward to working with both of you," he said. "I look forward to working with this entire Executive Board. We're good, we're all good. We are going to do great things."

Thomas becomes the sixth president in OPSEU's history.

Rout Elected Vice-President/Treasurer

Region 3 EBM Patty Rout was elected Friday as OPSEU's 1st Vice-President/Treasurer. In her victory speech, Patty said if you believe it will happen, it will. "Because of you, the members, it has happened. Together, our future is now and now is the time for change."

Rout congratulated the other candidates, Bob Eaton and Eduardo "Eddy" Almeida on their clean and well-run campaigns.

The Vice-President/Treasurer-elect stated that with her strong family support she would diligently undertake the duties of the position to ensure OPSEU remains fiscally responsible. "The focus remains on the membership."

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Banquet honours Casselman

On Thursday, an evening of tribute to retiring OPSEU president Leah Casselman culminated with the creation of an award in her honour.

The Leah Casselman Award for Mobilizing will be awarded at future OPSEU Annual Conventions to the local and individual who exemplifies the spirit and intent of “mobilizing to win.”

There were several guests who spoke to Casselman’s dedication, commitment, integrity and sense of family. Guest speakers included former OPSEU President Fred Upshaw, retired Region 7 EBM Ruth Bergman, OPTrust Chief Administrative Officer Heather Gavin, NSGEU President Joan Jessome and NDP MPP Peter



Kormos. Wayne Samuelson, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, provided the emcee duties for the evening.

Casselman was the fifth president of OPSEU, the first female president and, at 12 years, OPSEU’s longest-serving president.

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Rout brings with her a great deal of experience from the positions she has held within OPSEU. Her extensive background in the financial aspects of committees will assist her in her new role.

Rout replaces Warren “Smokey” Thomas, who was elected as OPSEU’s new President earlier in the day.

Patty looks forward to working with both the new president and the Executive Board. Rout spoke passionately to the convention, stating, “Together, our future is now.”

Rout, now in her second term on the Executive Board, is the chair of OPSEU’s Hospital Professionals Division.



Who is here?	
Delegates	818
Alternates	426
Observers	227
Retirees	7
EBMs	21
Committees	42
Solidarity Guests	15
Guests	26
Total	1582
Voting Delegates	888

Going Green

OPSEU's mandate to make our union more environmentally friendly progressed forward with the 2007

OPSEU Greening Committee report presented Friday afternoon. The environmental resolution was unanimously passed at Convention 2006.

Brother Gino Franche, Vice President-elect of Region One, provided an update on the status of OPSEU's greening. He identified the Committee's first four initiatives. They include developing an inventory of union activities with a view to lessen our environmental footprint as well as organizing members to be environmental stewards.

In anticipation of this fall's provincial elections, and possible federal election, the Greening Committee is also formulating campaign strategies to pressure the provincial government to adopt a greener platform. The committee is presently contacting and forging coalitions with like-minded groups to stand together and have our voices heard.

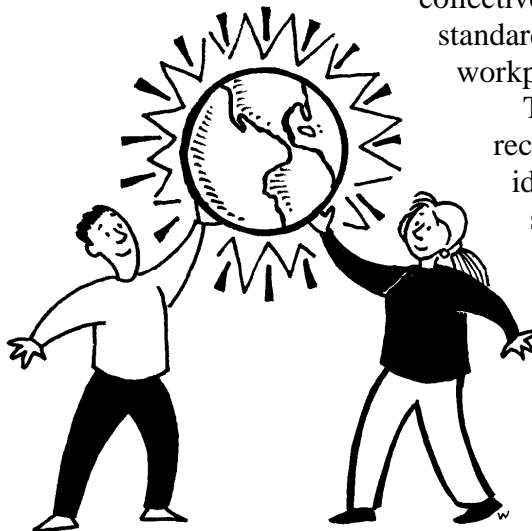
Reduced paper use at Convention, increased electronic filing, better air-conditioning management and increased accessibility to recycling bins at Head Office are all changes that are being implemented. They will also research and develop environmental standards for collective agreements to have standard demands for green workplaces.

The Committee is actively recruiting eco-activists to identify themselves as stewards of the environment, help pass the word and act as contacts for the Greening Committee. They are also designing an Eco-Activist Course that would be offered at regional educationals. If you are interested, please sign up

at the "Ontario Can Do Better" booth just outside the convention floor doors. You can also visit the OPSEU website.

At this year's Young Activist School for children 12-16 years old, the focus is on environmental issues.

"The health of the environment is of critical importance to each and every one of us," said Brother Franche "Working together, we will make a difference."



PYWC elects top spots

The new Provincial Young Workers Committee (PYWC) held elections at noon on Friday, April 20 for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair. Elected were Elizabeth Ha (Chair) and Amy Mars (Vice-Chair). Jennifer Giroux, Nelson Ross, Krista Maracle, Benjamin Ng and Kyle Pearson make up the remaining members of the committee.

The PYWC mandate is to recruit new union activists from shop floors and follow and learn from the experienced veterans within OPSEU.

Convention Quotables

"This is a high speed convention. There's a 100 rumours flying per hour."

Smokey Thomas after Thursday's Bear Pit session.

"I'm not going to win any popularity contests with my position, like earlier today."

David Rapaport at the OPS Bargaining Caucus

"Eduardo Almeida is going nowhere."

Eddy Almeida after congratulating Patty Rout on her victory.

Breakfast with Spirit



It was standing room only for the Provincial Women's Committee (PWC) Breakfast held each year at the OPSEU Convention. This year's theme, Sisters in Spirit, brings awareness to the alarming rate of violence against aboriginal women in Canada, in particular the high rates of missing and murdered aboriginal women. The movie, "Highway of Tears," was shown to the audience and depicted Highway 16 in British Columbia as that highway. It is a long stretch of road in a rural area that aboriginal women hitchhike on because there is no public transportation. Many end up killed and tossed into the ditch. There are virtually no witnesses to the crimes because of the remote area.

This year's recipient of the Bread and Roses Award is Paddy Musson for her outstanding contributions to the women's movement. PWC

Chair Yvonne Bobb introduced her as her mentor and a long-time advocate of women's rights. She was presented with a rose and a handmade shadow box. After accepting this prestigious award Paddy said, "Reach out to women in your local, it builds solidarity in sisterhood." She said that it was her positions within unions that have helped her, and to help other woman.

Regional Recognition Awards were given out to the following:

- Region 1 – Alicia Czekierda
- Region 2 – Brenda Wilson-Young
- Region 3 – Joan Gates
- Region 4 – Marlene Rivier
- Region 5 – Peggy Maybury
- Region 6 – Mandy Dumais
- Region 7 – Jeanette Smith

Missing Fly returned

Region 7's mascot, The Black Fly, went missing last night from their fourth floor hospitality room. After the previous years, they knew what they had to do to get it back.

They immediately went on the mission. EBM John O'Brien plead at the microphones today for the safe return of their mascot and told the

hostage takers they had successfully raised \$600.00 for its safe return.

Region 6 EBM Sue Brown, by

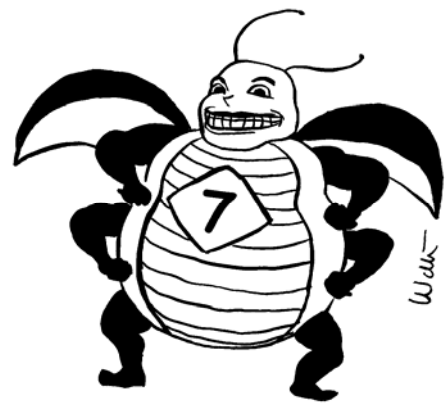
Where's my fly?!



amazing coincidence, stood up and walked towards O'Brien with the Black Fly in hand.

Region 7 can rest easy, knowing that their fly was well looked after during the 18-hour period it was kidnapped.

The money raised was matched by OPSEU and was donated to the OPSEU Live and Let Live Fund.



Friday's Resolutions and Constitutional debates will be included in Convention Final Update, which will be posted on the OPSEU website next week.