

Day 2

IN SOLIDARITY

CONVENTION UPDATE

April 21, 2006

Convention dedicated to John Stammers

OPSEU President Leah Casselman opened the 2006 Annual Convention by welcoming the 1400 delegates and members attending the largest convention in OPSEU history.

With over 6,000 new members being welcomed into our union, this translated to over 150 additional delegates and members attending Convention. Almost the entire floor of the Grand Ballroom was taken up by delegates with a small section for Alternates and Observers. An overflow room was added on another floor.

Leah spoke about the upcoming debate on the affiliation with the NDP. She said it should be a healthy debate that would show our maturity as a union and as people committed to progressive social change.

Leah paid tribute to the 9,100 members of the college academic division. "College faculty stood up to an employer that openly mused about bringing in scabs to do the work of faculty," said Leah. "Getting the key issue on quality education to arbitration was a major, major win for this union. I want to acknowledge all of OPSEU, and in particular, college support workers, for their solidarity during this strike. Thank you so much."

Her speech touched on the many battles that currently face our union such as the right to organize the college part-timers, strikes at

Kennedy House in Ajax and Community Living Mississauga, LHIN's, P3s, the safe needles campaign and downsizing in the OPS.

"We helped to keep the pressure on the government to have an inquiry on the Dudley George travesty," Casselman said. "We spoke out against the Liberals' planned destruction of the Human Rights Commission. We spoke out for fully public non-profit health care, education and for public child care. For a justice system that works the way it should, and is fully public. For quality education and for college part timers. For accountability in our public services. For a fairer and more just Ontario."

"He paid the ultimate price"

On Mar. 13, 2006, at the Progress Campus of Centennial College, John Stammers, an accounting professor, was struck by a car while participating in legal strike action of college staff. Five days later, he died from the injuries he sustained on the picket line. John was known to be a dedicated teacher, a loving husband, father and a good friend. He gave his time and support to his students, colleagues and fellow members of Local 558. The 2006 Convention is dedicated to the memory of John Stammers.

Budget debate a hot issue

As expected, this year's budget was a hotly-contested issue. The Board has identified the main issue to be problems with the General Fund (operating expenses). In particular, the main area of concern is with the allocation of funds to cover operating costs.

Warren "Smokey" Thomas, Vice-President/Treasurer, presented four possible solutions:

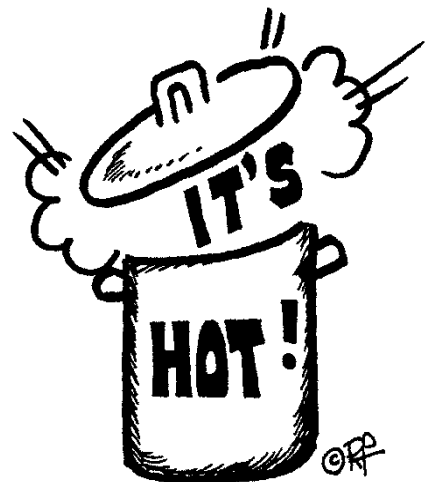
- **Spending cuts** - Potentially, reducing operating costs would negatively impact the services we provide anyone would translate to OPSSU staffing cuts.
- **Additional bank financing**

- **Dues increases** - This would require a constitutional amendment per Article 20.1 of OPSEU's Constitution
- **Adjust the strike fund transfer** - Per Article 20.1.2 (10), *10 per cent of our revenues are allocated to the strike fund until we have reached the threshold of \$50 million.*

Under the "5 - 2 Solution" presented by the Vice President/Treasurer, we could obtain that threshold by 2009 with a five per cent allocation of revenues, at which time we could decrease the allocation to two per cent.

It was suggested that the numbers contained in the proposed budget were not an accurate reflection of the "real" revenues and operating costs. After a lengthy debate, the budget was referred back to the Board for discussion, and to amend the budget to incorporate one of the solutions presented by the Vice President/Treasurer. The budget is to be presented again to the delegates for debate on Friday morning.

Who's Here?	
Delegates	811
Alternates	349
Observers	155
Executive Board	20
Committees	47
Retirees	7
Solidarity Guests	8
Guests	14
Total	1411



NDP affiliation narrowly defeated

The debate on NDP affiliation hit the floor on Thursday afternoon and OPSEU's Central Political Action Committee (CPAC) gave a report of this proposal's history. Between October 2005 and March 2006, the CPAC committee consulted with members, area councils and sector leaders, gathering feedback on the affiliation issue. The Executive Board sub-committee consists of Doris Middleton (Region 3), Eduardo Almeida (Region 2) and Peter Wall (Region 6).

Each of the CPAC members stood, reiterated their support for this resolution and discussed the benefits of affiliation. The resolution then went to the floor where it was heavily debated. Some excellent points were raised on both sides of the issue and there were long lines of

speakers still standing when closure was finally called.

When the vote on the resolution was called, a show of hands indicated a large split across the room. As per established procedure when votes are too close to call, the doors were tiled and a standing count was ordered.

When the votes were tallied, the results showed just how close the vote was...there were 349 votes in favour of affiliation and 378 votes against. The resolution to officially affiliate with the NDP was defeated by 29 votes.



Look up, way up!

Delegates wishing to speak on a particular motion or issue must be standing at the corresponding PRO or CON microphone for their Region. There are banners above the microphones identifying the microphone number (for audio purposes), the region and if the mic is to be used for PRO or CON arguments. For privileges, delegates can use either the PRO or CON microphones for their Region.



Youth violence resolution gets approval

Delegates passed the resolution which calls on the Ontario government to reinvest in social programs that target at-risk urban youth. This resolution requests financial and other supports to community-led initiatives that seek to address the causes and consequences of gun-related crimes in their neighbourhoods. The resolution also calls on the Ontario government to work with other levels of government to secure our borders against the illegal smuggling of firearms into Canada.



Retirees resolution defeated

A resolution submitted by the Retired Members Division was put to a vote today. The resolution included the appointment of a liaison by the Executive of the Retired Members Division and required that the Retired Members Division would have direct communications with the negotiating teams regarding changes that would affect them. The resolution was defeated.



Brought to you by *IN SOLIDARITY*

This is the thirteenth year that the editorial committee of *In Solidarity* has produced the daily updates. We will provide a record of Convention events and happenings.

Who we are: Len Mason, Local 737; Laurie Sabourin, Local 368; Larry Farr, Local 559; Karrie Ouchas, Local 340; Mandy Dumais, Local 680. Ex-officio members are: James Tocker, Executive Board Liaison and Don Ford, OPSEU Communications.

