

Day 3

IN SOLIDARITY PRESENTS:

# CONVENTION UPDATE

April 16th  
2005

## Delegates choose *no change*

Delegates to the 2005 Convention chose the status quo when they re-elected Leah Casselman and Smokey Thomas to OPSEU's two top spots.

Leah was challenged by Region 4 Vice-President Bob Eaton, and newly-elected Region 6 Board Member Richard Larcher. After two ballots, Leah was declared the winner.

In her sixth acceptance speech as President of OPSEU, Leah Casselman told the convention delegates that it's time to tell the citizens of Ontario we do important work. "Throw off the veil of secrecy and tell people who you are," she said. "Wear your buttons when you grocery shop. Don't be embarrassed that taxpayer money pays your wages."

Casselman said her most important accomplishment over the past ten years was her work mobilizing the members. "This union now leads the way in what it means to be a trade union," she said. The steady, impressive growth of OPSEU has turned this union into "a political powerhouse."

After the election, Bob Eaton told the convention that he was committed to doing everything he can to make OPSEU the strongest union in the province of Ontario. "The members have spoken, and the members are never wrong."

Larcher, also known as "the scabhunter" (resulting from his innovative ways of exposing scabs in the two past OPS strikes) said he looked forward to working with the new Executive Board. Leah praised his campaign and told him that he ran "for all the right reasons."

# ELECTION

OPSEU is a "growing power in the labour movement," Casselman said. "I've never chosen the easy path as your president. The job of a president is to lead, even if it costs you politically. We're not the union we were ten years ago - we're better in every way."

In a hard-fought battle for the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President/Treasurer position, incumbent Warren "Smokey"

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Delegates make some constitutional renovations

Two constitutional amendments supported by the Constitution Committee were passed by delegates without debate.

One amendment, proposed by the London and District Area Council, refers to Article 6.3 of the Constitution. The amendment allows members on workers' compensation to seek and hold office in the Union and ensures OPSEU is not in violation of the Human Rights Code.

The second amendment refers to Article 4.1 and was proposed by Local 560. It recognizes OPSEU's international responsibility in our aims and purposes.

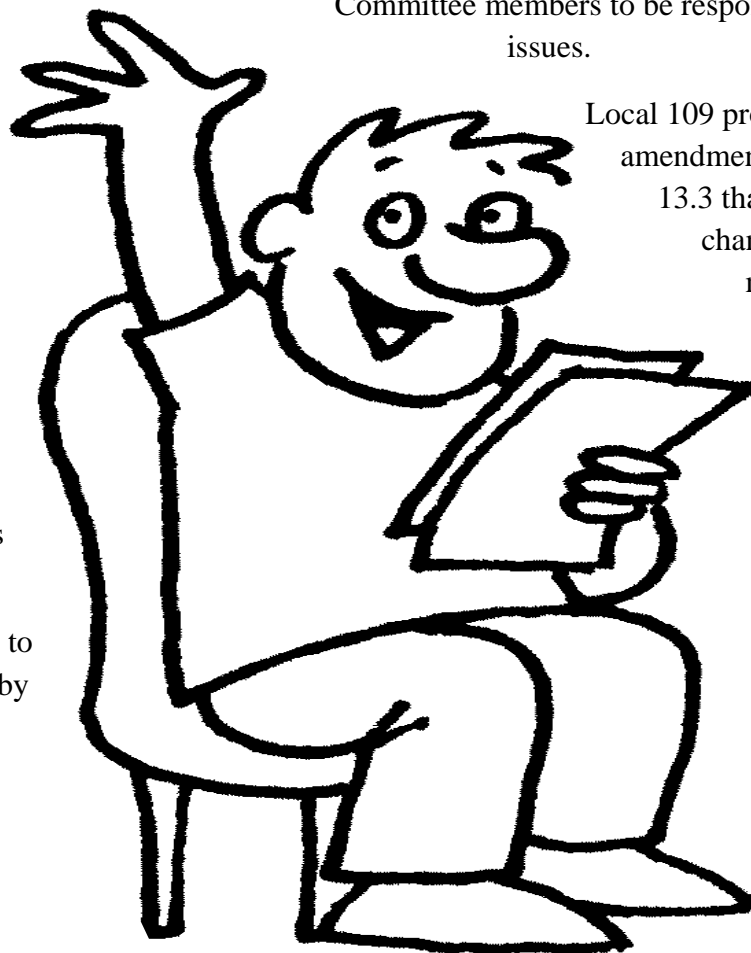
## Democratic principles affirmed

The Executive Board proposed an increase in the delegate entitlement for larger locals, in order to provide more fair representation. The Constitution Committee agreed, and delegates approved the amendment.

## Local changes endorsed

Two constitutional amendments have implications for Locals, and both refer to Article 29.2.1. One ensures that the Constitution requires each local to have a President. The other amendment, proposed

by the Provincial Women's Committee, allows locals to designate one of its Local Executive Committee members to be responsible for equity issues.



Local 109 proposed a third amendment under Article 13.3 that would have changed the status of members who pay dues, but have not signed union cards. The change would give these members "union citizenship" and allow those members to be counted toward convention delegate entitlements. The Constitution Committee disagreed, and

was concerned that Locals would lose the incentive to sign new members. Delegates defeated the motion.

## Convention committees to continue as is

Delegates defeated a proposed amendment that would have added equity group members to each Convention Committee. The Constitution Committee argued that equity is taken into consideration by the Convention Committees and the Executive Board.

# Resolutions: most make the grade

## Childcare allowances affirmed

On the recommendation of Local 432 and the Provincial Women's Committee (PWC), delegates passed a resolution which provides for an increase in the maximum

allowance paid for childcare from \$100 to \$112 per 24-hour period, a housekeeping item left over from the hourly rate increase to \$6.



## OPSEU moves closer to NDP affiliation

Delegates accepted without debate the recommendations of the Executive Board and the Resolution Committee, and passed a resolution to investigate affiliation with the New Democratic Party.

## Health care and education initiatives supported unanimously

The Executive Board submitted two resolutions dealing with health care. One supported OPSEU's continued campaign against Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN). The other resolution supported OPSEU's continued work with the Ontario Health Coalition and the Ontario Federation of Labour to eliminate managed competition and to develop improvements in home care.

The third resolution was submitted by Locals 560 and 110 and directed OPSEU to urge the

government to implement the recommendations of the Rae Report, without job loss for any OPSEU members.

The Resolutions Committee recommended acceptance of all three resolutions. No one spoke against the resolutions, and all three were passed unanimously.

## Non-voting youth delegate resolution defeated

Local 432 and the Kingston Area Council moved the addition of one youth delegate from each Local (with voice but no vote) to divisional meetings and to the demand-set meetings for OPSEU's major sectors. Part of the rationale was to provide mentoring opportunities for youth. The Resolutions Committee argued against having delegates without voting rights, and the enhancement of the rights of one equity group without consideration of all groups. Delegates defeated the resolution.



## Delegates to receive information from Board

The London and District Area Council submitted a motion dealing with resolutions that do not make it to the floor at a Convention. The resolution would have required the Executive Board to send the outcome of its decisions on these left-over resolutions to all Convention delegates prior to the next convention. At the end of the debate, delegates passed a requirement that the Board report to delegates within four months and prepare a rationale for resolutions defeated by the Board.

# OPSEU Women Honoured at Annual Breakfast



Over two hundred members and guests rose early on Friday morning and were greeted for breakfast by eight famous “mystery guests.” Members of the Provincial Women’s Committee (PWC) dressed up as famous and influential women from the past and present. The mystery guests were Irene Parlby (Libby Simpson), Diana Kilmury (Helen Riehl), MaryAnn Shadd Carey (Yvonne Bobb), Rosie the Riveter (Paddy Musson), Judy Rebick (Sandra Snider), Emily Jennings Stowe (Elaine Bagnall) and Hayley Wickenheiser (Laurie Sabourin). EBM Doris Middleton took on the role as Adrienne Clarkson from “Take 30” and interviewed the guests about their accomplishments.

OPSEU President Leah Casselman welcomed everyone and thanked them for their dedication to women’s issues. She also thanked the PWC for the completion of the book: “A Herstory of OPSEU: Women make the union strong.” This proud accomplishment is a compilation of women’s history in the Ontario’s public service and everyone

was given an inaugural copy.

The 2005 Bread and Roses Award was presented to Stephanie Blake for her outstanding contributions to the women’s movement. Having served on both the Executive Board and the PWC, Stephanie continues to be a union activist at Ryerson University.

This year the committee changed the Regional Recognition Award to “The Feminist Achievement Award.” Recipients were honoured with a certificate and a rose for their contribution in moving forward women’s issues. They are:

- Region 1 - *Cindy Haynes*
- Region 2 - *Lois Boggs*
- Region 3 - *Betty Cree*
- Region 4 - *Sue Dafoe*
- Region 5 - *Joyceline Sobers*
- Region 6 - *Lynn Alary*
- Region 7 - *Julie Kaminski*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Thomas was the victor. Vice-Presidents Ron Elliot (Region 1) and John O’Brien (Region 7) also ran for the spot.

“It’s good to be challenged,” Smokey told the convention. He went on to say that it was time for

the Executive Board to unite and carry on the business of the union.

Thomas’ platform of political and fiscal balance proved a winning combination, and he said his “fair, firm and friendly” approach has served him well over the last two terms. “We have to plan for the future, but we have to live with today’s realities,” he said.

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This is the twelfth 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 438; Larry Farr, Local 559; Suzanne Clancy, Local 240; Ken Palmer, Local 456; Jamie Tocker, Executive Board Liaison and Don Ford, OPSEU Communication.

